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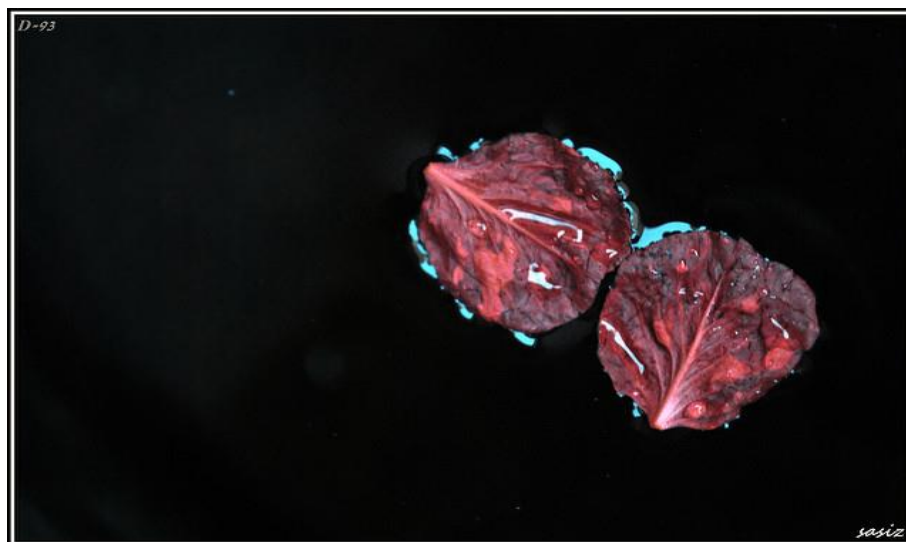


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## Contemporary Literary Perspectives

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Editors

Dr. Sharada Allamneni and Dr. S. D. Sasi Kiran

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## EDITORS' NOTE

Speaking of Shakespeare's plays, Samuel Johnson had said that great literature transcends time and place. The Victorian poet, Mathew Arnold opined that great writers are humanists, in that they are the vanguard of human culture and civilization. Great classics refine human sensibility by spreading sweetness and light. Literary theorists, critical thinkers and creative writers; male, female, white, black, straight or gay, from Michel Foucault to Judith Butler or Gloria Naylor, all provide radical ideas and interpretations into the cultural binaries that our society has got wedged in. These thinkers offer us a fair idea of the mechanics of socio-political change that are at work to shape the human society. The emergent consciousness strives to deconstruct and make sense of the contemporary society.

This volume endeavours to record the pulse of literary enthusiasts and contemporary researchers by offering a platform to their free and independent, as well as critical and creative thoughts. The articles in this volume cover various genres of literature, taking into its stride, papers on gender studies, ecocriticism diasporic studies etc. The book will hopefully provide value to scholars of literature and encourage young researchers, whose voices most often go unheard in the melee of serious deliberations made by seasoned scholars.

We sincerely hope the views of these scholar critics will resonate with all of you.

**HAPPY READING...**

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## 1. The Dialectics of Female Identity in Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Lowland*

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### Introduction

At the turn of last century, under late modernity as society got more diversified, a new kind of interest began in the human self (Wagner 2002). Evincing interest in the social changes, philosophers and cultural critics of the new age like Friedrich Nietzsche and Sigmund Freud turned the spotlight on this ephemeral entity called *self*. Presenting a vision of the chaotic world, without cause and consequence, Nietzsche advanced the notion of self that is in perennial flux, caught up in the process of *becoming*. Questioning the belief of a definite teleology, he subverted the idea of self as a stable ego, one that is rooted in certainties (Nawarath 2010). Nietzsche arguably said that the central task of philosophy is to teach us to become who we are. Later Sigmund Freud applied his psycho-analytic method, to identify the basic drives regulating and aiding the development of human psyche. These drives, Freud informed are responsible for the internal construction of selfhood. Other later thinkers like Margaret Mead (1949), Erving Goffman (1956) and Herbert Blumer (1969) carried out individual studies to analyze the effects of modernization, particularly of freeing an individual from the social norms that he/she was formerly subjected to under the collective life of feudal society. Goffman (1956) theorized on how the self comes to shape its identity through everyday interactions maintained in society.

Around the same time, the French postmodernist, Michel Foucault undertook a series of extensive studies to elucidate the process through which the self is produced. Making a more thorough analysis of social structures and political discourse, he posited the idea that as society evolves the individual also changes substantially. The individual consciousness learns to discern between the civic and human virtues. He/she realizes that the customs and standards upheld by the community or state may not always provide the right orientation. Ultimately, individual happiness lies in cultivating the right ethical and aesthetic ideals in life. "...the problem for the subject or the individual soul is to turn its gaze upon itself, and, recognizing itself in what it is, to recall the truths that issue from it and that it has been able to contemplate" (Batters P.29). Consequently, happiness is the outcome of one's striving towards this ideal and how one consciously arranges his/her life in the attainment of it. The reference points for charting out one's path in life are concepts of 'goodness', 'virtue', 'duty', 'freedom', 'responsibility' and 'the mechanism of conscience'. Through these concepts, morality interacts with other cultural standards to contribute to the social consciousness of the self. This is what, provides the ultimate answer to the question of man's meaning in life (Belskaya 1989). These reference points, as the postmodern philosophers point out, will however not exhaust the question of meaning in life. The complexity involved in gaining self-knowledge, is accompanied by frequent misconceptions and illusions. At times, the meaning of life may be realized only in an incomplete or distorted way. The life of Gauri, the female protagonist in Jhumpa Lahiri's novel *The Lowland* (2013) is a case in point. The narrative evokes with great poignancy the tragic dimensions of personal dislocation that Gauri experiences during the time of a great personal trial and a sudden change in the social and cultural landscape.

## **The Self and its Higher Needs**

In the latter part of the twentieth century, post-structural, feminist thinkers and gender theorists like Judith Butler further revised the existing theories on the concept of selfhood. They shed light on how our knowledge of the self, both its emotions and cognitions are shaped by society and culture. The *Self*, according to Butler, keeps shifting and changing and does not remain static (Butler 1990). It is a given fact that, an individual lives and acts, motivated by a host of needs. “No one can do anything without at the same time doing it for the sake of one or another of his needs and for the sake of the organ of this need...”( Marx & Engels 255). Overlaying the primary, vital needs of basic food, shelter and clothing, is a whole edifice of more complex spiritual needs including love, communication, compassion, dignity and many others. The lives of Lahiri’s characters in *The Lowland*, clearly exemplify these dynamics in the existential world.

All the characters in *The Lowland*, particularly the women live through great turbulence of social change and personal crisis. Bijoli, mother of Subash and Udayan though rooted in love and family is provincial in her outlook. Having spent, almost her entire life in Tollygunge, West Calcutta, she is culturally circumscribed. She sinks into a trauma, when Udayan, the apple of her eye is shot down as a naxalite before her eyes. Another chief female character in the book is Bela, Gauri’s daughter. She undergoes a deep personal upheaval when her mother abandons her in pursuit of a career. The experience despite being profoundly difficult, however acts as a catalyst for learning, change and development. Bela, emerges successful after the whole personal ordeal. But it is Gauri, around whom the narrative of the novel *The Lowland* revolves. Studied in the diaspora context, Gauri exemplifies the new spirit of a ‘mobile selfhood’. She comes across, as an ontologically unfamiliar and enigmatic character.

## **The Assertion of Self**

Gauri is a continuum of self discovery. At a young age she along with her younger brother, Manash, is taken into care by her grandparents. Growing up with Manash in the urban climate of Calcutta, Gauri escapes the conditioning influences of the conservative Bengali culture that other girls of her time were subjected to. She is shown no female role models to emulate. Right from early childhood, she enjoys complete autonomy, to create a self in accordance with her own desires. The first time Udayan meets her, he is struck by her simple, unassuming beauty. He reflects, “A bookish girl heedless of her beauty, unconscious of her effect. She’d been prepared to live her life alone, [...]” (*The Lowland* 338). Gauri, who was studying philosophy in Presidency College, falls in love and marries Udayan. Udayan, a student at the Calcutta University, was already entrenched in the Naxalbari revolution. She goes to live with him and her in-laws at Tollygunge. After witnessing Udayan’s brutal killing in the hands of the police force, she experiences a kind of rupture in her consciousness.

Staying with her in-laws at Tollygunge, subject to their harsh and unforgiving treatment, Gauri gradually becomes alienated from them. When her brother-in-law, Subash goes to meet her, he finds her leading an austere life marked by ritual fasting. He notices that in her room, “Instead of powders and combs there were notebooks, fountain pens, bottles of ink” (*The Lowland* 72). To escape

persecution from the police authorities and the haunting memoirs of Udayan and Calcutta, Gauri accepts Subash's offer to marry and adopt Udayan's child, developing in her womb. She moves with him to Rhode Island, where he was pursuing a doctoral programme in Marine Chemistry.

Living in America as a migrant, Gauri responds to her changed context in a number of surprising ways. She does so, first by retracting from the cultural references of her past. She seeks an alternative interpretation of her changed situation by embracing a new identity. Acting with spontaneity and decisiveness, she attempts to overcome the temporal and spatial dislocation incumbent on her in the diaspora context. In anticipation of an academic career, she signs up for a Master's course in Philosophy. When Bela is born, she feels the newborn an encumbrance and a constant reminder of Udayan. It turns out that, Bela develops more affinity to her father, Subash who adores her and fulfills her every wish. Eventually, Gauri opts out of marriage. She informs Subash that she did not feel any bond with him; it was proving a strain, to keep up the pretence any longer. Unable to accept her mother's desertion, Bela, who has just turned twelve sinks into a deep trauma. Hence, Gauri's search for self, in the latter part of her life, takes place in exclusion of her family.

It is interesting to note that, Gauri starts her life as an emotionally and socially mature individual, led by a belief that she can regulate her life, and chart out her own destiny. Unlike Subash, who has a relatively smoother transition to America, Gauri has to confront new models of behavior much more abruptly than he has to. However, she withstands the pressure of her immediate environment by exercising a relative independence of behavior. Her mode of action is flexible, as she attempts to adapt to the changed social landscape. She chooses to differentiate and innovate herself with respect to the ideals of her Bengali upbringing. Even if only partially, she questions the restrictive nature of her native Bengali conventions in a way that her mother-in-law, Bijoli probably would never have done. In the initial course of her life, Gauri seems to have a clear idea of her place in the world and the required value orientations for choosing her life's goal. At an individual level, she is getting ready to strive and realize the chief goal of her life. She aspires to build an academic career by acting in cooperation with her husband and daughter.

Referring to the polysemic nature of selfhood, Judith Butler (Gender Trouble 1990) posits a Hegelian view to explain how the self exercises its agency. She says that the meaning of life is not revealed to an individual in a 'ready-made' way; it has to be discovered and constructed through an arduous and intensive search. Needless to say, the process is deeply personal. Foucault (1994) had also impressed on the reflexive role of the subject, i.e., the predilection of the self to maintain a critical awareness of itself, by being responsive to the place and time in which it dwells. Both Foucault and Butler argue that as a knowing subject, the *Self* seeks to maintain a mobility of mind and spirit, by eschewing any fixed or stabilized view of the present. In its journey, the self is compelled to ponder over questions like, 'who she is', 'what the purpose of her existence is', 'how she should live', and even whether life is worth living at all. These questions arise when an individual becomes aware of his/her mortality. Other situations of existential crises are the suffering of the body and the mind produced by creature discomforts such as deprivation of human company, illness or pangs of conscience, deceived confidence or unrequited love. It is this critical awareness, reminds Foucault, that enables the self to exert its 'freedom in a civilization dictated by forces of power' (Batters, 2011).

Acutely aware of her predicament in the context of diaspora, Gauri attempts self consciously to adjust. She seeks to adapt to the new time and place by adopting a more questioning approach and rejecting positions that she is expected to take. Lead by the new feminist thought and emancipatory aspirations of self-hood, Gauri begins to question the pro-family values that tend to encumber and fence her as a woman. Gauri's later actions speak of an unbridled individual agency. In pursuit of her career, she attempts to revise the moral boundaries of her *Self*. Against the backdrop of the new cultural references of the host society, she feels compelled to cede a hegemonic social positioning. Having married for convenience, to escape from police persecution after Udayan's brutal shooting, Gauri maintains cool aloofness from her husband Subash. She also makes the conscious choice of not getting entangled with her daughter, Bela and shuns every manifestation of filial love. She feels that the family could become an impediment; stand in her way, to thwart her and rob her of her autonomy. She commits an act of grave transgression when she forsakes her young daughter and abandons her family. By jettisoning her individual duties, first as a mother and then as a wife, she renounces what she later regretfully views, as the right and good. She pays a high cost for relinquishing conventions. Thereon, begins her struggle to preserve her inner self.

After distancing herself from her daughter and husband, Gauri's vocation takes precedence, which directs her course. Working in the philosophy department of a community college in California, Gauri earns reputation for herself as a successful academic. As a committed teacher, she attempts to find peace and harmony in her life through her professional career.

Her job was not only to teach students but to mentor them, to know them. She was expected to maintain generous office hours, to be approachable. In the classroom she led groups of ten or twelve, introducing them to the great books of philosophy, to the unanswerable questions, to centuries of contention and debate. She taught a survey of political philosophy, a course on metaphysics, a senior seminar on the hermeneutics of time. She had established her areas of specialization, German Idealism and the philosophy of the Frankfurt School (*The Lowland* 163).

Despite her strong will, she is unable to garner adequate psychological resources to salvage her conscience which is racked with guilt. Unable to comprehend the broader implications of her actions, she stumbles through the rest of her life. Sinking into melancholiness brought about by loneliness, she dwells on her life concerns; death, fear of isolation, burden of responsibilities that accompany freedom, and the ultimate purpose of life. Bereft of her family and human company, Gauri reconciles herself to a lonely and cloistered life:

Isolation offered its own form of companionship: the reliable silence of her rooms, the steadfast tranquility of the evenings. The promise that she would find things where she put them, that there would be no interruption, no surprise. It greeted her at the end of each day and lay still with her at night. She had no wish to overcome it. Rather, it was something upon which she'd come to depend, with which she'd entered by now into a relationship, more satisfying and enduring than the relationships she'd experienced in either of her marriages (166).

Gauri sees little value in devoting her time to take care of her husband or daughter. Neither does she, like other first generation parents, seem interested to work for the economic betterment or to leave a legacy for her family. Residing by herself in California, she opens up to the idea that a woman

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should enjoy her life. As an antidote to her loneliness, she sometimes seeks informal and casual unions with other men:

When desire eventually began to push its way through, its pattern was unpredictable, casual...Mainly they were fellow academics, but not always... Sometimes she juggled lovers, and at other times, for extended periods, there was no one. She'd grown fond of some of these men, remaining friendly with them. But she'd never allowed herself to reach the point where they might complicate her life (166).

She experiments with her sexual life even further by entering into an alternate relationship with a female colleague, Lorna. Gauri introspects her own attitude towards lesbianism. Her acceptance doesn't seem to be triggered by any need to maintain key interpersonal relationships. Perhaps, it is an explorative attempt to stretch the margins of what society would consider a legitimate way of life. It is an orientation she attempts at, not because she considers such relationships right but perhaps as a spontaneous response to some primordial need of hers, i.e., to keep her sensual, instinctual side alive:

Only Lorna had unraveled her... A tall woman in her late thirties, her center-parted hair in a small chignon. Nicely dressed, in fitted trousers, a white button-down shirt... Her beauty was sober, in its prime. A long neck, clear gray eyes, abbreviated brows. Earlobes so scant ... Slightly visible pores on her face... Her hands seemed small for her height, the wrists delicate...Gauri felt disoriented in the little office that was so familiar to her. ..She had no recollection of crossing a line that drove her to desire a woman's body. With Lorna she found herself already on the other side of it...She feared that she would not be able to control the temptation to take one step closer, then another, until the moment the space between them was obliterated (166-167).

Thus, towards middle age, Gauri comes across new values in her quest of selfhood. Here, Lahiri is probably referring to the US society that is 'opening up' to alternative ways of life. With the ripening of age Gauri muses on the successive transformations, she had to make, first as a wife to Udayan and later to Subash and last of all as paramour to Lorna. All that she has experienced has got transcribed into her Self; her mind, body and soul, to shape her into a subject of a certain kind, that she herself has difficulty in recognizing. Going through these emotionally powerful events, she meditates on life and its meaning:

It was not unlike the way her role had changed at so many other points in the past. From wife to widow, from sister-in-law to wife, from mother to childless woman. With the exception of losing Udayan, she had actively chosen to take these steps. She had married Subhash, she had abandoned Bela. She had generated alternative versions of herself, she had insisted at brutal cost on these conversions. Layering her life, only to strip it bare, only to be alone in the end (168).

The Danish philosopher, Kierkegaard (1985) had considered the role of making free choices, with particular reference to one's core values and beliefs; how such choices shaped the nature and identity of the chooser. Often, during her long lonely evenings in her California home, Gauri experiences inner torment and guilt over her dastardly act of forsaking Bela, even while she continues to be haunted by memories of Udayan. Overcome, by existential guilt and despair, Gauri prepares to kill herself. It is only when her daughter, Bela reconnects with her and brings her some kind of

reconciliation with the memory of her dead husband, Udayan that she is able to regain her sense of direction in life. In following the trajectory of Gauri's life path, the readers cannot help pondering over deontological questions like: what obligations do we, as humans, as rational agents, have towards our fellow humans?

### **Postmodern fragmented self**

The desire for family and social life is virtually universal. It is explained by the basic human need for belonging, acceptance, and security. "To have friends and a family you can call your own, whether in reality or fantasy, is not only a desideratum; it is a necessity for psychological and spiritual as well as physical survival" (May 1991 53).

The angst of the transitoriness of modern life and times is best depicted in the character of Gauri. Studied in the diasporic context, though Gauri does not really experience much cultural dissonance in the new land. Still, she fails to develop as an American cultural citizen. Despite her superficial change of appearance, she fails in her assimilative adjustment to US mores or cultural citizenship.

And yet she remained, in spite of her Western clothes, her Western academic interests, a woman who spoke English with a foreign accent, whose physical appearance and complexion were unchangeable and, against the backdrop of most of America, still unconventional. She continued to introduce herself by an unusual name, the first given by her parents, the last by the two brothers she had wed. Her appearance and accent caused people to continue to ask her where she came from, and some to form certain assumptions (The Lowland 165).

She appears reluctant to engage or negotiate with the complexities of difference in the new cultural spaces, which provided her ample opportunities to open up a dialogue between familiar and foreign meanings, relations, and identities. Instead she seeks to camouflage her identity, feigning widowhood to her neighbours and as a married woman to her male colleagues. However, the pretense does not provide her any relief. Instead it augments her existential predicament:

She avoided situations where she might be introduced to someone,[...]. She turned down dinner invitations, offers to have lunch. She kept to herself at conferences, always retiring to her room, not caring if people found her unfriendly. [...] (236-237)

In their first meeting, Subash presents Gauri, with a copy of Marcuse's *One Dimensional Man*. It is Marcuse, who had suggested that modern man, despite making great technical innovations and gaining a wide knowledge of the world, has not attained the basic wisdom of self enlightenment. Stretching the moral framework of the self, by appropriating new values Gauri represents another form of making cultural change at the individual level. In revising the coordinates that define a good life, Gauri actions, if we were to analyse through a framework of Kantian ethics, appear to lack a critical vision leave alone current commonsense morality. In exercising her free will, Gauri diverts with a drastic reversal of the current moral order. Her actions speak of a gross state of anomie, a sense of living in an unregulated space. It leads to loss of harmony and a fragmentation of her *Self*. Ultimately, struck by the absurdity of it all, driven by a nihilistic despair, Gauri rejects life by



affirmatively choosing death, an attempt that is thwarted by her own inner voice. Finally comes her realization that she is at odds with her time and society, and she makes an honest attempt to amend by reaching out to her daughter whom she had forsaken. Lahiri concludes the narrative of Gauri's self evolution with a modicum of reconciliation between Gauri and Bela.

In her quest for self-knowledge, and self-expansion, Gauri explores both the sublime and the quotidian through her relationships with other human beings; members of the family or others. Gauri maintains a sort of diasporic ontological and epistemological existence and shuns all pleas for pure identity. In the interaction between the self and the society, the hyphen provides a liberating tool, to cope with the socio-political and cultural repertoires of her environment. Gauri evolves this strategy for self-preservation by inhabiting the in-between position that she thinks provides her greater autonomy. She attempts to acclimatize to the unfamiliar cultural environment by adopting a new life style. Unlike, her other compatriots, she shows no desire to maintain cultural purity. She yields to the forces of assimilation by readjusting her life and affecting changes in her lifestyle. She sheds Indian clothes and adopts western attire, cuts her hair...but then, all these changes are at best superficial. She continues to be seen as "the other" :

And yet she remained, in spite of her Western clothes, her Western academic interests, a woman who spoke English with a foreign accent, whose physical appearance and complexion were unchangeable and, against the backdrop of most of America, still unconventional. She continued to introduce herself by an unusual name, the first given by her parents, the last by the two brothers she had wed. Her appearance and accent caused people to continue to ask her where she came from, and some to form certain assumptions (The Lowland 165).

Lahiri suggests the complexity of identity formation, especially in the case of female subjectivity, when factors that contribute to one's identity, i.e., cultural signifiers are deliberately divested off, from oneself. Gauri fails to conceive that to know oneself truly, one must also know one's other. She ignores these finer nuances that have the potential to shape her identity. Alienated from herself and her near and dear ones, she feels wretched. Lahiri hints at how the ideology of essentialist feminism can be very reductive. Though she survives the trauma of Udayan's death, while living apart from her daughter, Bela and Subash, she has no anchor to hold on to; one that could provide her some security of continuity or self-preservation. She has absolutely nothing that could give her a sense of intactness or rootedness in the face of cultural alienation and social displacement. She had mistakenly thought that she could lead the rest of her life without love or friendship. In a sense, by insulating herself, Gauri seeks a double amenity from the ontological constraint of 'culture' as she considers it a 'freedom from identity itself' besides the constraint of national affiliation of an abstract space with borders. Alone in exile, she staggers through life without any sense of self, struggling with an inner crisis of chaos, torment and alienation:

Her life had pared down to its solitary components, its self-reliant code. Her uniform of black slacks and tunics, the books and the laptop computer she needed to do her job. The car she used to get from one place to another. Her hair was still cut short, a monkish style with a middle part. She wore oval glasses on a chain around her neck. There was a bluish tinge now to the skin below her eyes. Her voice raspy from years of lecturing. Her skin drier after absorbing this stronger, southern sun (The Lowland 163).

Nevertheless, there are moments when she also experiences an inchoate yearning for the place she left behind. Nostalgia for Gauri, however, brings with it, guilt and suffering. In her solitary moments she would wonder:

What had Subhash told Bela, to keep her away? Nothing, probably. It was the just punishment for her crime. She understood now what it meant to walk away from her child. It had been her own act of killing. A connection she had severed, resulting in a death that applied only to the two of them. . It was a crime worse than anything Udayan had committed. She had never written to Bela. Never dared reach out, to reassure her. What reassurance was hers to give? What she'd done could never be undone. Her silence, her absence, seemed decent in comparison (169).

### **Conclusion: The Self Needs the Other**

Thus, the chief protagonist of *The Lowland*, Gauri comes across as a multi-layered model of selfhood. She seems to embody the universal and existential human experience, while still retaining traces of influence of culture and society. In forging a *Selfhood*, Gauri, as a knowing subject adopts a constructionist approach by engaging in a dialectic 'play' maneuvering the dynamic interface between cultural regulations and individuals.

*The Lowland* can also be read as a critique of the dubious claims of emancipation made by the feminist movement. In seizing agency to self-determine her own life, Gauri appears misguided. She fails to realize that her capacity to be self-directed is dependent upon her ability to enter into and sustain meaningful relationships in the social sphere. Her stance contradicts the expected moral strength of character on which women in traditional Bengali society forge their personal identity; against which they measure their self-worth. Gauri's mother-in-law, Bijoli's generation believed in the values of Bengali society of 1960s and 70s. They believed that, a woman's moral worth lies in suppressing personal aspirations, thoughts and feelings, by being self-sacrificing, reliable and committed to family throughout one's life. Very often, on pain of social sanction, a woman was bound to do what she must and not what she liked. In a radical refutation of this norm, Gauri associates her need for change both as a demand of the times as well as out of sheer personal conviction.

The American pragmatist philosopher Dewey says, self-knowledge arises from an active engagement with the world in a search for meaning and values. The self is both formed and brought to consciousness through interaction with environment. Lahiri, thus engages with one of the central dilemmas of the postmodern age, Self vs. the Other. In informing us of an authentic self, Lahiri, advocates the Heideggerian view, as she seems to question the conventional notion of autonomy and subjectivity whilst arguing in favour of a relational model of selfhood. Existential phenomenologists from Hegel to Levinas to Heidegger, all argue that the self needs the 'the other' for self-definition; for the confirmation of her own existence (*Ethics and Infinity* 97). Without 'the other' the *Self* would sink into a deep existential despair. Gauri's life is most instructive in this respect.

Gauri exhibits a series of inconsistencies that frustrate her autonomy in forging her identity in postmodern America. Bela, her own daughter gets disenchanted with her and comes to dis-identify

with her. She makes life choices contrary to the ones made by her mother. She chooses an anti-intellectual profession, by choosing to work with soil, striving to uplift common people, by training them on ways of organic farming and eco-conservation.

In terms of a social vision, the readers can only speculate but not fully grasp what exactly Lahiri has to offer. However, Lahiri in *The Lowland* does offer a social vision, one that is liberating, and free from desire. In fact, she suggests in revolutionary terms, a new aspiration apposite to the progressive terms of female identity. Although Gauri emerges a less sympathetic character than Bela or Bijoli, she obliquely embodies the basic blueprint of Lahiri's social vision. Ultimately, female desire, as exemplified by Lahiri's protagonists, both Gauri and Bela, is founded not on the surrender of the unified identity, but rather on its fortification

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## 2. Descartes' and Patañjali's Conceptions of the Self

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### Introduction

“As the mind, so the man; bondage or liberation are in your own mind.” (Sanskrit Saying)

Many people think of Western and Eastern philosophy as incommensurate and irreconcilable. It is my aim to introduce one of the many ways in which this notion is mistaken. Western and Eastern philosophy, while distinct, can enhance each other by the use of multiple methods of getting at similar truths. One such subject of truth involves the conception of the self. In Yogic thought, the true self (*Purusha*) is the only thing that is unchanging. It is the locus for insight and the result of such insight is enlightenment (*Samadhi*). Likewise, Descartes, often considered to be the first modern Western philosopher, systematically and persuasively argued for the existence of an individual self as the foundation of all knowledge. Descartes' and Patañjali's conceptions of the self are similar in some remarkable ways, and I attempt to resolve conflicts between the two views by enlightening Western thinkers to how some aspects of Yogic philosophy of mind can be understood within a broadly Western framework. Ultimately, Descartes and Patañjali espouse distinct metaphysical views of the self, which depend on each philosopher taking a different epistemic standpoint and having different practical goals. These remaining differences can be understandable to both Western and Eastern thinkers, and which view one sympathizes with more, the Cartesian or Patañjalic, may have arguably more to do with a person's practical goals than with their philosophy of mind. I will first briefly discuss Descartes' argument for the existence of the self and his conception of the self. I'll compare Descartes' views to the Yogic conception of the self by referring to Patañjali's *Yoga Sutras*, which are the primary text for Yoga. A few sutras are important to the parallels I will be drawing and I will examine the Cartesian view alongside the *Yoga Sutras* after I introduce a brief overview of Descartes' and Patañjali's conceptions of the self.

### Descartes' Argument Asserting the Self as Thinker and as Certain

Descartes was interested in discovering what is true (metaphysics) and in how to know that it is certainly true (epistemology). In service to this epistemic goal, he employs a method of radical doubt in *Meditations on First Philosophy*, whereby he imagines that everything that he once thought was true is simply an illusion or a dream, perhaps one implanted in him by an evil demon. It seems everything can be doubted. But he argues that one thing is immune to doubt. That is, his thinking and doubting itself. Every time he thinks and doubts, he affirms that he is a thinker and doubter, one who can make judgments, be confused, and entertain ideas and perceptions, whether the propositions themselves are true or not. From this, he asserts the most famous Western philosophical dictum, called the *Cogito*: “I am, I exist.” In other words, my activity of thought affirms that I exist, and even if nothing else is true, it is certain that as long as I think, I am a thinker and therefore exist as such.

Through the *Cogito*, Descartes therefore lays the foundation of all true knowledge. The self is analytically distinguished by its thinking capacity since thinking is what generates the knowledge that there is thinker. Descartes explains: “Well, then, what am I? A thing that thinks. What is that? A thing that doubts, understands, affirms, denies, wants, refuses, and also imagines and senses.” The self is a “thinking thing” and it is distinct from the external material world and even from a person's own body and brain, all of which can be doubted, and may not exist in the way we think it does (if it exists at all). Only pure thinking faculty is immune to doubt and is the expression of the self. Later in *Meditations on First Philosophy*, Descartes argues that there is an external world and that many of our clear and distinct perceptions of it are true. He further argues that there are two distinct metaphysical substances, each of which can survive independently of the other: the material (of which the external world, and our bodies and brains are a part) and the mental (which Descartes

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thinks of as our self, soul, and mind. He also argues for the existence of God as perfect and therefore embraces the traditional Western conception of God as omnipotent, omniscient, and omnibenevolent.

### **Patañjali's Training of the Mind through Yoga and Revelation of the Self as Seer**

Patañjali's *Yoga Sutras* express the system of Yoga; it is the canonical text for Yogic thought. Rather than a set of arguments, it expresses the theory and practice of how to be a yogi. The Yogic goal is stated simply in Book 1, Sutra 2: "The restraint of the modifications of the mind-stuff is yoga". When we train our minds to get rid of all of our garbage which pollutes our views and leads us astray in our lives, we have a pure, calm, and unchanging self (*Purusha*). But this garbage is more than just negative thinking and patterns. It is everything that we are not in essence. It is everything but the activity of the conscious observer. Patañjali classifies the external world, body, and mind all as the material world, and sharply differentiates the unchanging observer self as immaterial. Book 1, Sutra 3 states: "Then Seer (Self) abides in his own Nature." The self is unchanging; it is not the mind or the body, but the observer. In Book 2, Patañjali makes this clear indicating specifically in Sutra 20 that "The Seer is nothing but the power of seeing which, although pure, appears to see through the mind." Only the self is immaterial; the mind for Yoga is a part of the material world. The philosophy of Yoga relies on the idea of the self as primary and as the bearer of all wisdom and insight. Patañjali explains how to achieve such knowledge of the self. In Book 1, Sutra 12 he says: "These mental modifications are restrained by practice and nonattachment". We reach *Samadhi* (enlightenment) after analysis, training, and meditation as we detangle our true selves from our desires, beliefs, and habits, focus and gain control over these temperamental aspects of our psychology, and meditate on the calmness within. The mind (*Chittam*), once clear, can help us in meditation and devotion to God to see our purest self (*Purusha*), which is not the mind at all, but is simply a conscious observer. Even the highest level of *Samadhi* maintains the distinction between the Seer and the Seen, or the observer self and the perceptions of itself and the world, but in *Samadhi* their relationship is one free from possession and completely absorbed in meditation.

### **Comparing Patañjali and Descartes on Their Conceptions of the Self**

There are multiple similarities between the Cartesian and Patañjalic philosophies of the self and methods of discovery. Insofar as Yoga involves the rigorous training of the mind to eradicate all ignorance and reveal pure truth, it is similar to the Cartesian method of radical doubt. Furthermore, in both systems what remains after serious and disciplined mental inquiry is the self. The self alone is the bearer of clear and certain knowledge. A chart at the end of this section of the paper enumerates the many similarities in their views discussed in the previous section and throughout the next section, however, for the purposes of this paper I will turn towards the differences between their views now, so as to set a background for how to bring the Cartesian view into more alignment with the Yogic view, which I develop in the last section of the paper.

### **Differences in the Method of Discovering Truth between Descartes and Patañjali**

Although both Patañjali and Descartes emphasize discipline of the mind to eliminate falsehoods and reach an ultimate truth, their understanding of what it means to discipline the mind varies. Descartes' primary method is one of radical doubt – it relies on questioning all options available including distant and unlikely possibilities to eliminate any doubt and lay a foundation for certainty. His arguments do not admit probabilistic reasoning or reasoning from tradition, intuition, or sacred sources since all of these are in doubt. Descartes seeks certainty by looking for possible contradictions between alternatives and eliminating anything but the *Cogito* – a truth that he argues is self-affirming. It is inconsistent to deny it in any possible world. He then continues his argumentative strategy by seeking entailment relationships among that truth and other possibilities. Most Western philosophers try as they may to refute Descartes, usually still endorse some version of the *Cogito*. Western Philosophers have found other Cartesian arguments for the external world, substance

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dualism, and God, to be much more suspect. These aren't at issue in this paper, since Patañjali and Descartes agree on all of these points. The methods of Yoga are not contrary to philosophical reasoning. Patañjali asserts that awareness of the true self can be achieved without the mind, after disciplined contemplation has been achieved, but he does not disagree with the use of rational argument. Sutra 17 specifically embraces reasoning: "Samprajnata Samadhi (distinguished contemplation) is accompanied by reasoning, reflecting, rejoicing, and pure I-am-ness." This sounds remarkably close to the *Cogito*. In addition to reasoning and analysis, however, Yogis also rely heavily on either meditation or devotion to God to reach enlightenment. Meditation is a more advanced step than reasoning in the process to attain enlightenment and knowledge of the true self. Introspection, awareness, focus and control of the mind, the removal of sensory disturbances, and calming mental disturbances such as desires, beliefs and all other forms of attachment are necessary in Yoga to achieve a clear unbiased and unattached awareness. Sutra 41 says: "Just as the naturally pure crystal assumes the shapes and colors of objects placed near it, so the Yogi's mind, with its totally weakened modifications, becomes clear and balanced and attains the state devoid of differentiation between knower, knowable, and knowledge. This culmination of knowledge is Samadhi." Whereas Descartes thinks that intense analysis of all possibilities and use of the method of radical doubt will suffice in eliminating bias and becoming mentally clear, Yogis primarily use the methods of meditation and devotion to God to discipline and calm the mind. This difference in method, though it may seem small, is likely the most significant reason why their conceptions of the self diverge.

### **Differences in Conceptions of Self and Mind between Descartes and Patañjali**

The most poignant dissimilarity between Descartes and Patañjali emerges when considering their substantive conceptions of the self. Whereas Descartes argues that the self is a thinker, Patañjali asserts that it is observer. In this paper I will attempt to explain to what extent these two share (or could potentially share) similarities and to what extent there are irresolvable differences between the Cartesian and Yogic conceptions of the self. Before discussing the differences between the two views in detail, it is important to address a misconception of Descartes' view that has caused some to a hasty dismissal of these two conceptions of the self as similar. Descartes' self should not be considered to be identical to a person's mind containing all of a person's contentful mental thoughts and perceptions. Nor should the self be confused with the mind as the immaterial counterpart to the brain. Cartesian dualism is quite clear on this issue. The self is *the thinking thing* – the thing is the immaterial substance or soul that enables the thoughts to occur. The thinking thing should not itself be confused with the thoughts that the thing has, which are merely indicators of the self's activity and existence.

Descartes' self appears to be more similar to the Yogic conception of the mind than it is to many contemporary Western conceptions of the mind that attempt to reduce the mind to brain and bodily processes or materials. In Yoga the disciplined mind, once calmed and directed upon itself, enables insight into the true self (*Purusha*). Patañjali's expression '*Chittam*,' refers to all three levels of the yogic mind, including (in order of more refined to less refined): intelligence and discriminative faculty (*Buddhi*), the ego or "I" (*Ahamkara*), and desiring capacities (*Manas*). Descartes' conception of the mind is similar to this, as he explains he is "a thing that doubts, understands, affirms, denies, wants, refuses, and also imagines and senses." Both conceptions of the mind include thinking, an ego or "I", and desiring. Descartes' description of the mind also specifically includes sensing. However, for Yoga, the self is not equivalent to the mind: Whereas *Purusha* is immaterial, the mind is material. Intelligence (*Buddhi*) is one step away from the true self. *Yoga Sutras* translator and commentator, Edwin Bryant, explains that "It [intelligence] is the interface between *purusa* and all other *prakrtic* evolutes. From this vantage point, it can direct awareness out into the objects and embroilments of the world, or, in its highest potential, it can become aware of the presence of *purusa* and consequently redirect itself toward complete realization of the true source of consciousness that pervades it." The

mind therefore can function as a gateway between itself, the less refined material world, and the self. Furthermore, Yogis have specific practical reasons for separating the self and the mind. When the self identifies with the mind it causes distress. Mental and emotional suffering arise in happy as well as sad, angry, and ignorant states. The primary source of distress is based on one’s attachment to one’s own conception of oneself and to one’s preferences, beliefs, and desires. In Book 2, Sutra 6, Patañjali explains that “Egoism is the identification, as it were, of the power of the Seer (*Purusha*) with that of the instrument of seeing [body-mind].” And later in Sutra 17 he states that “The cause of that avoidable pain is the union of the Seer (*Purusha*) and seen (*Prakriti*, or Nature).” Neither egoism nor pain is a desirable state, so if these are practical problems one has when identifying the self with the mind, there is every reason for a Yogi to drive a wedge between the two. It is ironic to notice that what motivates this picture which separates the self from the mind (including all desires) is a *desire* to be at peace; meditation is the instrument to attain that peace and meditative awareness appears to end in complete absorption and is markedly most powerfully peaceful when one is not thinking, desiring, or separating oneself from any other being.

In summary, whereas Descartes’ project is epistemic in focus and his conception of the self includes both a mind and an observer, both of which he classifies as immaterial, Patañjali has a much more narrow understanding of the self which is discovered through meditation and divorces the self, which is immaterial, from the mind, which is material – for the purposes of calmness and the avoidance of distress. The way that Yoga uncovers this purported divergence between self and mind is not through reasoning, but through meditation. This is why the single most *pivotal* difference in the two views is one of method and not of the conception of the self. One of the most central debates between Western and Eastern philosophies emerges fully in this discussion. Given what has been said so far, two possibilities emerge: Either 1. Yoga has reached too far past its epistemic abilities in embracing a-rational meditation – something most Western philosophers would argue can never lead one to reliable knowledge, or 2. The Western theorists have been too close-minded, refusing to trust the process of meditation that they can experience but cannot fully understand, articulate, and render rational. Often, the debate between Eastern and Western views ends there – at a standstill. Instead of ending the discussion there, I would like to push the Western methods and concepts and attempt to get at least a little bit closer to Patañjali’s conception of the self via a Western framework.

The interesting question between these two versions of substance dualism and their conceptions of the self in particular, is whether and to what extent they can be made to overlap. Descartes does not eliminate “observer” from his description of the self. Rather, his description of a self entails that it is also an observer. Observing and perceiving are one among many activities of the self. Unlike Patnajali, Descartes isn’t concerned with which activity of the self is most basic, or which activities can be stripped away and still maintain the self. Instead, Descartes’ project is epistemic in focus. He indicates that the most indubitable activity of the self is thinking and doubting. One wonders whether Descartes’ emphasis on epistemic certainly and Patañjali’s emphasis on practical development of meditative enlightenment cause the two philosophers to discuss the similar conceptions of the self from two different perspectives. Is it possible that Descartes’ conception might be brought into closer alignment with Patañjali’s conception? The Seer and the thinking thing may be demonstrably indicating the same self. Descartes and Patañjali have several central claims that appear to parallel one another, and others that may sound similar but reveal divergences within their ideologies. The following chart summarizes some of the key theses of each philosophy regarding the nature of the self and indicates whether they are similar or not.

Descartes	Patañjali	Similar?
Radical Doubt Gives Us a Method of Seeing More Objectively	Training the Mind in Nonattachment Allows us to See More Objectively	Yes
Reflection on the Self Reveals	Reflection on the Self Reveals Truth,	Yes



Truth, It is the Foundation of All Knowledge	It is the Foundation of All Wisdom	
The Proper Method for Reaching the Truth about the Self is Reasoning aimed at Epistemic Certainty	The Proper Methods for Reaching the Truth about the Self are Meditation and Devotion to God for Eliminating Mental Distress.	No, Descartes would not agree to truths reached through an a-rational process not guaranteed to discover reliable truths
I am, I exist, is the One Thing that is Certain	The Conscious Observer Emerges as the One Unchanging Self	Yes
The Self is a Thinking Thing	The Self is Not the Mind nor the Body, but the Observer	No, Descartes' self is more robust than Patañjali's
There are Two Kinds of Substance: Soul/Mind (Immaterial) and Body (Material)	There are Two Kinds of Substance: Immaterial and Material. Spirit is Immaterial, Mind and Body are Material.	No, For Descartes the mind is immaterial; for Patañjali it is material. However, the observer is classified as immaterial according to both.
The Self (Soul/Mind) is Immaterial and Can Survive the Body's Death	The Self (Observer) is Immaterial and Can Survive the Body's Death	Yes
There is a God and God makes everything work together, and He gives all knowledge	There is a God and God is everything, and God gives all knowledge	Yes

### **A Neo-Cartesian Account that Seeks Similarities with Patañjali's Conception of the Self**

It is clear that the most central disagreement between these two views of substance dualism is on how each conceives of the self. Patañjali's conception is much more narrow than Descartes'. In an attempt to understand the yogic view of the self within a Western framework, I'll develop a *neo-Cartesian* view on which all thoughts with external content (content that comes from or references the world) are categorized as a part of the world rather than a part of the self. I'll examine how far that view will take a Western dualist towards a yogic understanding of the self, and what issues are still at stake in a discussion between neo-Cartesian dualism and Patañjalic dualism.

### **Why Patanajali's View is Unappealing to Western Theorists in Contemporary Philosophy of Mind**

There are no theories in the Western philosophy of mind that I know of which embrace a categorization like Patañjali's, wherein the mind is a part of the material world and nothing but localized consciousness is categorized in the immaterial self. Although most contemporary Western theories of mind reduce or identify the mind to the brain or bodily processes, theorists that fail to endorse a thorough-going materialism usually embrace property dualism, not substance dualism. Under property dualism the mind is an aspect of the same substance as the material world, not a separate and independently-existing substance. Property dualism has almost entirely replaced substance dualism in philosophical circles in the West.

There are two main reasons for preferring property dualism over either materialism or substance dualism. First, unlike materialism, it does not entirely deny hard-to-reduce features of what we commonsensically consider to be features of the mind, namely consciousness, qualitative feels (what it feels like to experience something firsthand, especially by the senses, such as the pain of stubbing a toe or the smell of jasmine), and the intentionality of thought (the way that our thoughts can be about something in the world). Second, unlike substance dualism, it still maintains the integrity of the scientific world-view, in which mysterious non-material entities do not pop in and out of existence,

exist independent of bodies or have inexplicable interactions with bodies. In short, Western theorists are motivated to move far away from substance dualism, whether it is a Cartesian or Patañjali incarnation of it. If they did consider substance dualism, they would have very little reason to accept a view of it on which consciousness but not qualitative feels and the intentionality of thought were explained. Such a picture would create more philosophical problems in the Western world-view than it would resolve, compounding the problems of both materialism and substance dualism. The effort I take here to help resolve some aspects of Patañjali's conception of the self are intended to help both Western and Eastern thinkers to more deeply develop their mutual understanding of each other's views, instead of dismissing them too early as nonsensical, irrational, or overly simplistic. Descartes' theory, though not currently embraced by most in the West, is studied with intensity as one of the starting points of philosophy in nearly every university in the West, and his views are considered to be among the most important to understand for any philosopher who studies metaphysics, philosophy of mind, philosophy of language, and epistemology. Undoubtedly, the history of philosophy in the West would have been very different if we studied Patañjali's philosophy instead.

### **Externalism and A Neo-Cartesian Account of a "Pure Self"**

In philosophy of mind in the West, we often discuss to what extent the language and words we use reach into the world for their content. Those views which argue that content is highly dependent on the world are called 'externalist,' whereas views that argue that content is dependent almost entirely on each person's individual conceptions are viewed as 'internalist.' Descartes and arguably all modern philosophers were internalists regarding the content of our words (and by extension, our mental states which involve words or images from the world). Externalism did not emerge as a recognized view until the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century with such thinkers as Hilary Putnam, Tyler Burge, David Kaplan, Saul Kripke, and Nathan Salmon. The clearest example of the externalist's argument that words depend on the world for their content is with indexicals (such as 'I', 'here', and 'now') and demonstratives (such as 'this' and 'that'). The statement "I am here now" has different content depending on who utters it, and where they are at the moment of utterance. Who they actually are gives the content of the word 'I' and where they actually are gives the content of 'here'. The time of the utterance gives the content of 'now'. Even if my sister in a dream thought she was Marilyn Monroe and in a car with John F. Kennedy in Hollywood, California in 1971 and uttered "I am here now," she is still Summer (my sister) not Marilyn Monroe. It would not be correct for her to say upon waking, "I was once Marilyn Monroe and I had an affair with John F. Kennedy." Rather, if she uttered "I am here now" from her dream, the content of the words would be "Summer is in her bed in Phoenix, Arizona, in 2014." If someone wanted to argue that she indeed was Marilyn, it would be odd to say, by extension, that John F. Kennedy was also not yet assassinated in 1971, simply because my sister dreamed it. Likewise, if someone is a murder suspect he cannot be excused from being present at the crime or deny being a murderer of a certain victim if he says "I thought I was somewhere else," or "I thought I was killing someone else."

Demonstratives like 'this' or 'that' also directly inform the audience of the content of the words. If I point to a beautiful temple in Agra, India, and say of it, "That is the most beautiful building I have ever seen," the content of that most beautiful building is the Taj Mahal, even if I do not know the name of it and even if you do not inform me that it is not a temple but a mausoleum. I could go on in ignorance for the rest of my life but I would still have said that the Taj Mahal was the most beautiful building I had ever seen. Many externalists argue that proper names and even common nouns (such as water, fire and so on) "rigidly designate" the items in the world that they refer to, which means that the world determines their content once the meaning of the word is fixed, and that these words designate certain objects regardless of my own idiosyncratic understanding of them. The neo-Cartesian view that I propose cuts the world in a way more similar to Patañjali's, and uses externalism to insert a wedge between anything we think we say or perceive and those things we actually think and perceive. If the content of many or most of the things we say, think, and perceive

comes from the world, then like Yoga, Western philosophy of mind can see that “pure self” would not incorporate such elements. Therefore, even though Western metaphysics may still categorize all thoughts and perceptions as “mind” and not of the purely external world, on my neo-Cartesian proposal, perceptions and thoughts that have externalized content would also not be “purely mental.” Rather, “purely mental” phenomenon would be only that which is untainted by the material world. On the neo-Cartesian view I am suggesting, we might propose three categories of stuff: the material world, the immaterial purely mental self, and items mixed with the two, such as the content of statements and mental states which depend upon both the material world and the purely mental self. I previously discussed that according to Descartes the self would be viewed as the mental stuff that enables perceptions and thoughts and not all of the actual perceptions and thoughts had by a person. This neo-Cartesian view gets the Westerner much closer to Patañjali’s dualism since specific thoughts and perceptions that issue from the self and depend on the outside world for their content are no longer “purely mental” and are further removed from the self. There are three levels, which approximate Patañjali’s metaphysics: 1. *Prakriti* (Nature/Matter) for Yoga and similarly matter for Descartes; 2. *Chittam* (Mind) for Yoga – where the mind is matter that sufficiently disciplined and calm enables one to access the true self (*Purusha*). For the neo-Cartesian theory, mind is neither completely material nor completely immaterial, but, like Patañjali’s mind, an intermediary between matter and pure mind; 3. *Purusha* (Immaterial Self/Seer) for Yoga and Pure Immaterial Self for the neo-Cartesian view.

### **Comparing the Neo-Cartesian View with Patañjali’s**

Although the neo-Cartesian view I developed gets closer to Patañjali’s than other Western theories in philosophy of mind, there are still some points of disparity. First, even if the neo-Cartesian view eliminates perceptions and thoughts that have external content from the “purely mental,” there are still some perceptions and thoughts that will slip through. A version of the *Cogito* itself, “I think, therefore I am,” which grounds Descartes’ epistemology, is a prime example. Descartes says that the one thing which is immune to his doubt is that he is a thinking thing *while* he is thinking. Let’s examine this: Both ‘I’ and ‘am’ function as indexicals, pointing respectively to the actual self and to the present. Therefore, the *Cogito* never requires content outside of the self. “I am thinking that I am thinking” is purely mental, just as “I am doubting that I am thinking.” However, this may not be an issue for Yoga since what is at stake for the Patañjalic view is not the content of ‘I’ as informed by the external world, but rather the self. This self and reference to the self is something that is embraced by Yoga. Some other thoughts and perceptions that reference only a person’s mental states might also be classified as purely mental. The sensations of pain and pleasure are good candidates, as long as the pain and pleasure are not “pain of” and “pleasure of,” such as the pain of childbirth or the pleasure of eating chocolate fudge ice cream. Those would not be pure since some of their content is informed by the external world. It may also be the case that Patañjali could agree with this construal on his view. After all, a feeling of pure peace or bliss is often thought to accompany the pure self.

### **Conclusion**

Perhaps the biggest problem with reconciling these two views is in their approaches, however. It is not merely that Yoga is a practical approach and that Descartes takes a very theoretical approach, but also that Yoga has in mind a very specific spiritual goal for the practitioner. Therefore, the theory is developed in service to this goal. This is not the case for Descartes and many Western theories of mind. Descartes had a theoretical project of grounding certain knowledge. This is a backwards-looking theory, searching for an ultimate justification on which our knowledge can rest. Yoga is on the contrary a forward-looking view, not looking for justification for certain knowledge, but rather, asking the practitioner to take some things based on faith and use meditation, reasoning, experience,

determination, and devotion to God to allow a transformation of the self to take place. The correctness of Yoga is not based on epistemic certainty nor is it grounded in a decisive deductive proof. Rather, the proof of the theory of Yoga is that it is working to get the individual closer to *Samadhi*, closer to a quiet and peaceful mind, and closer to a consciousness which emphasizes selflessness and inclusion.

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### 3. Ona's Identity Crisis in Tess Onwueme's *The Broken Calabash*

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#### Introduction

“Anything which cannot stand the force of change must be uprooted or be blown into oblivion by the storm of heralding the new season !” (Ona, *The Broken Calabash*)

Osonye Tess Onwueme, belongs to Igbo community in Africa, which is mostly found in profitable Delta region of Nigeria. Eugene B Redmond calls her ‘an African – Nigerian –Igbo – woman – feminist – artist ‘(Onwueme 16) Her plays ,strictly reflect critical perspective of Nigerian women on corrupt socio-political system in Nigeria. Osonye Tess Onwueme is distinguish professor of Cultural Diversity and professor of English at the University of Wisconsin –Eau Clair . She has the reputation as the leading African female playwright with national and international distinction in Africa, Europe and North America. She is the winner of ‘The Associate of Nigerian authors (ANA) Award, The 1989 / 90 Martin Luther King / Cezer Chavez Distinguished Writers Award, the 1994 Nigerian Achievement Award in Literature. Her award winning allegorical dramas are : *The Desert Encroaches* ( 1985 ) and *Ban Empty Barn*( 1986 ) and *A Hen Too Soon* ( 1983 ) .Another award winning dramas are *The Missing Face*(2002),*Shakara Dance Hall Queen* (2000) , *Tell It to Women* (1997) and *Three plays* (1993) . *Three plays* (1993) includes three dramas: *The Broker Calabash* (1986), *Parables for a Season* (1993) and *The Reign of Wazobia* (1988).The play, *The Reign Of Wazobia* is taken from ‘ *Three plays*’ (1993) to which Eugene B.Redmond calls ‘she – King Trilogy’(Onwueme 15).The writer tries to problematize the idea of a united sisterhood for the promotion of worldwide feminism. In Political drama– *What Mama Said* (2003), she illuminates the effect of national and global oil politics, on the lives of impoverished rural Nigeria. African Diasporic legacy becomes a dominant theme, in her plays –*Riots in Heaven* (1996) Daniella Giseffi , comments in the introduction to the *Three Plays* , about the universal appeal of Tess Onwu,e’s plays: ‘Her drama are very much universal plays an international; audience as they speak to us of basic human rights, regardless of national age, sex or race (Onwueme10) Onwueme further explains(1993) that the play *The Broken Calabsh* constitutes an intellectual revolt against the decadent traditional values of the caste system and further shows the tragic consequences of denying any human being , female or male , the right to an individual life or self-fulfilment (9) In this paper we propose to have critical overview of the dramatist’s treatment of the question of the African Igbo women’s identity this drama .The paper further analyzes the journey to self assertion of the female character in the drams by exploring the different traditional aspects of the Igbo culture and protagonist’s opinions about them. *The Broken Calabash* is abbreviated as *TBC*, through out this paper . Although the discussion treats the topics separately, in the drama, they are integrated as a part of the organic whole.

#### 1. Identity

*The Broken Calabash* presents the woman in the post colonial Nigeria, trapped in old and new tradition .She is trapped in the patriarchal and the colonial past. The drama captures the position of African women as complicated by forcefully labelled traditions. Iniobong I Ukomentions (2004) Ezeigbo’s observation on Gender roles of African women: “the misfortune of the modern Nigerian , African women is that that she neither enjoys political power no economic power. Her tragedy is that she has virtually lost out all counts and [she] finds herself more marginalized and devalued than her traditional mother (xvi) In the drama, *The Broken Calabash*, the female protagonist Ona, rebels against her father, once she is convinced that her own father causing her lot of miseries Ona is fade up

of dictatorial attitude of her father, Courtuma who constantly restricts her movements. Courtuma crosses Ona's opinions dislikes her friends and over and above insults religious beliefs. In fact she confesses to her best friend Ugo that she find her father's love consuming which in returns makes her feel miserable , when she wishes: "I wish I had a choice when I was coming" (TBC 27-28). She further wishes to break down from father's clutches to regain her won identity when she questions , "...must my life revolves around him so. so circumscribed by him? Must I never live my life independent of him ?..." (TBC 39)

## 2. Tradition

In the drama, tradition plays vital role as a biggest blow to ona's free will . The Identity of African Igbo women can be viewed against the backdrop of the importance of traditions n their society. Iniobong I. Uko mentions (2004)the importance of traditions in of African culture and its association with the gender. Tradition is in active relationships with certain trends in the society, resulting in a process of symbiotic influencing between them. These trends include religion, speech patterns, gender roles and relations as well as socio-economic and political realities. ( 52) There are many incidences where Ona could be seen smothered by her father's expectation to follow traditional norms .For instance Courtuma and Olianaku , both have converted themselves into Christianity long ago , however , they both fear the influence of Christianity might turn their young daughter into emotionally independent girl who will never obey the age old traditions in Igbo community, as Courtuma, shares his doubt with his wife: "We must be cautious .Life is no longer as simple as that... That we may not die wanting and longing to enter a car owned by other people's children, who knows and who can tap the tree o f the white man's wealth."(TBC 34) Further Courtuma, restricts Ona's visits to the Church , claiming ther is no need of no 'white man's communion' to his any family members and declares :'white man's confession and (catechism) confirmation business is irrelevant activity and an attempt to catch people in a 'vicious circle'(TBC 41) . For embracing white master's religion is necessity for Courtuma's family, but deep down both husband wife have e faith in indigenous culture an tradition. . On fails to understand this point .The Christina influence among the Igbos, is the result of colonialism. As ToyinFalola brings (2001) light upon this issue.

Christianity has bought many aspects of Western culture and ideas about society of Nigeria .Converts are expected to abandoned indigenous religions and various aspects of their culture...total conversion of Nigerians to Christianity which means indigenous religion should be used as a point of reference in any way ... (46) The clashes between old and new generation becomes obvious when Ona's modern approach to life starts disturbing Courtuma. In one incidence Courtuma disapproves his daughters, westernised 'wave'' like hair style, copied from *Vogue* fashion magazine. He criticise that her hair looks as if "á rat fallen into oil' (TBC 37) and further he insists that she should appreciating the, "beauty of plaited hair" (TBC 38) In another incidence ,Courtuma hurts Ona, by comparing her best friend Ugo's 's dressing style to that of a prostitute's and demands that in future she should not visit his home ,provocatively dressed .Further Ona is seen to be visibly embarrassed whenever her father expresses his love for daughter with physical contact or verbally. Courtuma's love for Ona is deeply suggestive of eroticism and this is symptomatic of the danger of incest. Courtuma tells Ona: "Don't you know you mean more than a daughter to me?... My diamonds I, who am your father and will always be father of your children generation after generation, even from my grave!!!You are my saviour, my confronter." (TBC 38 -39)

In one more incidence, Courtuma keeps a watch on Ona and Diaku when he visits her house. Courtuma makes it sure that Diaku and Ona maintain distance while chatting and he keeps on making sarcastic comment on Diaku. Courtuma, when witnesses Ona kissing Diaku, his overreaction, surprises Ona as he shouts at her:'Ona! Ona! Ona! ...Why must you lick another mans spittle like

the white man?..I sent you to school not to contact the white man's disease but to learn his grace..” (TBC 45) Courtuma is aware Diaku and Ona both are in love and wish to marry each other. However, Courtuma, turns down Diaku's proposal and this exactly hurts Ona a lot. Courtuma, flatly refuses to give his daughter, Ona's hand in marriage to Diaku, because she is an *Idegbe*. He insults the opposite party by breaking the calabash which is often offered in Igbo community to opposite party during marriage talks.

### 1. *Idegebe*

Ona is an *Idegbe*. and as per this tradition, a girl as only child must either be kept at home as *Idegbe* to bear children for her father or marry a wife to propagate Courtuma, and Oliaku want their only daughter Ona to marry another daughter to continue the *Idegbe* tradition. Ona, being their only child, she needs to follow the custom of *Idegbe* to keep the family tree (parent tree) alive..Ona has a choice: A choice to bear children for her father alone or marry a wife who can help bear children to multiply the stock. She can neither marry nor bear children for any other man. Osony Tess Onwueme comments that this *Idegbe* tradition: this (*Idegebe*) status makes enormous demands on the daughter because she is expected to perform several male roles in the family and the whole society also recognizes her dual identity. (Uko 257) Victor Uchenedu informs (1979) about the importance of the *Idegbe* tradition or woman marriage in the Igbo community: 'Woman marriage' is a recognised Igbo institution by which women can validate status in the society. (50)

### 2. *Self Assertion*

Ona denounces the *Idegbe* tradition because as per her opinion, first, it encourages prostitution and secondly she claims a tradition which doesn't stand the test of time needs to be discarded by society. She claims this *Idegbe* custom encourages prostitution and if the homestead is too shaky then need not to be nurtured. She questions the credibility of the society that sanction such arrangement. She claims it is high time such exploitative customs need to be stopped in the modern time: "Let the wind blow let the shaky homestead be blown anything that can not stand the force of change must be uprooted or be blown into oblivion by the storm heralding the new reason!" (TBC56) Courtuma, tries to convince Ona that The *Idegbe* system is ideal for his family to continue his name with pure blood and if it is a socially sanctioned prostitution that helps him to save the root of his family, he doesn't mind forcing it on Ona, since he claims, "your children or your wife must answer your father's name...The homestead ...Ona. The root ...Ona" (TBC 56-57). Courtuma, makes it clear to Ona, that even through the *Idegbe* system she can't let Diaku father her children because he belongs to the family of Osu (lower caste, as per the tribe hierarchies) which is a completely different family than hers and there is fear of pure blood getting polluted. Victor Uchenedu in his book quote (1979) Leith-Ross that 'the Osu are hated and feared, treated as if mean and discussed with the tone of horror and contempt' (89) When Courtuma, considers Diaku's blood as impure blood because of his lower social status, Ona, explains her father that that if she is kept at home to bear children for her father or marry a wife either way, the blood is going to be polluted. Further, she also adds that that if they had a son, who enters an exogamous marriage, even that way, 'the blood will even be less pure' (TBC 56) Ona turns revengeful, for pushing her into outdated tradition. The tragedy with African girls are, in any given social set up, they are not allowed to think independently as Osony Tess Onwueme (1993) mentions Gay Wilentz observation: [A]lthough the women are in charge of education and initiation of young girls into adulthood, they are not free ...A upholders of traditions, they are compelled to act 'in line with past practice' (Abraham 4) whether they agree with custom or not. In a dual sex role culture, this aspect of women's responsibility in one which demands great respect from the society. (10) (as quoted in Umeth 310) Ona completely breaks down when her lover Diaku ties knot with to the Ugo, her best friend. Ona is convinced that her father has caused all the miseries in her life. She implicates Courtuma, holding him responsible for her pregnancy. Shocked Courtuma begs for mercy, but ultimately, he is

being expelled from the community. Ona's act to implicate her father is, her another way of rebelling against the patriarchal Igbo society. Thus, Osonye Tess Onwume's heroine, dares to go beyond all means, in order to teach lessons to the exploitative agency. That is her way of getting control of her life. Being an Igbo woman with the fighting spirit's Ona dares to teach lesson to her father who is responsible for her miseries. Ona's fight can be justified with MqlaraOgundipe – Leslie(1993) in discusses Fifth mountain on her back is 'man' with his centuries old patriarchal society and urge women to fight against it. ...male domination is advantageous to him (man) ... Thus it is up to women to combat their social disabilities; to fight for their own fundamental and democratic rights ... The liberation of women in society is not simply about sexual freedom as most men tend to think and fear, but about the larger problem of the redistribution of privileges, power and property between the rich and poor, encompassing the smaller problem of the redistribution of power, property and privilege between men and women (36). Considering the lack of support system in their immediate environment, the women need to make efforts at individual level and find the solution. In the wake of globalization, among African societies, so called custom/traditional policing is not always healthy way to attract and encourage young generation to follow age old traditions.

## Conclusion

Tess Onwume's heroine Ona, is not apologetic about her methods to finding solution to her problems. Nevertheless, it suggests that the educated African women can not have freedom of will, unless the African society is mature enough to give them liberty. In the modern times, the society needs to let woman use her discretion. Traditions that doesn't stand the test of times, need to be discarded completely if the situation demands. This is high time that, in the wake of globalization African society needs to find the golden mean in order to find old as well young generation on the same page, when it comes to celebrating their own traditions and customs. However when exploitative agencies are masked in the name of traditions, the women need to fight back for their survival and self respect. African society needs to find a golden mean where both old and new generation both can be on the same page.

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#### 4. Revisiting Tennessee Williams' *The Night of the Iguana* in the light of the *Bhagavad-Gita*

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Tennessee Williams, born on March 1911 in Columbus, Mississippi, is one of the most powerful dramatists of America of the twentieth century who wrote dramas of high emotional conflicts in which the characters are trapped in their extreme point of psychological repression. The pressure of repression that Williams experiences himself throughout his life due to his unfavourable family environment and his being a homosexual one is transmitted to his characters. It is this intensity of the pressure of repression that inevitably led Williams to explore the possible avenues which can illuminate the dark world of his otherwise repressed characters. Tennessee Williams has exploited the theme of sexual repression to its extreme in his plays with the basic intention to show its inherent ambiguity and confusion. For him it is the 'deeper necessities' in order to communicate his own confused sexual identity. An in-depth study of the plays of Tennessee Williams displays the creator's experimentation with the theme and technique with the sole intention to give his otherwise repressed world a more meaningful communication. The obsession is to minimize the pressure of repression by ensuring the process of sublimation, to give the personal feeling a more meaningful universal outfit, to provide the singular with comprehensive plural response.

The dramatic world of Tennessee Williams is filled up with the characters unwillingly find themselves trapped in their own predicament. But the responses of his characters to their subsequent situations vary with the writer's experimentation with the theme. Though sex and death perform dominating roles, his plays seem always in search for something which can give meaning to the 'broken world' of his psychologically disturbed characters. In this search Williams is found attracted to the Oriental philosophy which has left its profound voice in some of his plays viz. *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*, *The Night of the Iguana* and *The Milk Train Doesn't Stop Here Any More*. The last is an allegory as the playwright himself called it, and even pressed for an explanation of his new religious bent, he brought out a copy of the *Bhagavad-Gita* and said that a trip to the Orient had left him deeply impressed with eastern philosophy. (Marowski et al. 450) The value of human compassion and endurance are highly praised in the Orient and Williams happens to find his answer here to shower ray of hope in repressed world of his characters where each one is in solitary confinement psychologically.

*The Night of the Iguana*, written in 1959, strongly displays the influence of Japanese Noh play where Hannah is referred to as a 'female standing-up Buddha'. But Hannah, which suggests Hannya, is not the female ghost-mask of a Noh play, she is rather the Holy Ghost engaged to drive out the evil from Shannon. Noh play intends to present some universalized human passion especially at a moment of crises, advocating transcendence to a balanced existence at the same time. *The Night of the Iguana* displays the same issue where Shannon's, a defrocked Minister, emotional crises has left him almost at the point of extinction but who is ultimately able to experience transcendence to a relatively balanced existence with the help of an outsider Hannah Jelks. In this context, *The Night of the Iguana* very aptly invites a re-reading of the play in the light of the *Bhagavad-Gita* where Sri Bhagavan was engaged to wipe out the darkness from the mind of Arjuna, the warrior, who was at his extreme emotional crises and fully confused about what was right for him. Many of the dialogues between Hannah and Shannon surprisingly echo those of Sri Krishna, the Bhagavan and Arjuna.

In his *Civilizations and its Discontents*, Freud has discussed the source of man's unhappiness. To get happiness is the aim of life, and whenever it is obstructed we seek substitutive gratification. "The Pleasure Principle" has to be accommodated with the reality principle under the external pressure of civilization. This substitutive gratification has given rise to counter illusions like religion, art etc. which compensate our sufferings though cannot protect us against it. But in a different way

Carl Jung, a Swiss psychoanalyst, stresses the importance of exploring the world of religion and spirituality for psychological growth and maturation, which he calls the process of individuation, of the individual. This process starts with the encounter between consciousness and the symbols arising from the unconscious. Analytical psychology finds out a collective unconscious which is different from the personal unconscious in the sense that it possesses archetypes common to all human beings. The individual, going through the individuation process, may get the gleams of symbols which are related to the experience of not a single person but humanity in general. These are the symbols which throw light upon the fundamental questions like life, death, happiness, etc. In the *Bhagavad-Gita*, Arjuna cannot be considered simply a warrior who finds himself in depression, he is rather representing everybody whoever is in his crises just as Shannon in *The Night of the Iguana* who states his own situation-“...well, like everyone else, at some point or other in life, my life has cracked up on me.” (Williams, *Plays 1957-1980* 343). His (Arjuna) queries are those of any confused mind which fails to make the right choice. In chapter: 2 verse: 6, Arjuna confesses his inability:

“na caitad vidmaḥ kataran no garīyo  
yad vā jayema yadī vā no jayeyuḥ  
yān eva hatvā na jijīviṣāmas  
te 'vasthitāḥ pramukhe dhārtarāṣṭrāḥ”

(“We do not even know which is preferable for us - to fight or not to fight....”)

In verse: 7 of the same chapter, he is taking refuge in Sri Krishna seeking answers to remove his confusion. He states:

“kārpaṇya-doṣopahata-svabhāvaḥ  
pṛcchāmi tvām dharma-sammūḍha-cetāḥ  
yac chreyaḥ syān niścitaṁ brūhi tan me  
śiṣyas te 'haṁ śādhi mām tvām prapannam”

(“With my very being smitten by the vice of faint-heartedness and my mind puzzled with regard to duty, I beseech You! Tell me that which is decidedly good; I am your disciple. Pray, instruct me, who has taken refuge in You.”)

It is as if he seeks answers not only for himself but for the humanity in general. In *The Night of the Iguana* Shannon’s depression is enhanced due to the lack of his insight into the basic goodness of a human being and especially of himself. He has lost faith and has lost hope to lead a meaningful life as well. His situation is similar to that of Arjuna as we find him in the ‘Vishad Yoga’ to a greater extent. But here his savior is not Divinity incarnated but a human being. Though absence of God is one of the recurrent issues that have attracted attention in Williams’ plays, search for God’s vision is also inherent in his characters. A desperate need to restore faith in companionship and to develop a feeling of compassion for others prompts Williams to create characters like Hannah Jelks who is a human being with a vision of life and no less of God. The spiritual inclination which has been discerned momentarily in the early plays of Williams almost outbursts in this play. His obsession with God and sex that are functioning as parts of repressive mechanism in his plays is illuminated with the progress of the play *The Night of the Iguana*. In his *Memoirs* Williams states, “...what I think we most need is a New Morality. And I think we’ve arrived at a point where that is a necessity of continued and bearable existence....” (Williams, *Memoirs* 230). It is surprising that how Williams’ demands for New Morality has made an age old scripture echoed in his play.

In *The Night of the Iguana* Hannah Jelks is vested with the supreme task of a savior and so her appearance itself symbolizes her difference from Williams’ other characters. Hannah is “remarkable-looking - ethereal, almost ghostly. She suggests a Gothic cathedral image of a medieval saint, but animated. She could be thirty, she could be forty: she is totally feminine and yet androgynous-looking - almost timeless.” (Williams, *Plays 1957-1980* 338) This is what Shannon feels when he first looks at her. This description of Hannah is very significant in the subsequent discussion of the

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topic. In the *Bhagavad-Gita*, Sri Bhagavan who is beyond the cycle of birth and death is delivering “Brahma-Vidya” which is again timeless containing universal truth. But writing in his time Williams could not dare to give his savior that stature and so almost inevitably he has mixed up physical and metaphysical fragrances in the description of Hannah to make her more acceptable. When Hannah reappears for the second time with her grandfather Nonno, Shannon looks at them steadily “with a relief of tension almost like that of someone going under hypnosis.” (Williams, *Plays 1957-1980* 348). So from both the initiation it is clear that Hannah is special for Shannon who is badly in need of someone who can rescue him from his internal conflict. What Williams demands for his characters is better comprehension of their problems with compassion. Himself experiencing a long period of depression after the death of his friend and lover Frankie, Williams feels the pain of the inability to communicate with people. In his *Memoirs* he puts his realization of that period: “As long as you can communicate with someone who is inclined to sympathy you retain a chance to be rescued.” (Williams, *Memoirs* 204) The ‘rescue’ is very significant in the sense that the repression that consequently gives rise to later depression cannot be resolved completely by an outsider. But a brief communication of love, sympathy, can make the pressure endurable. In the play we see Shannon is able to share his problems with Hannah and she not only responds with compassion but also illuminates his mind with her wisdom. In chapter: 10, verse: 11 of the *Bhagavad-Gita*, Sri Krishna says:

“teṣāṃ evānukampārtham  
 aham ajñāna-jaṃ tamaḥ  
 nāśayāmy ātma-bhāva-stho  
 jñāna-dīpena bhāsvatā”

(“In order to bestow My compassion on them, (who come to take refuge in Him or love Him) I, dwelling in their hearts, dispel their darkness born of ignorance by the illuminating lamp of knowledge.”)

It is Hannah Jelks’ compassionate nature and deep understanding that results in Shannon’s existential resurrection from the hammock “...Out! Free! Unassisted” (Williams, *Plays 1957-1980* 408). It is that brief but honest communication between Hannah and Shannon that helps the latter to revive his internal strength to fight back his ‘spook’. In the *Bhagavad-Gita*, Arjuna lays bare his mind with its conflicts and queries to Sri Krishna and He responds with compassion and in the process of interaction wipes out the ignorance of Arjuna transmitting the supreme knowledge of Atman (Soul) or “Brahma-Vidya”. Here also the depressed one is assisted to revive his internal strength to fight back his ‘spook’, if we can use the term ‘spook’ here in this context.

Hannah is a human being who has experienced a lot and who in return learns a lot from her experience. The adverse situation of life has taught her to develop a genuine vision of life which is quite often reflected in her words. Her words to Maxine Faulk: “We’ve been through several typhoons in the Orient. Sometimes outside disturbances like that are an almost welcome distraction from inside disturbances...” (Williams, *Plays 1957-1980* 358) is worth quoted in this respect. Hannah is also very tactfully projected as a painter who naturally bears a strong sense of perception to look beyond the physical or the superficial. We find that Art, Poetry, and Religion are always Williams’ strong concerns as he finds in them better substitutes to realize sublimation of his repressed desires and so these are recurrent elements in his plays. Hannah and Shannon’s conversation starts in Act 2 of the play which is initially based upon the latter’s past career as a Minister and his subsequent downfall. Shannon, like Sebastian Venable of *Suddenly Last Summer*, has a negative conception of God who is described in Western Theologies. The antagonism that Shannon develops against God is due to the influence of his puritan mother who caught him in amusing himself and warned him against the wrath of God for such a forbidden act. This incident injected guilt conscience in his psyche. In this respect he shares Williams’ own life where the dominance of a puritan mother enhances her son’s intensity of repression. Shannon’s open declaration of God as a “senile

delinquent” has shaken the normal pulse of established customs and he has to pay for it as a consequence. Following Williams’ tradition, Shannon is in search for the presence of God not in the furious sermons but in somewhere else just as Hannah finds it in the suffering faces. Hannah inspires Shannon by speculating that one day he will surely go back to the church at least for those very few old faces who will look up at him and he will make them aware of ‘something to still believe in’. Here she very significantly remarks, “Lead them beside still waters because you know how badly they need the still waters ...” (Williams, *Plays 1957-1980* 370). The meaning inherent in the phrase ‘still waters’ is tentative. Shannon has shaken their faith and it is his moral duty to restore it upon something which can still believe in with firmness. A man can see his face in the still waters, not in the waves. Here reference to *Bhagavad-Gita* is inevitable which says a confused mind can never taste the bliss of peace, of truth and only moves towards damnation. The glimpse of God or of Atman is possible to get when a man strongly establishes himself in the field of faith. Hannah’s intention is to make Shannon aware of his assigned duty just as Sri Krishna in chapter: 2, verse: 31 of the *Bhagavad-Gita*, is telling Arjuna:

“sva-dharmam api cāvekṣya

na vikampitum arhasi

dharmyād dhi yuddhāc chreyo 'nyat

kṣatriyasya na vidyate”

(“Besides, considering your own duty too, you should not waver, for there is nothing more welcome for a man of the warrior class than a righteous war.”)

In chapter: 11 of the *Bhagavad-Gita*, we see Arjuna is filled up with fear beholding the supreme, effulgent, primal and infinite Cosmic Form of God, and prays Him to reappear again in His loving four-armed form. In verse: 46 of the chapter, Arjuna pleads to Sri Krishna:

“kiritinam gadinam cakra-hastam

icchami tvam drashtum aham tathaiva

tenaiva rupena catur-bhujena

sahasra-baho bhava visva-murte”

(“I wish to see You adorned in the same way with a diadem on the head, and holding a mace and a discus in two of Your hands. O Lord with a thousand arms, O Universal Being, appear again in the same four-armed Form.”)

Fortunately here Arjuna is assisted by God himself and so he need not have to search Him in somewhere else in accordance to his suit will. But Shannon has to find out his God himself as he doesn’t find comfort with the image of God that comes up in the violent and furious sermons of Western Theologies. Hannah only helps him in his search with her compassion and beliefs. It is in the storm, in the white lightning, in the rainfall, that Shannon feels that divine touch: “Shannon extends his hands under the rainfall, turning them in it as if to cool them. Then he cups them to catch the water in his palms and bathes his forehead with it. The rainfall increases... Shannon lowers his hands from his burning forehead and stretches them out through the rain’s silver sheet as if he were reaching for something outside and beyond himself.” (Williams, *Plays 1957-1980* 387).

In Act 3 of the play, Hannah has turned against Shannon especially for his act of self-inflicted crucifixion in the name of atonement in the hammock as she rebukes him by calling it a ‘passion-play performance’. Shannon wants Hannah to untie him but she rejects and prefers to wait till he has passed through his present disturbance. She wants to remove the sadistic pleasure he is taking in self-indulgence. She has found in him something precious which shouldn’t be allowed to get wasted meaninglessly. So she has insisted him to stop, “Stop being childishly cruel!” (Williams, *Plays 1957-1980* 404). When Shannon wants to know what she has found to respect in him, Hannah responds: “I respect a person that has had to fight and howl for his decency and his bit of goodness....” (Williams,

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*Plays 1957-1980* 404). In chapter: 2 of the *Bhagavad-Gita*, Sri Krishna is seen disapproving Arjuna's faint-heartedness which does not suit to his personality and which will not bring heaven or fame for him. Sri Bhagavan says:

“klaibyaṁ mā sma gamaḥ pārtha  
naitat tvayy upapadyate  
kṣudraṁ hṛdaya-daurbalyaṁ  
tyaktvottiṣṭha parantapa”

(“Yield not to unmanliness, Arjuna; this does not become you. Shaking off this base faint-heartedness stand-up, O scorcher of enemies.”)

So in both the texts the saviors are engaged to make the disturbed souls aware of their actual duty.

Again in Act 3, we find Shannon with a vital question seeking answer from Hannah. He wants to know about his problem which Hannah has indentified and it is “the oldest one in the world - the need to believe in something or in someone – almost anyone – almost anything . . . something.” (Williams, *Plays 1957-1980* 408). When a person gets aware of the nature of his problem, it becomes easier for him, at least to make an effort, to get rid of it. Shannon's problem is spiritual necessitated by infantile regression. At one moment he shouts: “...The infantile protest, ha, ha, ha, the infantile expression of rage at Mama and rage at God and rage at the goddam crib, and rage at the everything, rage at the . . . everything. . . .Regression to infantilism. . . .” (Williams, *Plays 1957-1980* 401). He needs to establish his faith but is it upon God? Hannah's answer is very appropriate and acceptable as well in the context of the world scenario when the play is written. When sense of alienation is ruthlessly grasping the individual life, it is the “Broken gates between people so they can reach each other, even if it's just for one night only” (Williams, *Plays 1957-1980* 408) which can at least make life easy and tolerable. Arjuna's problem is that of a confused mind distracted by the mire of delusion and here, Krishna is suggesting him the practice of Yoga of selfless action where the intellect remain determinate and directed singly towards one ideal. He advises Arjuna to perform his duties established in Yoga, renouncing attachment, and be even-minded in success and failure; evenness of mind is called ‘yoga’. Krishna's suggestion is for attaining a stable mind and it is possible for those whose senses are under their control. In that case a hint of experiencing repression is inevitable but it is for the welfare of the disciple as the path towards experiencing sublimation is also dictated clearly. Through ‘Jnana Yoga’ and ‘Karma Yoga’, Krishna elaborately discusses the means to attain a stable mind.

In verse: 14 of the same chapter: 2, Krishna advises Arjuna to endure pleasure and pain, the feelings of heat and cold alike because these are transitory and fleeting, and are the results of the contacts between the senses and their objects:

“mātrā-sparśās tu kaunteya  
śītoṣṇa-sukha-duḥkha-dāḥ  
āgamāpāyino 'nityās  
tāms titikṣasva bhārata”

Hannah is also significantly shown to highlight the value of endurance. She has beaten her ‘blue devil’ by endurance because “Endurance is something that spooks and blue devils respect.” (Williams, *Plays 1957-1980* 409). Later on Hannah's oriental message to Shannon “Accept whatever situation you cannot improve” strongly supports Williams' indebtedness to the *Bhagavad-Gita*. With the progress of the play we find Shannon's positive transformation from “rage at God” to the words “God help me” (Williams, *Plays 1957-1980* 410). In the last part of Act 3, both Hannah and Shannon are engaged in playing God to save the tied up Iguana because it is one of God's creatures. Hannah,

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through her wisdom, is able to raise Shannon from the dark world of depression to the bright one of compassion.

Once again we can make a similar reading of both the texts from the perspective of psychoanalysis to a considerable extent. Sigmund Freud has divided individual psyche into three parts viz. Id, Ego and Super-ego. Id is related to the irrational part whereas super-ego is to the individual conscience. Ego is the vital one of the three which experiences conflicts whenever it fails to sustain proper balance between 'id' and 'super-ego'. In both the texts the focus is upon two characters, one who is trapped at his crises and the other who is engaged in the task of liberating the former from the trap. Both Shannon and Arjuna are experiencing internal conflicts, and in this respect they are better representing 'ego' of individual psyche whereas Hannah and Krishna are performing the part of 'super-ego'. The dictates of 'super-ego' generally intends to uplift the individual morality by making him aware of his expected dos and don'ts. It is for Hannah Jelks that Shannon's existential "resurrection from the hammock" becomes possible. His ultimate realization of the presence of God's benevolent touch and his efforts to set iguana free because it is one of God's creature is taken place due to Hannah's compassionate nature and wisdom. Krishna by delivering the supreme knowledge of 'Brahma-Vidya' has assisted Arjuna to overcome his delusion and pick up weapon to perform his assigned duty which is to fight the battle for truth. In *The Night of the Iguana* all the other characters except Nonno, the poet and grandfather of Hannah, are projected as almost nothing but slave to 'id'. Maxine Faulk, the host, is however the best example in this respect who wants to capture Shannon. Arjuna's emotional inclination for those who are happened to reside in his opposite side necessitates his depression that naturally hides his vision. But in both the cases of Shannon and Arjuna 'super-ego' is more forceful and strong enough to lead them towards the path of sublimation or rather salvation.

Upanishads speaks about 'jivatma' and 'paramatma', the former is restless, and its restlessness is inherently meant for getting united with the latter where lays the absolute bliss. We can even more rationally divide the individual between the conscious mind or waves of thought and the soul or 'atma', and it is the latter where lays our true identity. In the *Bhagavad-Gita* it is a known fact that Krishna and Arjuna are paramatma and jivatma respectively. Arjuna was restless and Krishna helped him to know himself; but Arjuna came to know his true identity only after realizing Krishna as God or Paramatma. In *The Night of the Iguana* Shannon was restless whereas Hannah was more composed than we could expect from anyone in her situation. Time and again she has insisted Shannon to get aware of his own self and for this purpose she has even recreated his true identity before himself. But surprisingly here also Shannon first had come to know about Hannah, her 'blue devils', her way of looking at life-at God, and then he found out himself playing God in saving iguana, one of God's creatures.

The dichotomy between flesh and spirit is one of the recurrent issues that prevail over Williams' dramatic career and *The Night of the Iguana* is also not an exception to this. But it differs from the tradition of Williams' previous plays mainly because of the strong influence of Oriental philosophy upon the playwright. Consciously or unconsciously *The Night of the Iguana* bears some strong points of similarities with the *Bhagavad-Gita* and it becomes more obvious when Williams himself shows a copy of the Book as an evidence of his acquaintance to Oriental philosophy. Though it may not have that level of status which *The Glass Menagerie* or *The Streetcar Named Desire* or *Cat On a Hot Tin Roof* enjoy, but it is also devoid of their dark, gloomy, repressed atmosphere. This play at least gets some solutions for Williams in his search to get rid of repression.

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## 5. A Lesbian Reading of Gloria Naylor's Novel *The Women of Brewster Place*

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In what are some of the most defining lines of Gloria Naylor's novel *The Women of Brewster Place*, the central character Mattie Michael and her friend Etta Mae Johnson are talking about Lorraine and Theresa – a lesbian couple – who live together in an apartment on Brewster Place. Initially, Mattie disapproves of their relationship and wonders how they come to be lesbians – she specifically wants to know if one is born a lesbian. Continuing to ponder over the issue in order to arrive at a better understanding of a lesbian relationship, Mattie considers the fact that she too has loved women – Miss Eva, Ciel and Etta herself. Etta proposes that lesbian couples love each other the way a man and a woman love each other. Pushing the argument further, Mattie responds by saying that she has loved some women deeper than she has loved any man and conversely some women have loved her and done more for her than any man has ever done. Etta agrees with her but is unable to find the difference between lesbians and other women when Mattie concludes, “Maybe it's not so different.... Maybe that's why some women get riled up about it, 'cause deep down it's not so different after all..... It kinda gives you a funny feeling when you think about it that way, though.” Mattie's conclusion in this regard opens up the possibility of women having non-erotic (from a patriarchal point of view) lesbian relationships which, in the context of the novel, are much more satisfying and sustaining than their relationships with men. It is worth quoting Adrienne Rich's views on the matter to find the parallels between her views and those of Mattie – “As the term lesbian has been held to limiting, clinical associations in its patriarchal definition, female friendship and comradeship have been set apart from the erotic, thus limiting the erotic itself. But as we deepen and broaden the range of what we define as lesbian existence as we delineate a lesbian continuum, we begin to discover the erotic in female terms as that which is unconfined to any single part of the body or solely to the body itself, as an energy...” These lines are taken from her essay “Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence” (1980), in which Rich attempts among other things “a feminist critique of compulsory heterosexual orientation for women”. In this essay, Rich uses the terms “lesbian existence” and “lesbian continuum” in place of “lesbianism”, which according to her has “a clinical and limiting ring”: the former to suggest that lesbians have existed in history and that women continue to create “the meaning of that existence”. “Lesbian continuum” is a broader term which Rich uses to include not only “consciously desired sexual experience” between women such as the one that exists between Lorraine and Theresa, but also to refer to other forms of “primary intensity” between them such as “the sharing of a rich inner life, the bonding against male tyranny [and] the giving and receiving of practical support.”

Rich's views are particularly useful when we consider Gloria Naylor's novel *The Women of Brewster Place*: the women in the novel represent both a lesbian existence and a lesbian continuum. The novel, written in 1982, is in the form of seven short stories and explores the lives of seven African American women who make Brewster Place their home and who form a range of relationships between them: those of mother-daughter, friends and lovers. Mattie Michael after whom the first story is named knows only heartache and frustration from her heterosexual relationships. She loses home twice on account of the men in her life: her father's home when she has an affair with the womanizer Butch Fuller; and the second home when her son Basil, who is arrested for “involuntary manslaughter” and “assaulting a peace officer”, doesn't turn up for the hearing of the trial. As a result, she forfeits her house which she has put up for her son's bail. Mattie is pregnant after she is seduced by Butch and she refuses to tell her father, Samuel, the name of the child's father as a result of which he beats her savagely. Mattie leaves home and goes north to her friend Etta Mae Johnson, who is scheduled to leave town but stays on to care for her friend. Mattie's father loves her dearly – “that man lives and breathes for you” is how Mattie's mother describes Samuel's feelings for his daughter – yet he is angry with her for her disobedience. In sharp contrast, Mattie is able to confide in her mother who comforts her and assures her that there is nothing shameful in having a baby. Further,

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to quote Rich again, Mattie's "survival relationships" are all with women "beginning with her mother." More than her mother, who offers her sympathy, solace and support and saves her from further savage beating by her father, and her friend Etta Mae, who ensures that Mattie is comfortably settled before she leaves town, it is Eva Turner with whom Mattie shares a deep mother-daughter bond. Badly shaken by an experience in a boardinghouse room where one night a rat bites her son Basil's cheeks, Mattie leaves the place and after a painful search the next day finds an old white woman with a "black voice" who takes her in. The old woman's name is Eva Turner and she stays with her granddaughter Ciel. Mattie and Basil stay in her house for thirty years – and for the period that Eva is alive she doesn't take any rent from her though she insists that Mattie save the money which she would otherwise have paid her as rent. The advice is useful and when Eva dies, Mattie uses the savings to buy the house from Eva's children. Eva's act in itself can be viewed as an undermining of capitalist patriarchy in which everything is valued in terms of money.

Further, Mattie feels very comfortable in Eva Turner's company – she settles like "fine dust on her surroundings" and Eva worries that Mattie doesn't have a boyfriend or a husband. To Mattie's protestation that she has Basil to care for, Eva says that "children get raised overnight". Mattie has occasion to remember Eva's advice when Basil grows up and she becomes lonely. On such occasions, she sits in the sun porch and prays for comfort to Eva. Thus, one sees that Mattie receives practical and moral support from Eva with whom she has a deep bond which reveals the "primary intensity" that exists between women and which Rich talks about.

Etta Mae Johnson is the perfect foil to her friend Mattie. Mattie lives a life of self-abnegation devoting all her attention to her son so much so that he remains dependent on her always. She doesn't have much by way of a love life either – she once takes a bus ride with a foreman and goes out a few times with an usher in her church. Etta Mae, despite criticism, lives life on her own terms -- in a childhood spent at Rock Vale, Tennessee she is "unwilling to play by the rules". She changes lovers frequently – "business opportunities" as she calls them and in the second story which is named after her she is seen looking for another such opportunity. Mattie wants to aid Etta in her quest to find a husband and suggests that she accompany her to church as it has "a few settle-minded men..., some widowers and such". Etta is initially skeptical – "if your church is so full of upright Christian men, why you ain't snagged one yet" is what she tells Mattie – but eventually agrees to go.

In church, Etta's self-assurance soon fades away and she becomes envious of Mattie who forgets all worry when she is praying. She wonders if she could have lived a different life and given a chance would like to lead a more respectful life. She fancies marriage with the minister Moreland T. Woods as a way of leading a life of luxury and respect. When Mattie points out that Woods has no such intention and that he is merely out to have a good time with her, Etta accuses Mattie of being jealous of her like the others are. Etta is jolted out of her wishful thinking in the last few moments of her lovemaking with the calculating Woods and keeps her eyes closed to feel the "soothing darkness" before facing the painful reality of her situation. This is the first time that Etta's spirit is broken but there is hope for her in the form of Mattie who stays awake waiting for her return. Despite having a string of affairs with various men, Etta eventually finds a life-affirming experience in her friendship with Mattie and eventually comes to stay at Brewster Place.

The main character in the third story is Kiswana Browne who harks back to an African past and drops using the first name, Melanie, given to her by her parents to assume the name Kiswana which she finds in an African Dictionary. Her parents stay in Linden Hills, an area where the more affluent African Americans live. Her mother disapproves of Kiswana's staying at Brewster Place but she stays on as she wants to be independent. Kiswana comes across as an idealist as she discontinues studies to fight for equality and a better quality of life for the black folks. Her mother however, is more practical minded; she points out that the black revolutionaries are leading comfortable lives and urges Kiswana to fight by staying within the system – by being an assemblywoman or a civil liberties

lawyer or by starting a freedom school. In the course of the argument that follows, Kiswana infuriates her mother when she accuses her of being a “white man’s nigger” – what Kiswana means to say is that her mother is not proud of her black heritage. Her mother flares up and refers to her grandparents – her grandmother “was a full-blooded Iroquois” and her grandfather “a free black from a long line of journeymen” – who simply wanted to be themselves. She impresses upon Kiswana that it is important to be at peace with oneself rather than try to be like someone else – an obvious reference to Kiswana who is rediscovering her blackness by assuming an African name and spraying her thin and fine-textured hair with lacquer so that her hair looks like an Afro. Towards the end of the story, Kiswana finds that her mother applies polish to her toenails to please her father who has a foot fetish and realizes that she is no different as she too does it to please her lover Abshu. It then dawns upon her that in very real terms her life is no different from her mother’s – she “suddenly realized that her mother had trod the same universe that she herself was now travelling.”

The next story centers around Eva Turner’s granddaughter Luciellia Louise Turner or Ciel. Ciel is married to Eugene and her relationship with him is a painful one; by her own admission the only thing she has ever loved without pain is her daughter Serena. Eugene always picks on her and is terribly insensitive to the needs of the baby (he plays the stereo when the baby is sleeping) and blames Ciel for all his frustrations like the loss of a job. Unable to take Eugene’s bitter complaints about having to feed one more mouth, Ciel who is pregnant goes in for an abortion. Later when the couple are having an argument, their daughter Serena dies when she puts a metal fork into an electric socket. Ciel then goes into a daze; she doesn’t eat or drink and she stops bathing and combing her hair as life starts ebbing out of her body. It is in this situation that Mattie starts rocking Ciel to get to the “nadir of her hurt” and purge her of all “the evilness of pain.” After Ciel vomits phlegm and bile, Mattie bathes Ciel “slowly” and “reverently” as if “handling a newborn”. Ciel starts crying and Mattie knows that all is going to be fine. The story comes full circle as Ciel’s grandmother Eva Turner supports Mattie by allowing her to stay in her house when Mattie is homeless and alone. In yet another instance of a woman being a woman’s best friend, Mattie brings Ciel back from the brink of death, in a way repaying her debt to Eva Turner and continuing her legacy to the next generation through Ciel.

Cora Lee’s is the peculiar story of a young girl who loves baby dolls to the exclusion of all other kinds of dolls including a teenaged Barbie doll much to the dismay of her parents and when she grows up she starts liking real babies so much so that as an unwed mother she has seven children and all but two of them have the same father. There is a strong sensuality in the way Cora handles the dolls and the babies. Naylor describes Cora Lee’s response when her parents give her a new baby doll thus: “She trailed her fingertips along the smooth brown forehead and down into the bottom curve of the upturned nose. She gently lifted the dimpled arms and legs and reverently placed them back. Slowly kissing the set painted mouth, she inhaled its new aroma while stroking the silken curled head and full cheeks. She circled her arms around the motionless body and squeezed, while with tightly closed eyes she waited breathlessly for the first trembling vibrations of its low, gravelly “Mama” to radiate through her breast.” When Cora starts having babies, her attitude towards them remains pretty much the same. “Taking the baby’s hand in her mouth, she sucked at the small fingers and watched it giggle and try to reach for her nose. She poked her thumb into the dimpled cheek and lifted the child onto her breast so she could stroke its finely curled hair and inhaled the mingled sweetness of mineral oil and talcum powder that lay in the creases of its neck.” Cora also wishes that babies don’t grow up so that they are “soft and easy to care for” and “she alone could be their substance and world”. Cora’s obsession with baby dolls and babies is puzzling – it’s perhaps her disillusionment in her heterosexual relationships that makes her live in a fantasy world. She is the victim of physical abuse at the hands of her men lovers, having had a fractured jaw, a loose tooth and a scar under the left eye as a result of that abuse. Cora also comes across as one who has strong maternal instincts – quoting Nancy Chodorow, Adrienne Rich says “that in having a child a woman seeks to recreate her own intense relationship with her mother.” There are parallels in the way Mattie and Cora regard their children –

Mattie is very protective of her son so much so that she turns him into “a little boy who would always need her.” Both these instances show that in the absence of fulfilling and supportive heterosexual relationships, both women invest their all in their children who they don’t want to grow up so that they can depend on them always.

Of the seven stories that make up the novel, the first five are named after the respective characters and the last two are named differently – the penultimate story which deals with two lesbian lovers is titled “The Two”. This story is about Lorraine and Theresa who stay together in much the same way as any married couple would and this meets with open disapproval from at least one of inhabitants of Brewster Place, Sophie. Sophie is constantly looking for telltale signs of erotic lesbianism between the two; her apartment windows which face theirs make it convenient for her to keep watch over them. She is inquisitive to the extent that she even rummages through their garbage and asks the handy man Ben if he notices anything peculiar in their house. However, Mattie, Etta and Ben among others are more tolerant and have no such qualms about the two staying in Brewster Place. “The Two” ends on a very tragic note when Lorraine is raped by six thugs led by CC Baker “who was greatly disturbed by the thought of a Lorraine”, implying that a lesbian is seen as a threat to a patriarchal society. The rape of Lorraine exhibits two of the eight characteristics of male power as outlined by Kathleen Gough in her essay “The Origin of the Family” – Lorraine is punished for lesbian sexuality when Baker forces his sexuality upon her by raping her. As a result of the brutal rape, Lorraine’s memory fails and she loses her ability to taste, smell, love and hate. Subsequently, in a bizarrely ironic turn of events, Lorraine kills a father-figure Ben, the one person with whom she is herself, by hitting his mouth and then head with a brick. This can be seen as women’s and the lesbian’s ultimate revenge against patriarchy where any man – benevolent or otherwise – is seen as the enemy of all women.

A common feature that runs through all the woman characters, with the exception of Ciel, is that they are not married. Also, they do not derive any fulfillment from their heterosexual relationships. Ciel too gets only misery out of her marriage as she has an abortion, her daughter dies in an accident and her husband too leaves her. In the end, she is brought back from certain death and given a new life thanks to the efforts of her mother figure Mattie. Mattie, on her part, hardly ever tries to have an affair after the brief one that she has with Butch pretty early in her life, choosing instead to transfer all her feelings on her son. Eventually he leaves home, Mattie loses her home and comes to stay in Brewster Place. A study in contrast, Etta is unable to find fulfillment in her relationship with various men including the preacher Moreland T. Woods. Cora Lee’s story is interesting: she has sex with “shadows” – men who come into her life just to have sex and leave. The arrangement suits her as having lovers means being abused by them and being the victim of their falsehoods (the father of one of her children promises to marry her but he goes out to “buy a packet of milk” and never comes back). Moreover, the shadows show her “the thing that felt good in the dark”, Cora Lee keeps having babies that she is so fond of and she is content to live in fantasy world.

It is interesting to note that what Adrienne Rich posits finds consonance in the works of other critics. Black feminist critic Barbara Smith in her essay “Toward a Black Feminist Criticism” (1978), opines that many of the works of Black women writers are lesbian as in these works, women “are the central figures, are positively portrayed and have pivotal relationships with each other”. Smith prefaces this statement with the rider that though they are lesbians, the women characters are not “lovers” in the usual sense of the term. Her comments are made against the backdrop of Bertha Harris’s suggestions at the “Lesbians and Literature” discussion at the 1976 Modern Language Association convention that “if in a women’s work a sentence refuses to do what it is supposed to do, if there are strong images of women and if there is a refusal to be linear, the result is innately lesbian literature”. By Smith’s definition too, Naylor’s novel is lesbian as women are the central characters, they are positively portrayed and as the relationships of Mattie with Eva Turner, of Mattie with Etta Mae, of Ciel with Mattie, of Kiswana with her mother, and of Lorraine with Theresa show they form

very important relationships with one another whether it is as friends, lovers or mother and daughter. What becomes clear is that feminist critics and artists writing in the late Seventies and early Eighties are challenging patriarchal norms and institutions including heterosexuality and are trying to forge a “woman-identified” tradition – one of the most important ways they do so is by defining and expanding the scope of lesbianism. It is also interesting to note the similarities in Rich’s, Smith’s and Naylor’s views which also reveal the intersection between the black and white feminist criticisms as proposed by another Black feminist critic Deborah E. McDowell in her essay “New Directions for Black Feminist Criticism” (1980). Exhorting Black feminist critics to offer a definition of lesbianism which is not “vacuous”, McDowell urges them “to determine the extent to which their criticism intersects with that of white feminist critics”.

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## 6. Predicament of Women in Jhumpa Lahiri's "A Temporary Matter" and "Mrs.Sen's"

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Jhumpa Lahiri's *Interpreter of Maladies* is a collection of short stories focusing on the immigrant lives of Indians and Indian-Americans whose disconnected Indian identity entails a conflict. The present paper focuses on two short stories, "A Temporary Matter" and "Mrs.Sen's", wherein the prevalent desertedness and the psychic condition of women is examined in the immigrant world and cultural crisis in the process of making a life in the New World. The agony and suffering from still-born child of Shoba creates a gap in Shoba's and Shukumar's life and consequently her indulgence in creating a new space for herself by straining her marriage in the first story "A Temporary Matter" whereas in "Mrs.Sen's", the protagonist's struggle to survive in the immigrant world leaving her 'home' for her marriage finds desolated and confused with the demands and practices to make herself fit into the Dreamland of many. The predicament of immigrant women irrespective of their cultural and geographical background is examined.

"A Temporary Matter" is a story of second generation Indian couple Shoba and Shukumar whose marriage is on the verge of rocks. The distance in the couple is the result of losing their still-born child. The loss of their still-born child creates a vacuum more in Shoba's life than that of Shukumar. She as a woman of endurance, celebrating life with all attempts in a new land has turned to be a woman of emotionless, painful being living a life with no spirits, expectations and attempts in making her world. The story is a third-person narrative and the whole story runs about the invisible agony and suffering of Shoba and the narrator makes its remarkable by peeping into her erstwhile world where her attempts to assimilate into the new world looked successful till she experiences the pain of losing her still-born child with no one around. Thus, the cultural roots pull her back and the resistance comes to the fore in her life. The resistance towards leading as a 'successful immigrant' and assimilating herself into the eternal relationship in marriage with Shukumar is equally depicted at various instances. The agony of both the couple comes into picture when they start 'exchange of confessions' (18) and thus disclose the pain in each other's heart. Throughout the story, it is Shoba who is more in the centre of action as she gets a deep sense of shock of being 'alone' and 'homeless' at the time of the labor when Shukumar leaves for Baltimore for an academic conference.

Jhumpa Lahiri pens down the muted anguish of Shoba in a skillful way by comparing the two periods in her life i.e pre-delivery and post-delivery status. The couple who started living in an apartment for three years found a drastic and dramatic change in their lives after the still-born child's incident. Shoba and Shukumar as a second generation Indians were found successfully assimilated in the new world unlike the first generation immigrants in other stories in the book. However, the assimilation proves to be only at social and economical level as they could not get back to their normal state after the incident. Shoba, who has been doing lot of planning for her to-be born child and emotionally attached for the arrival was shattered after the incident of still-born baby delivery. The predicament and struggle in the story is more of emotion as both of them are known to be educated, financially stable and still attached to the traditions and customs of their homeland or to say an ancestral land. Her losing child was un-warning to her and could not take it while many simple and minute things in their new world are always intimated. "It's good [...] to warn us." (1) Having carried un-bearable from the unexpected incident in her life Shoba behaves in an eccentric way in comparison to her past-life. She starts feeling 'homeless' in her own house and spends more outside as she works as a proof-reader. She becomes a woman "she'd once claimed she would never resemble." (1) The story is the juxtaposition of the roles of husband and wife after the incident as Shukumar stays at home for completion of his research and Shobha works as a proof-reader. Her indifference to life is shown in various ways as neglecting her husband, avoiding being together, and

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negligence to things and reluctant feeling to her home, kitchen, food, dressing and even to celebrations in her life.

Shoba conceded [...] more for her own benefit than Shukumar's. (1)

Shoba and Shukumar hadn't celebrated Christmas that year (2)

But now she treated the house as if it were a hotel. (6)

But now, Shoba [...] eat a bowl of cereal for her dinner. (8)

Her carelessness towards life as she said, "It doesn't matter," (11) was compared to her keenness to the minute things of the daily chores in the past by Shukumar. "He liked that Shoba was different. It astonished him, her capacity to think ahead." (6) Shoba, who is depicted as a typical immigrant is a kind of a person to prepare for surprises, good and bad. Later it reflects the predicament of loneliness that the immigrants face in the new land. The shock and pain of losing a baby would have been differently experienced in India where family, friends and relatives come to one's help in loss thereby lessening the burden. This is not the case in the new land, where "all the friends and the friends of friends [...] now systematically avoided." (9) The absence of Shukumar at that undesired moment of labour is haunting her more and which makes her experience the unbearable pain even in her marital relationship. "When he mentioned the baby's death, she looked up [...] and said, "But you weren't even there." Priyanka Sharma remarks on the relationship as "The marriage bond which is still considered sacrosanct in India is slithering down under pressure of new needs under a different background." (Sharma 5) The forced togetherness due to power-cut for eight consecutive nights to repair damage done makes them reveal their untold truths, fears and thoughts by conversing, confessing in unmasking themselves. During the process of spending their powerless nights, the revelation of their past relationship is unveiled and it is observed that the death of the first-born baby is a shock and blow to both the parents and this unhealed grief is aggravated by alienating and deceiving each other. It is in this muted anguish, Shobha chooses to stay away for work from home while Shukumar withdraws himself from the outside world and seldom leaves the house. Jhumpa Lahiri interprets Shobha's sufferings; struggle in a poignant way, her self-made identity is made evident in her decision to move into a new apartment as she wants "some time alone" (21) Though Shukumar gets prepared to face this state in their marriage, it is in this isolation, they both feel that they are missing something very important to their identities. In search of solace, Shukumar finally reveals the grieving mother that the baby is a boy. He does not tell her before as she wants the sex of the baby to be a 'mystery' (21) and now with the revealed truth they "wept together, for the things they now knew." (22) The title, "A Temporary Matter" in a way is not only the power cuts but also the distances in a relationship and thus the Indian-institution of marriage re-built between the two with a quest for assertion of identity, meaningfulness both in their lives.

"Mrs.Sen's", another story of an emigrant Bengali house wife is exposed through the narrative's point of view i.e Eliot, a little one stays for a few hours of the day. The story depicts the struggle of an Indian wife her difficulties of being away from her country, culture and family. Her consistent efforts to cope up with the demands of the New World in which they live have been poignantly portrayed. Throughout the story Mrs.Sen's crisis for her identity desire for her 'home' is depicted in her words and actions. Her loneliness and crave for 'home' is constantly mentioned in her expressions and her routine. The conflict she undergoes in accepting the new world's traditions and trends. The struggle to be attached to her cultural roots always reflected in her efforts of creating a mini-India in her house. Mrs.Sen's in her thirties is not owned her name in the story is an obedient and responsible wife who came all along from India to live with her husband. She is similar to Shoba has 'muted anguish' for leaving her 'home', which she never directly expresses to her husband Mr.Sen. Mr.Sen is a Mathematics professor in the university expects her wife to get assimilated in the new world by ways of living and learning driving on her own. Mrs.Sen's finds it difficult to get 'rooted' in the new home for Mrs.Sen 'home' is always India. It is observed Bharathi Mukherjee's

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remarks in *Massachusetts Review*, “When an Asian man comes to America for economic transformation and brings a wife who winds up being psychologically changed.” (Mukherjee 82) Mrs. Sen falls in the similar category of Indian wives who tries to find and make imaginary homelands from the unforgettable memories of their past.

Mrs. Sen lives in “past-present” as Homi Bhabha explains in his essay *The Location of Culture* ‘the past-present’ becomes the part of necessary not the nostalgia of living.’ (Baba 936) Her urge to recreate her ‘home’ in the dreamland is depicted in various ways i.e the Indian way of keeping her apartment, cooking Indian dishes and brooding over her identity and sharing her grief and unsaid fears to the little companion who comes to spend evenings, Eliot. Mrs. Sen, who left her large family, friends and relatives in India and ends up futile in finding her home in suburban America, Her trials and struggle to keep the Indian traditions, customs and practices in stack is depicted in a poignant way. This poignant ways are either failed or disappointed in her attempts in making dreamland as her ‘home’. The story revolves around her sense of alien in America as she “did not know how to drive.” (111) Because of her inability to drive car, she tried to explore a job like ‘Baby Sitting’ in her house, which doesn’t require driving car. But, when Eliot’s mother visits for the first time to Mrs. Sen’s house, she enquires and comes to know that she did not know driving as unusual thing in America. Mrs. Sen’s reply displays her knots to her ‘home’ as she says: “Yes, I am learning,” [...] “But I am a slow student. At home, you know, we have a driver.” (113) She also express her disappointment and ‘emptiness’ in her new life when she says that “Everything is there” (113) in India. Though she takes up the job of ‘Baby Sitting’ to Eliot in her house, she always find solace and rather escape into her ‘world of home’ by indulging herself busy in cooking especially fish for both of them. Her use of artifacts such as chopping blade and the manner she chops the vegetables, rewinding her days in India to Eliot is imperative of the fact of her struggle in her assimilation into the new world. She displays her frustration of being alone and her disdain to get used to the new circumstances. She expresses her feelings to Eliot about her days with people around in Calcutta for simple reason of celebration and the way she is left alone for the whole day in the alien land. “It is impossible to fall asleep those nights, listening to their shatter.” “Here, in this place where Mr. Sen has brought me, I cannot sometimes sleep in so much silence.” (115) Her fear and pain of leaving her place and living in Vacuum, the grief and the joy is explicit in her conversation with Eliot at her new home. “Eliot, if I began to scream right now at the top of my lungs, would someone come?” “At home that is all you have to do. Not everybody has a telephone. But just raise your voice a bit, or express grief or joy of any kind, and one whole neighbourhood and half of another has come to share the news, to help with arrangements.” (116) Throughout her conversation with Eliot and her mother she always means India as her ‘home’ than America, the place where she takes her livelihood. [...] Eliot understood that when Mrs. Sen said home, she meant India, not the apartment where she sat chopping vegetables. (116) Her interest in keeping her Indian identity is remarkable from the ways she dresses and makes her marital status disclosed by Indian way unlike the western style. Her pride of taking Indian identity is clear when she disapproves the western ways. “he could see the perfectly centered part in her braided hair, which was shaded with crushed vermilion [...] solemnly applying [...] a fresh stroke of scarlet powder [...]. “I must wear the powder every day,” she explained when Eliot asked her what it was for, “for the rest of the days that I am married.” “Like a wedding ring, [...]” “[...] exactly like a wedding ring, only with no fear of losing it in this dish water.” (117) They didn’t hold hands or put their arms around each other’s waists. (130) Her yearning to get back to her place Calcutta and her fearful truth do not make it possible. Her painful loneliness is subtly manifest in all her conversations with Eliot.

Mrs. Sen tells Eliot she doesn’t feel it right [...] alone in the apartment (119) because she is afraid. Her only hope for learning driving is ironically stated in her words as she says “What do you think Eliot? Will things improve?” She enquires with Eliot whether ‘everything’ will improve once she receives her license. Eliot suggests, “You could go anywhere.” Then she immediately finds “could I drive all the way to Calcutta? How long would that take, Eliot? Ten thousand miles, at fifty

miles per hour?”(119) Her yearning for her home makes her ‘continuously distracted’ (120) from her family and when she indulges herself as an escape from the ‘present to the past’ by cooking fish herself. The anguish of living alone and missing her ‘home’ is often filled in with the voices of her family, kith and kin’s voices which she tapes at the time of her leaving India. Her missing of family is as unexplainable as she reveals that she has never expected to live away from ‘home’ at any point of her life. “The thought never occurred [...]” (122) the predicament of being alone is often expressed as [...] very frustrating. (123) and she “was without knowing that one day [...] would be so far.”(123) from her world. The unhappy and insipid life that she leads is made explicit in her words: “They think I live the life of a queen, [...]” “They think I press buttons and the house is clean. They think I live in a palace.” (125) “I hate it. I hate [...]. I won’t go on.” (131) Her muted anguish is observed only by the little Eliot as “he’s heard her crying.” (135). The greater tragedy is that she cannot share nor relate her traumatic experiences of dislocation of self in the new world to no one except to the little Eliot.

Both “A Temporary Matter” and “Mrs.Sen’s” carry a narrative focus on the female protagonists. Their struggle as lonely individuals and their inability to face the turmoil are resulted in hushed pains. However, “A Temporary Matter” and “Mrs.Sen’s” have an open ending where the readers are left to their imagination. In both the stories the protagonists are found busted out in cry at the end: They wept together, for the things they now knew. (22) (A Temporary Matter) Eliot, [...] he’d heard her crying. (135) (Mrs.Sen’s)

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## 7. Sharon Butala's *The Perfection of the Morning* and Arun Joshi's *The Strange Case of Billy Biswas: A Transnational Eco Perspective*

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The present study has been carried out with the main objective of exploring how far an ecocritical perspective illuminates relationship between humans and the landscape across a transnational perspective. Early theories in literary studies focus on issues of class, race, gender, region as important criteria of critical analysis. The late twentieth century has woken up to a new threat: ecological disaster. Ecocriticism is the result of this new consciousness, that very soon, there will be nothing beautiful in nature to discourse about, unless we are careful. The presence of a bond, a relation between the human and the non human generally forms the ecocritical basis of a text. Ecocriticism pleads for a better understanding of nature, and it both interprets and represents the natural world. Ecocriticism is a term derived from Greek oikos and kritis. "Oikos" means "household," a nexus of humans, nature and the spirit. "Kritis" means judge, "the arbiter of taste who wants the house kept in good order" (Howarth 163).

David Mazel declares in *The Ecocriticism Reader* that ecocriticism is the analysis of literature as though nature mattered the most in human lives: "Our reading of environmental literature should help us realize that the concerns are not exclusively of the order of —Shall these trees be cut? or Shall this river be dammed? —important as such questions are—but also of the order of —What has counted as the environment, and what may count? Who marks off the conceptual boundaries, and under what authority, and for what reasons? Have those boundaries and that authority been contested, and if so, by whom? With what success, and by virtue of what strategies of resistance? (143)."

Reviving the romantic sensibility in poetry, William Wordsworth chose wild nature as the backdrop of his poems. One could say that it was he who pioneered —nature writing. In Wordsworth, the self communes with nature. And against this background of ecophilosophy, two novels one Canadian and one Indian have been chosen for transnational ecocritical discourse. Although both these novels have been written by writers who are located in different locales they seem to advocate the same philosophy as of Wordsworth, Emerson, Thoreau etc., of looking at nature to be a part of our lives. For a very long time, nature was not given its due consideration. Man's voracious urge to conquer nature is a known fact. He also feels that he is superior to other forms that inhabit this biosphere. Land has come to denote power, making man more powerful. However, man has always longed for reunion with nature, a return to his older, more natural self of nurturer rather than possessor. The concept of wilderness and ecological importance can be proved with such transnational study that such concepts do not change with time, location or through cultural transformations over nations. The spiritual isolation is uniquely found in the novels of both Arun Joshi and Sharon Butala which focus upon the sense of man's unification of identity with the manifestation of the living force of Nature.

Arun Joshi's *The Strange Case of Billy Biswas* is a powerful record of the sophisticated, complex modern culture which is highly stressful and provides an affirmation of return to nature as the best option available for human beings if real peace and affinity is to be established. Fritjof Capra explains the concept of interdependence in the context of ecosystem: 'All members of an ecological community are interconnected in a vast and intricate network of relationships, the web of life. They derive their essential properties and in fact, their very existence from their relationships to other things. Interdependence--

the mutual dependence of all life processes on one another—is the nature of all ecological relationships. The behaviour of every living member of the ecosystem depends on the behaviour of many others. The success of the whole community depends on the success of individual members, while the success of each member depends on the success of the community as a whole (290).’

Arun Joshi has created Billy Biswas as a hero who longs intensively to locate his real self not in the matrix of westernized culture but in the most innocent, most native primitive environment and lifestyle. The current social and cultural conditions act within the framework of ever speeding development and changes erode the possibility of struggling for self-reflection. Billy is man of nature and struggles so much that it affects his life adversely. Ecology movements are political movements for a non-violent world order in which nature is conserved or conserving the options for survival. Ecological restructuring is required at the level of world view. The survival of humanity is threatened and justice is violated in the name of modernity and urbanization. Eco system sustains us and it sustains one and all. The profound intellectuality and obsession of Billy is known to Romi, the narrator and his Swedish girlfriend, Tuula Lindgren. Biswas rejects the post-Independence pseudo-Western values. Billy Bimal Biswas, the only son of a Supreme Court judge is sent to America to study engineering. On his arrival in New York, he takes up his lodging in the outskirts of Harlem famous for slums because America is too much civilized for him. He abandons his study of engineering in favour of Anthropology and is already half-way through his doctoral work in that subject. That is where he meets Romi, the narrator, with whom he shares his lodging and forms a thick friendship. The death of the narrator’s father compels him to return to India. After finishing his Ph.D. he went back to India and became a lecturer at the University of Delhi. Despite such an affluent background, he felt himself to be a misfit in the so-called civilised society and he became interested in exploring the inwardness of life. He is married to a pretty aristocratic, convent-educated girl named Meena. It is Meena’s lack of understanding that out of despair and agony, Billy seduces Rima Kaul, a girl related to Meena. His passions lead him astray and his romance with Rima Kaul is degraded into seduction. A look inward into his character gives the impression that he is fond of the primitive world. Billy's case has been strange from his very childhood. When he was only fourteen he went to Bhubaneshwar and visited Konark. His inner urge to live like a primitive man in a primitive world is made evident at fourteen years. He says that he had received intimations of his primitive self from the moment he emerged from the railway station: “It was as though a slumbering part of me had suddenly come awake” (Joshi 89). He admits that at that time he could not analyse his feelings properly: “I could not figure out what excited or troubled me unless it was a sudden interest in my own identity. Who was I? Where had I come from? Where was I going?” (Joshi 89).

Nature always was and is a source of energy and life spirit and has supported the existence of human race. Ecology addresses a quantifiable relation between organisms and non-organismic world, but also acknowledges the unquantifiable spirit in the spiritual dimension. *He leaves the smart society because he finds his affirmation of the essence of human existence in the primitive life and makes a concerted effort to join an other world away from this civilization (Dwivedi, V 57).* Nature as Prakriti is full of activity and diversity. Nature symbols emerge in every realm of nature and Prakriti lives in every stone or tree, animal and is inturn identified with them.

Indian physicist and environmental activist Vandana Shiva argues for the recovery of the feminine principle—Prakriti—to counter the destructive effects of the Western model of development, which she calls maldevelopment. She defines Prakriti as “the feminine principle as the basis for development which conserves and is ecological. For Billy, Bilasia, the tribal chief’s niece is Prakriti (nature) and he is Purush (male) and the cosmic whole can be experienced in their union. Bilasia symbolizes the life spirit in woman, representing the feminine principle of the Sankhya

system. When one remains in contact with nature, one can get rid of most of the problems in life. Bilasia is the untapped source of psychic energy. She represents the primitive culture and is an embodiment of the primal and invulnerable force which had existed since ages.

Billy has come to an understanding of an ecological immortality. Billy had saved the life of his niece by giving her antibiotics on his earlier visit. He meets his niece Bilasia who had now grown into an untamed village beauty. When he leaves for his camp, Dhunia invites him to come next day to watch their dance. He feels that the whole hilly tract calls him to its primitive fold. Billy is attracted into the grip of primitivity ‘the essence of the primitive force’ (103) with a high degree of potential to move away from collective codes of the so-called organized modern society. He gets energized with the capacity to accept a changed system and its inherent challenges. His approaching re-envelopment by nature makes him happy. His unification of the spirit expands to become the whole landscape, as if space itself were its dimensions filling the whole land from horizon to horizon.

Sharon Butala, the Canadian writer who writes in a similar vein in her autobiography *The Perfection of the Morning* searching for self identity in ecophilosophical dimension succeeds in bringing together man and nature. For her nature is a reflection of God and she advocates a return to primordial contact with nature. She is a writer like Joshi who likes “the feeling of being close to the earth,” (Butala 6) and this impulse is retained in both Arun Joshi’s *The Strange Case of Billy Biswas* and Sharon Butala’s *The Perfection of the Morning*. The novel is about Sharon and her life in 1976 when she starts living on the ranch in the extreme Southwest corner of Saskatchewan. She immerses herself in understanding nature in Saskatchewan as she moves from the city of Saskatoon to the ranch.

The landscape, the people the culture of Saskatchewan ranch are unique and the locale has a realistic touch. Butala advocates man’s close kinship with nature as Joshi does and states that man’s well being is possible only within the frame of nature and when he understands the spirit of nature as inseparable from man’s spirit which takes us back to the primitive thought of “the presence of nature as a living entity all around” (Butala 8). The spiritual isolation is uniquely found in her novels which focus upon the sense of man’s unification of identity with the manifestation of the living force of Nature. She searches to examine several aspects of the puzzling, mysterious aspects of landscape through building relationships with animals. She grows into the awareness that there is a possibility of spiritual growth and self-awareness possible to be reached through animals.

She is captivated and enthralled by observing her husband working at the ranch with cattle and observes how *comfortable those men ... seemed, how at ease they were in their work, and how unassuming and casual in their skill with the animals... They laughed, cracked jokes, kidded each other while they worked in the corral or on horseback, roped, or cut cattle* (Butala 4-5). Metaphors of nature portray consistent values of wisdom. But it’s a wonder how man had turned away from the spirit of nature which consistently supports his conscious and thought processes. *What was extraordinary was that I saw clearly, indisputably, finally, that the child, the grass, the trees, the sky above were all woven of the same material, were all parts of the same fabric, which was the fabric of which the Universe is made . . .*” (Butala 18).

Butala is aware of the Creator’s role and his presence in nature. “I turned inward and became hyperaware of my own feelings, both somatic and psychotic” (Butala 14). Nature is an extension of God’s grace on man and man is an extension of God himself. Billy too like Butala tries to search out the real meaning of life in the lap of nature. Billy always makes a search for peace, as he is not satisfied with the urban life. He searches for meaning of life. However, this search is conducted in a very hostile modern atmosphere and he has to pay a heavy price for it. He thinks that his life can be meaningful beneath nature. He urges his friend to let him leave in the tribal life where he can live

unknown and secluded. In a similar dimension, the spiritual unification and contentment is seen on the rural landscape with Butala's understanding of the animals pointing the possibility of peace and knowledge. "Something was happening here that was beyond experience and understanding, but that meant something –something significant" (Butala 27). She observes strange peace and oneness: *On the far side of the hill in that slough-bottom, twenty or so cows stood grazing or lay with their calves beside them peacefully chewing their cuds. In their midst, Peter's saddle horse, reins dragging, browsed lazily too. And far off at the edge of the cluster of cattle, a couple of antelope stood, noses down in the grass ... as if they were all members of the same contented tribe ... In the midst of his animals, ... Peter lay sound asleep.* (Butala 27).

Butala like Joshi's Biswas feels the same kind of grip, the thing which in which our life is strangled the urbanized way of living "Urban life confuses this elemental knowledge, disturbs it in many ways" (Butala 62). The void created in man is in fact healed only when one could identify one's oneness with nature. Like Billy Butala being a woman too experiences first hand experience of being close to nature and points out that "Close proximity to a natural environment being in Nature – alters all of us in ways which remain pretty much unexplored, even undescribed in our culture" (Butala 92). She is confused in the city life like Biswas and feels that urban life doesn't provide food for the soul but rather it distances one from one's identity. "I came from a world where everyone was defined precisely by what he or she did" (Butala 37). The binary of Nature and Nurture is thus the basic category at the crux of all existence. It is not through man's interference with nature but in a spirit of total submission to its greater being that he felt he could attain happiness and realization of God. Like Billy, who is married to Meena and had an affair with Rima, being an anthropologist does feel at home with the urbanized way of life. Similar to this even Butala too feels "In the city, I had an identity, or rather several identities; divorced single parent, career woman, graduate student, future academics" (Butala 25). She represents a person who is much thrown away from the real world into a world of imagination where she once again searches for meaning and identity and comes out with the concept of nature as one which really controls human life and mind and soul. "I believe without a shread of doubt in the existence of this soul, and I believe, too, that there is an archetypal feminine soul, existing in that mythical world, the world of dream time, which we reach at last in dreams and walking visions" (Butala 159).

## Conclusion

Arun Joshi explores the contemporary man's inner crisis of being existent in this world and explores the contemporary man's inner crisis of being isolated from the whole apparatus of convention and ritual of society upholding our glorious cultural ethos. The novel is about 'mystical urge' of Billy Biswas, his metaphysical quest to find rest and peace in the civilized world. He hates the conception of materialism, which makes him restless. Talking about his characters, the centre is occupied by Bilasia – the primitive force and energy which frees him from all frustrations and thus the unification of spirit and nature occupies the primary ecophilosophical concept all through the novel. Talking about Canadians too in particular Butala, one can say loyally that "Without or without the orthodox Christian God at the centre; Canadians move towards a perception of an ordering absolute which may be nothing more than the recognition of matter in, through and with nature" (Mathews 38).

Both the writers thus recognize an organic, interactive connection between humans and the rest of the biosphere. The focus on the destructive impact civilization had on the environment by these writers presents to the readers a dilemma that the growth of civilization destroys the environment, and only finding out the philosophical and spiritual self would enable man to increase his knowledge and stop the destruction which modernization has brought within its fold. This paper thus is an attempt to bring to limelight the fact that cultures and civilizations might vary but age-old philosophical ideals, archetypal ethos remain

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essential and same the worldover and crave for the much needed change in preserving and conserving our environment and personal stability and ethics. The concept of wilderness and ecological importance can be proved with such transnational study that such concepts do not change with time, location nor through cultural transformations over nations.

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## 8. Mother-Daughter Relationship through Diaspora Lenses

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Diaspora is the term often used to describe any population which is considered de-territorialized or transnational that is which has originated in a land other than which it currently resides. Diaspora has been taken from Greek, meaning to disperse. Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin define Diaspora as the voluntary or forcible movement of peoples from their homelands into new regions. Robert Cohen describes Diasporas as the communities of peoples living together in one country who acknowledge that the old country; a nation often buried deep in language, religion, custom or folklore; always has some claim on the loyalty and emotions. Diasporas thus live in one country as community but look across time and space to another. The migrate Diasporas and their descendents experience displacement, fragmentation, marginalization and discontinuity in the cultural discourse of the subject countries.

Living in between condition is very painful and marginalizing for the Diasporas. There is yearning for home to go back to the lost origin and imaginary homelands are created from the fragmentary and partial memories of the homelands. They face a threat to their ethnic and cultural identity. They stand bewildered and confused nostalgic and homesick and show resistance to the discourse of power in various forms. In the following generations these confusions, problems and yearnings become less intense as they get influenced by the culture of that country and also adapt themselves to it. Though the children born to migrant peoples enjoy better settlement and place in that country but their sense of identity is born from living in a Diasporas community influenced by the post migrant history of their parents or grand parents.

Robert Cohen one of the major thinkers of discipline of Diaspora, classifies Diaspora as: 1. Victim Diasporas. 2. Labor Diasporas. 3. Imperial Diasporas. 4. Trade Diasporas. 5. Homeland Diasporas. 6. Cultural Diasporas. The author finds a common element in all forms of Diasporas; these are people who live outside their natal (or imagined natal) territories and recognize that their traditional homelands are reflected deeply in the languages they speak, religion they adopt, and cultures they produce. Each of the categories of Diasporas underline a particular cause of migration usually associated with particular groups of people. So for example, the Africans through their experience of slavery have been noted to be victims of extremely aggressive transmigration policies.

A few thinkers classify the underlined force/purpose for Diaspora as such:

1. Forced migration on account of slavery or indentured labor in the 18<sup>th</sup> or 19<sup>th</sup> century.
2. Voluntary migration to U.S.A., U.K., Germany, France or other European countries for the sake of professional or academic purposes.

The first classified Diasporas consisted of unprivileged and subaltern classes; forced alienation was a one way ticket to a distant Diaspora settlement. As in the days of yore, the return to Homeland was next to impossible due to lack of proper means of transportation, economic deficiency and vast distances so the physical distance became a psychological alienation and the homeland became the sacred icon in the diasporas imagination But the second Diaspora was the result of man's choice and inclination towards the material gains, professional and business interests. The diasporic production of cultural meanings occurs in many areas, such as contemporary music, film, theatre and

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dance, but writing is one of the most interesting and strategic ways in which diaspora might disrupt the binary of local and global and problematize national, racial and ethnic formulations of identity. (Ashcroft 218) Diaspora literature deals with issues like alienation, nostalgia, identity crisis, discrimination etc. It operates in a cultural space haunted by heterogeneity and attempts to reconcile with alien realities. All Diaspora fiction deals with issues related to location, movement crossing border, original/adopted home and identity.

In an interview with Nikhil Padgaonkar for Doordarshan, Edward W. Said reflected on the condition of exile: "I think that if one is an intellectual, one has to exile oneself from what has been given to you, what is customary, and to see it from a point of view that looks at it as if it were something that is provisional and foreign to oneself. That allows for independence—commitment—but independence and a certain kind of detachment". (Said 13) The study of world literature might be the study of the way in which cultures recognize themselves through their projections of 'otherness.' Where, once, the transmission of national traditions was the major theme of a world literature, perhaps we can now suggest that transnational histories of migrants, the colonized or political refugees - these border and frontier conditions - may be the terrains of world literature. (Bhabha 12)

Diaspora Literature involves an idea of a homeland, a place from where the displacement occurs and narratives of harsh journeys undertaken on account of economic compulsions. Basically Diaspora is a minority community living in exile. The Oxford English Dictionary 1989 Edition (second) traces the etymology of the word 'Diaspora' back to its Greek root and to its appearance in the Old Testament (Deut: 28:25) as such it references: God's intentions for the people of Israel to be dispersed across the world. The Oxford English Dictionary here commences with the Judaic History, mentioning only two types of dispersal: The "Jews living dispersed among the gentiles after the captivity" and The Jewish Christians residing outside the Palestine. The dispersal (initially) signifies the location of a fluid human autonomous space involving a complex set of negotiation and exchange between the nostalgia and desire for the Homeland and the making of a new home, adapting to the power, relationships between the minority and majority, being spokes persons for minority rights and their people back home and significantly transacting the Contact Zone - a space changed with the possibility of multiple challenges. However, the 1993 Edition of Shorter Oxford's definition of Diaspora can be found. While still insisting on capitalization of the first letter, 'Diaspora' now also refers to 'anybody of people living outside their traditional homeland. Greek meaning to disperse and signifies a voluntary or forcible movement of the people from the homeland into new regions." (68-69) "Didn't Baldwin say ... that being a Negro was the gate he had to unlock before he could write about anything else? I think being an Asian American must be like that through that bodily gate the alphabets pour in. This is our life in letters." this quotation from Meena Alexander's memoir, *Fault Lines* (1993), identifies several issues important to Asian American literature. In her first sentence, Alexander draws a comparison between African Americans and Asian Americans based on a shared preoccupation with identity, which is figuratively understood in terms of an unlock able gate. This spatial and temporal figure suggests that identity is not only a matter of responding to the question 'Who am I?' but also to a whole series of questions: 'Where am I? When am I?' and 'How did I become what I am? How shall I start to write myself, configure my "I" as Other, image this life I lead, here, now, in America?(Adams,1) It has been said "to be hyphenated is to be American" (Barber 614); however, the hyphen presents many different issues. For Chinese-Americans, what part of a person is Chinese, and what part American? (Adcock, 4) This cultural difference is best exemplified using the theme of mother-daughter relations in the novels of Amy Tan. Tan explores Chinese-American's world, their experiences as immigrants and cultural conflict especially problems between mothers and daughters in her novels She writes stories about Chinese - American women searching for identity and medium to negotiate both their Chinese heritage and dominant American culture; through mother/daughter plots. Each story of Tan shows a typical conflict between the mother and daughter, which is rooted from living in one society and fulfilling the demands of that society, at the same time expectations of another society intrude with cultural demands and obligations. In Amy

Tan's plots the mothers try to put Chinese heritage in the daughters' mind at the same time want them to be English speaking perfect American women but the daughters feel caught between the expectations of dominant American culture (inevitable to accept it) and traditional Chinese culture (their mothers want to put in them).

Amy Tan projects modern Chinese characters with traditions and historical settings of China in her novels. She connects her personal experiences mainly include her mothers and grandmothers' lives and their influence upon her experiences as Chinese –American. Her novels foreground hyphenated Chinese – American experiences which talk about issues of identity crisis. Both novels, *The Kitchen God's Wife* (1991) and *The Bonesetter's Daughter* (2001) show crisis between first generation Chinese immigrant mothers and their American daughters (second generation immigrants). The writer uses story telling technique (Chinese tradition) to build a bond between mother- daughters (American- Chinese Culture). The novels put some light on experiences of displaced existence. Tan treats language not just as a tool to reflect upon the past or to celebrate the present, but as a political means to allow Chinese American women to articulate their silenced lives, their otherwise voiceless positions in this society. (6) Tan brings the mothers' stories to a larger audience. The mothers achieve a political voice because in telling their own stories, they also tell the stories of many displaced Asian women living in dominant American culture. This political voice is significant because dominant culture has traditionally suppressed the voice of the marginalized woman. Marginalized women do not share the values of American dominant culture, and as a result, their stories have not been represented until the emergence of Asian-American voices in literature. Mothers and mother figures appearing in Amy Tan's fiction use oral tradition to find a voice in a culture that displaces them, and they find their voices through the use of folktales and stories from their pasts. Unable to read, write, and communicate in English, the mothers utilize oral tradition in order to share their lives and wisdom; the stories they tell form a complex web of language that empowers these women in two ways. First, storytelling enables the mothers to find a voice with which they express themselves, and the daughters' acknowledgement of this voice contributes to its value and strength. Second, storytelling allows the mothers to share their lives with their daughters and in doing so the mothers teach their daughters to be active agents in their own lives. (Conrad, 88)

*The Kitchen God's Wife* (1991) and *The Bonesetter's Daughter* (2001) both novels arise issues like immigrant experiences, cultural as well as identity crisis between immigrant mothers and their American born daughters. In *The Kitchen God's Wife*, Winnie Louie does not understand her daughter's American ways. Winnie practices speaking English phrases, so her daughter will not think she is stupid or embarrassing. In most of the novels of Amy Tan mothers struggle to adopt American ways and try to fit in American culture but they can not become as American as their daughters. Moreover, they prefer Chinese customs, traditions, and ways of thinking over American ways. Immigrated mothers Speak in a double voice and live in a bicultural world characterize their dual cultural dilemma. While striving to maintain a relationship with their Chinese immigrant parents, the Chinese American daughters also live in a society where one is expected to speak in a "standard" form of English and to "succeed" in the middle class Euro-American way. (3) The cultural distance between immigrant mothers and American-born daughters becomes resolved not through the characters' confrontation with contrasting cultural values but through their recognition that a matrilineal heritage transcends the generation gap caused by the daughters' integration into American culture. (236)

Hyphenated experiences such as the Chinese-American experience always bring issues of identity to the fore. *The Kitchen God's Wife* novel tells the story of mother (Winnie) and daughter (Pearl). In the novel Pearl hesitates to tell her mother about her disease. They do not share their personal matters with their mothers because they believe they would not understand due to cultural and generational differences. *The Kitchen God's Wife* is very much about the issues that arise out of



the immigrant experience and the generation gap between immigrants and their children. This struggle is mostly illustrated through the character of Pearl, who is American born but is raised in a household with Chinese customs and traditions always coming into play. It is difficult for someone like her to live the space between being fully American and fully Chinese. It seems that she has tried to abandon her Chinese heritage and tries to avoid it at all costs; she does not want to go "home," and she feels a distance from her mother. But the problem is solved when her mother reveals her story. Winnie's story describes her first marriage to an abusive misogynist and how she takes action in her own life to escape the marriage. She is motivated to tell this story by her desire to disclose a shameful secret. Clearly, the story's theme centers around taking control of one's circumstances, and Pearl's response to the story is no surprise, she discloses her own secret about having multiple sclerosis and decides to fight the circumstances, taking a cue from her mother's strength (17). Beyond this conflict Tan's novels end with an optimistic note that the daughters learn to accept both their mothers' Chinese culture and dominant American culture as part of a hyphenated Chinese – American identity.

The novel *The Bonesetter's Daughter* revolves around the story of Ruth, (grand daughter), Luling (daughter) and Bao Bomu. Ruth has been given a few pages written by her mother and she wants to translate them. Through the process of translation the life of her mother and grand mother reveals before her. She understands them better through write ups of her mother and stories told by her mother. In the *Bonesetter's Daughter* the gradual acquisition by the daughter figure of an ability to tell her story in her own terms in her own language and according to the writing tradition in which she feels most at home, is contingent on her learning to understand her mother. To this end, Ruth must learn about her mother's previous life in a culture practically unknown to her but also obtain a measure for her own distance from the culture. (New York 2007) With the help of an aunt, Ruth can easily construct these translations. Indeed as the aunt sounds out the originals, acquire additional meaning. Thus the translation provides not only a record of past events but marks the beginning of Ruth's reintroduction to the language she failed to learn when she was younger. The overall accuracy of his translations confirms Mr. Tang's authority as a mediator between the Chinese mother and her far more American than Chinese daughter.

As the daughters gradually come to accept their own hyphenated identities in the process of remembering or rewriting their mothers stories the novels suspend any hard and fast distinctions between western and Eastern traditions of thinking Western and Eastern conceptions of truth Western and Eastern literacy's. Indeed the distinctions between the different cultural backgrounds of the narrator protagonists blur. Their narratives, although conceived in English and containing only translations of Chinese words and only descriptions of Chinese ideographs, turnout to be truly hybrid expressions of their hybrid personae.

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## 9. An Eco-Critical Evaluation of John Steinbeck's *The Winter of Discontent*

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John Steinbeck is well known for his ecological concerns, a thing which is clearly traced in *Winter in Discontent*. Throughout his life, Steinbeck was a friend of the environment and a supporter of the deep ecology movement. His interest in ecology is emphasized by several critics like Jeffrey Schultz and Luchen Li (2005) Petr Kopecký (2006), and Mark Andrew White (2006). Although Steinbeck's ecological concerns are so acknowledged by critics that he is sometimes called an "ecological prophet" (Simmonds 323), his ecological thought in *Winter of Discontent* has been almost ignored by the same critics. Even in a study like *Steinbeck and the Environment: Interdisciplinary Approaches* (1997) by Susan F. Beegel, Susan Shillinglaw, and Wesley N. Tiffney, Jr. which is dedicated to the representation of the environment in Steinbeck's works, only few pages are given to the analysis of the whaling industry in *Winter in Discontent*.

Not only does the present paper seek to highlight those aspects of postmodernism and ecology which have been ignored by critics, but also to find a link that connects these aspects of postmodernism in *Winter of Discontent* with the representation of ecology in the text, bringing to light Steinbeck's ecocentric vision in a postmodern anthropocentric world. Moreover, the spread of capitalism and consumerism, aided by the rapid development in technology, weighed heavily on the environment. The exploitation of the physical environment as well as the disintegration and alienation of the postmodern man in the social environment highlight Steinbeck's ecocentric vision which represents a hope in a world of despair. As the paper demonstrates through the lens of ecocriticism, in *Winter of Discontent*, Steinbeck creates an ecological community in which connectedness with nature becomes a substitute for the loss of identity, lack of subjectivity, and the absence of morality in the postmodern world. The paper analyzes Steinbeck's novel eco-critically in order to show the role of nature in solving the postmodern man's predicament. As the paper demonstrates, nature in the novel has a dynamic role in the protagonist's search for connectedness. Set in the early 1960s in New Baytown, a small New England town, *Winter of Discontent* tells the story of Ethan Allen Hawley, a former member of Long Island's aristocratic class, who cannot cope up with a rapidly changing world.

Reading Steinbeck's *Winter of Discontent*, one finds him/herself facing a typical postmodern human entity suffering from alienation, moral disintegration and loss of identity. However, throughout the novel, the same reader finds that it turns over to introduce him/her to a notion of connectedness that Steinbeck is keen to portray. This time, the relationship is not drawn between humans, but between a human, on one hand, and nature as a domineering and powerful agent, on the other. It is the aim of the research to show through the context as much as the content that *Winter of Discontent* has a new reading that rests on proving that the implications of both postmodernism and ecocriticism in the novel evolve from each other and that they then turn to create one literary amalgamation endowed with a wonderful artistic expression portrayed by 'Green' Steinbeck.

Ecocriticism is an interdisciplinary approach that is based on reading nature, with all its forms, in literary works since it focuses on "literary (and artistic) expression of human experience primarily in a natural and consequently in a culturally shaped world" (Cohen 10 ). Ecocriticism is a

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method of reading works of art in a way that puts all environmental as well as natural elements into deep consideration. Here, it is important to bring into the same context Steinbeck's *Winter of Discontent*, a novel that rests on a challenging confrontation between idealism on one hand, and moral disintegration, on the other, resulting in a submission to the latter. However, it ends in an implication of a hopeful return to morality and ethics through getting from nature the strength and solidity of a stone, and the cleansing and purity of water.

In *Winter of Discontent*, nature is artistically represented to involve all the elements of the environmental milieu that Ethan constructs for himself, a milieu in which are listed the places, and other components that Ethan combines to form a sort of alternative community. Within the framework of an ecologically oriented perspective, nature, with its components, becomes a companion defying by this the stereotypical representation of nature as a mute non-human background. The ecological awareness that draws the reader with it along many patterns in the novel is most elaborately expressed within a panoramic representation of the place. Place, as a notion, is essentially traced in Steinbeck's *Winter of Discontent* since it acts like a literary knot around which three different threads are spun. These threads are nature, society and the individual. In other words, it is the place that enables one to look deeply into an individual amid a certain social context, on one hand, and nature, on the other. In this respect, Lawrence Buell proposes that "the concept of place also gestures in at least three directions at once- toward environmental materiality, toward social perception of construction, and toward individual affect or bond-makes it an additionally rich and tangled arena for environmental criticism" (63). Accordingly, nature in the novel is not a mere background against which the main actions of the novel take place. In contrast, nature here becomes a character whose role is clear in the life of the protagonist, shaping his character and giving him the sense of satisfaction he needs and lacks at the same time. This notion of place involves one individual i.e. Ethan, and two place versions i.e. his 'Place,' which relates the individual to nature, and the grocery store, that links the individual to the society. Therefore, this central position place occupies in Steinbeck's *Winter* varies to incorporate many connotations for the main character of the novel.

Ethan's Place is the point where the individual Ethan intersects with nature. Ethan finds himself resorting to a certain place that he does not know a name for but "the Place." This Place is a sort of old harbor that Ethan used to visit long ago when he was still a boy belonging to a rich family. It lies on the edge of the silted and sanded up Old Harbor, right where the Hawley dock had been, the stone foundation is still there .... That is my Place" (*Winter* 43). Actually, it is more interesting than shocking to know that whenever Ethan is to make a great decision concerning his life, he goes to his 'Place,' which is a part of nature. Before he went into service, before he married, and while his wife was having their first baby, Ethan used to spend the night there. In fact, he is conscious of this effect his Place has on him. He says: "I knew I had to sit there. It's big changes take me there—big changes" (44). Again, it is to be noted that during his morally transitional period in which he submits to the surrounding materialistic demands, he does not visit his Place; for example, he does not go there before taking the decision of robbing the bank or asking his closest friend to sell his meadow, as if he feels shy of the postmodern self he has developed.

As a result, linking himself tightly to such a place, Ethan finds a kind of refuge and it is in this linking that one easily perceives a psychological defense mechanism through which Ethan is fighting back. In this regard, it is the 'Place' that serves Ethan specifically because in it he implants himself within a natural setting far away from the social space that works on suffocating him. Steinbeck here thus proposes that "the cultivation of an attitude of respect for nature is a necessary aspect of human psychological maturity and self-realization. It is at this place that a perfect fusion occurs between what lies outside, represented in the natural element, and what is buried deep inside i.e. Ethan's American idealism. As a result, Ethan has developed an internal relationship with this place that provides him with the sense of self-satisfaction he seeks since "on each visit he reconstructs Old Harbor for his mind's pleasure" (*Winter* 47). He expresses his relationship to this place as a need for

anybody to accommodate. He says: "I wondered whether all men have a Place, or need a Place, or want one and have none. Sometimes I've seen a look in eyes, a frenzied animal look as of need for a quiet, secret place where soul-shivers can abate, where a man is one and can take stock of it" (44). Here, there is a direct reference to the fragmentation of identity that postmodernism implies. This is a fragmentation that necessitates everybody to have a separate place for him/herself only, but not everybody succeeds in having one. The snake or serpent figure that seems to be carved on the stone holds double meanings. On one hand, it acts as a guard that keeps the past intact and alive since snakes, scorpions and suchlike creatures that in real life are dangerous and to be avoided acquiring beneficial, magical properties as images. On the other hand, it still represents the evil nature embedded in the very nature of man against the backdrop of postmodernism.

Ecocritically speaking, *Winter of Discontent* is centered around Ethan who undergoes a journey towards temporal, spatial and moral reinhabitation. The term 'reinhabitation' is basically an ecologically-oriented term defined by Peter Berg and Raymond F. Dasmann as "learning to live-in-place in an area that has been disrupted and injured through past exploitation" (217). Ethan is obliged to go through a kind of temporal 'reinhabitation' with a postmodern era that forces him to undergo a moral metamorphosis from idealism to disintegration. He imprisons himself in the only thing that could keep him alive i.e. his past, from which he springs out in a kind of fake temporal reinhabitation when he tries to take over and internalize the new morals of the postmodern age. However, the true temporal reinhabitation occurs when he is able, at the end of the novel, to make a compromise between his social milieu of postmodern values and his ethical heritage. Ethan is now able to face his present and overcome his socially-oriented moral disintegration. He is deeply involved in and psychologically saturated with his natural-textualized sea Place in a kind of spatial reinhabitation that involves becoming native to a place through becoming aware of the particular ecological relationships that operate within and around it. He quits all the other places which are mere geographical space-designed entities toward locating himself within a place that occupies him to the extent that when he wants to die, he goes there to dissolve with its natural components since he is one of them. Here, it is Steinbeck trying to assert the ecologically-oriented fact that the world is an intrinsically dynamic, interconnected web of relations in which there are no absolutely discrete entities and no absolute dividing lines between the living and the nonliving. These two kinds of reinhabitation are linked to a third one which lies in Ethan's moral legacy epitomized in the talisman he receives from his aunt. This talisman is an inherited token of a familial history. However, it is not a ready-made living pattern catalogue. It stimulates in its holder a sort of self-projection that makes him/her contemplate his/her life thoroughly. In a word, Ethan achieves reinhabitation on the temporal, spatial and moral levels through knotting together his strong sense of the past, his sense of the place, and his ethical sense of familial legacy.

Although the language in *Winter of Discontent* is definitely not that 'green language' of the Romantic poets whose aim was to praise nature in all its shapes, the language here is still highly ecologically indicative. Ethan frequently uses words referring to elements of nature to reflect upon his ideas and thoughts. The title itself is an example of how Steinbeck is careful to draw a relationship between the natural, symbolized in 'winter' with all its implications that allude to the death of nature in winter, and the human world, symbolized in the abstract noun 'discontent.' Regardless of the fact that this title is borrowed from Shakespeare's play *Richard III*, the words in the title, read ecocritically, acquire extra importance since they clearly develop a structural link between nature, on one hand, and human psyche, on the other hand. As a result, the title of the novel throws shadows on the title of the present paper itself which proposes an evolving relationship between ecocriticism which introduces a way out through creating connectedness with nature. Actually, Ethan echoes Steinbeck himself when he says, "I wished I could stay to see the sun rise straight out from the Place" (*Winter* 47). Being a symbol of a new life and new hope, the sun rising denotes the resurrection of the moral code that has long been suppressed under the pressure of postmodernism only within the framework of nature, symbolized in the 'Place' as a hostess.

Another thread that unties Steinbeck's ecological vision is the open ending of *Winter of Discontent* that can be variously interpreted within a postmodern context, but is much positively understood if its postmodern core is spun with an ecological thread that holds the whole novel together. This open ending represents in part Steinbeck's attack on anthropocentrism by creating the super powerful cultured man with an inseparable sense of loss only unraveled when he comes into direct contact with nature.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, Steinbeck's *Winter of Discontent* proves that Steinbeck is a green writer who has an ecocentric vision in which man is no longer the center around which all the other organisms and objects revolve. In short, it is only through a postmodern ecocritical reading of Steinbeck's *Winter of Discontent* that one could easily identify Steinbeck's green philosophy that holds, within a monolithic outlook, a symbiotic relationship between nature and man through the sense of place that is endowed with temporal, spatial and moral dimensions. Such a sense is developed along the novel to embrace a sort of ecological ethical commitment toward nature as a place. Wrapping together the interdisciplinary nature of ecocriticism and the general philosophical rubrics of postmodernism, one finds that they are not only tightly related, but they also evolve out of each other.

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## 10. Intersection of Race, Religion and Gender in Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*

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### Introduction

Toni Morrison is an accomplished writer. She is the winner of Nobel and Pulitzer prizes. Morrison has left an enduring mark on American culture with her novels. Her prominent books such as *Beloved* and *The Bluest Eye* are normally assigned to high school and college students. Reading her novels American public has taken a note of Toni Morrison's views on race, gender and religion. Excerpts from interviews Morrison has given—some of which are featured in the compilation *Conversations with Toni Morrison*—reveal her smartness, allure and views on a number of social concerns. Nobel Laureate Toni Morrison is a much-read and much-loved author -- but her books are often hard to understand. With conversational tone, solicitous, and chock-full of eureka's in her novels; Toni Morrison has distinguished herself as an author, editor, and critic who has transformed the American literary setting with her charisma in the African - American literary institution. When she won the Nobel Prize in Literature (1993), the Swedish Academy referred to her as one, "*who, in novels characterized by visionary force and poetic import, gives life to an essential aspect of American reality.*" Indeed, in her Nobel lecture, delivered on 7 December 1993 in Stockholm, she impressively demonstrated that the visionary force and poetic import of her novels reflect her worldview and understanding of how language shapes human reality. She says, "*Writing was ... the most extraordinary way of thinking and feeling. It became the one thing I was doing that I had absolutely no intention of living without.*" Through her own use of the spoken and written word, she has created new spaces for readers to bring both their mind's eye and their intellect to the complex cultural, political, social, and historical issues of our time. Moreover, through her work as an editor and novelist, she has made it possible for the texts of both African - American and feminist writers to restructure the forms of what we call American literature. Although her novels typically concentrate on black women, Morrison does not identify her works as feminist.

Toni Morrison is the author of Ten novels, *The Bluest Eye* (1970), *Sula* (1973), *Song of Solomon* (1977), *Tar Baby* (1981), *Beloved* (1987) and *Jazz* (1992). *Paradise* (1997) *Love* (2003) *A Mercy* (2008) *Home* (2012). Through her novels, Toni Morrison traced the plight of black people who have struggled the inferior social and economic status in a "genderized" and "racialized" conspicuous culture. Morrison lodges a stern denunciation against the overriding society for its unfair tyranny of African-Americans. Blacks' subjugated culture is made noticeable by her literary representation. She has given a voice to the black minority. As an African-American female writer, her writings are profuse in rank about black culture. Her accountability as a black artist is to uphold black cultural perception, to enlighten and reinforce the values of black cultural legacy. The repressive life experience of African-American women in a racially prejudiced culture is treated with an eccentric voice in Morrison's work *The Bluest Eye*. The inspiration for writing *The Bluest Eye* comes from Morrison's conversation with a black girl during childhood. Morrison recommends that her thoughts about why that black girl pleads for blue eyes are stimulated when the racial beauty of "Black is Beautiful" is reclaimed. She says, it "*wasn't that easy being a little black girl in this country--it was rough. The psychological tricks you have to play in order to get through--and nobody said how it felt to be that. . . And I wanted to explore it.*" Published in 1970, a decade after the civil rights

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movement, *The Bluest Eye* speaks strongly of the gap that has developed between those who have yielded educationally and economically from the movement and those who live in ghettos and whose lot the movement has done little to change. The tone of the demoralized black females in the insignificant society has become mute. Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* well-expresses the victims' voices.

## Race

Racial discrimination in *The Bluest Eye* is a noticeable hint of Toni Morrison's concern to describe creatively the insensitivity of the white folks towards black. Pecola, the Chief character in *The Bluest Eye* is the most woeful creation who consistently suffers the racial discrimination. Her own mother Pauline Breedlove abashes Pecola by treating the white girl of her employers as superior to her just because of the colour. She has never felt the tenderness or love that she believes the white children receive. This pain turns her to believe that it is because of her colour ; her dark skin, dark eyes, and "woolly" hair, that she is not seen as being beautiful, and from these thoughts she begin to hate the beauty of the white children. Living in fear of her parents, Pecola becomes introverted and learns as many of the other children to deal with the pain. "[Mama's song] left me with the conviction that pain was not only endurable, it was sweet" (Morrison pg18). Pecola's shopping experience well serves as an outward reflection of the process of internalization of white values. When Pecola walks to the grocery store to buy candy, she knocks into "the total absence of human recognition—the glazed separateness" (Morrison, 1999, p. 36). Mr. Yacobowski cannot relinquish Pecola's presence as a subject because he simply cannot look at her, "How can a fifty-two-year-old white immigrant storekeeper... see a little black girl?" (Morrison, 1999, p.36) This is the foundation of the influence of the white-beauty. Claudia, the 11 year old girl, narrator of the story apprehends white beauty as disgusting. This is evident in the admiration of Frieda and Pecola towards Shirley Temple. "*Blue-and-white Shirley Temple cups . . . Frieda and [Pecola have] a loving conversation about how cute Shirley Temple [is]*" (Morrison 19).

Another noticeable incident for racism in *The Bluest eye* is young junior's wicked deed towards Pecola. Geraldine who is also a Black (light skinned) does not allow her son junior to play with other black children which made him to dislike his own race. Once Young Junior observed Pecola taking shortcut through play ground. He had seen her umpteen times standing alone at recess. Nobody played ever played with her because she is very black and ugly. Young Junior goes near her and speaks to her so gently and invites her to his home. He says, he has something to show her at home Pecola believes him and follows him. There was nobody at home. He opened the door for her and fosters her to get in. She is scared but still believes him and goes in. She finds a big red-and-gold coloured Bible on the dining-room table and a colour picture of Jesus Christ on a wall. Hence she did not anticipate any disaster to her. But to her surprise Young junior unveiled his original bestial character. He pulled her into another room and threw a big black cat right on her face. He guffawed cruelly running around the room and said "*You can't get out. You're my prisoner,*" (Morrison Pg89)

Through her statement on the impairment that internalized racism can do to the most vulnerable member of a community— Pecola; a young girl, Morrison jumps out of the tradition of African-American literature that "*Portrays racism as a definite evil*" (Eichelberger, 1999, p.59). Whiteness within this novel is said to be the symbol of goodness and innocence. The blacks in the novel are unhappy that they are not part of the dominant race. The main characters in this novel are marginalized people. Their status in the society causes them to feel subjugated. Cholly, the father of Pecola has also been a victim of racism and emotional abuse since his childhood; it makes him person who cannot show love or express his feelings. He suffers from racism when he is caught having sex with his friend Darlene. Two white men catch him in the act and scream, "*Get on wid it, nigger. . . . An' make it good, nigger, make it good*" (Morrison 148). The coloured people are always viewed as folks who should endure violence and pain even at home. Toni Morrison illuminates on the sufferings of black females in a white society in *The Bluest Eye*. This novel

“...shows racism’s damaging effects on the black community at large and on black families” (Kubitschek, 27). In *The Bluest Eye*, Pecola Breedlove realizes the supremacy of white society and longs to have the features of white females. She prays God to give the *bluest* eye in the world. This word reveals the eagerness to have even more finer features than white women.

## Gender

When compared to feminist novels like Alice Walker and Zora Neale Hurston, Toni Morrison make every effort to create a new original status in gender perception to articulate no longer being branded as a feminist. Feminist novelists inclined to stir up the intimidating feelings toward men and regarded as being on the matriarchy side by persisting too much on one-sided views. Alice Walker said in an interview, “No one writes more beautifully than Toni Morrison. She has consistently explored issue of true complexity and terror and love in the lives of African-Americans.” (Ashby, Ruth. 1991 Pg 268) The tragedy of African-American women comes from gender discrimination. They had to live with the tortures of gender bias carried out by not only white men but also men of same black race. Morrison, predominantly in *The Bluest Eye*, focuses on the concept of patriarchy, part of the gender discriminations. The women are living in a much more isolated black people’s patriarchal community. Morrison stated in an interview that race is the least reliable information they can have about someone. It’s real information, but it tells them next nothing. From the above, we can be assured that she wishes to put stress on something other than just racial issues. This something must be the fundamental issue of women, namely gender discrimination which is accepted by men. They strive to dominate the women of their town as if compensating for the humiliation they suffered at the hands of the light-skinned black people and white people, because they hope to build a cosy place by standing over something. This is very much evident in the case of Cholly. When he was caught by white men during his sex with his friend Darlene, he started to hate not the whites but the black girl Darlene. His frustration and anger turned towards Darlene. “Cholly, moving faster, looked at Darlene. He hated her. He almost wished he could do it—hard, long, and painfully, he hated her so much. (Morrison pg148). This shows the domination of black men on black women.

We can also observe the black female subjectivity towards their patriarchal community. Even though Pauline Breedlove got disgusted with the behaviour of Cholly she never betrayed him. Pauline takes a job as a housekeeper for a white woman. Cholly gets meaner and meaner. One day Cholly comes to Pauline's work, drunk, demanding money to drink. The woman she works for is frightened, and says she won't pay her or give her job back unless she leaves Cholly. Pauline refuses leave Cholly and loses her job, with no money to heat her stove. She is so subjective to Cholly. This show male chauvinism in the black society. Pauline when working in the White Fisher households she is degraded by the youngest White girl in the family. White girl addresses her “Polly”. She also experiences the gender inequality in the hospital. When she is giving birth her white doctor states, “these here women you don’t have any trouble with. They deliver right away and with no pain. Just like horses” (Morrison, pg 125). Additionally, as Miss Alice and Mrs. Gaines are talking, they comprehend the sturdy gender disparity that exists in the black community, “Everybody in the world was in a position to give them orders. White women said, “Do this.” White children said, “Give me that”. White men said, “Lay down.” The only people they need not take orders from were black children and each other” (Morrison, pg 138). Black girl’s physical exploitation by men in the community is another stark example of gender inequality in the African society. Mr Henry a middle aged man who lives under the roof of McTeer’s makes sexual advances at eleven-year-old Frieda. He doesn’t feel guilty even when he was bashed by the parents of Frieda. He sings “Nearer my God to Thee” (Morrison Pg100). Cholly’s rape of his daughter Pecola is one of the most noteworthy examples of gender discrimination in this novel.

## Religion



Almost all of Morrison's novels are filled with religious themes. If we keenly examine her novels, we can find number of issues related to religion either Catholicism or Christianity. The use of The Holy Bible is seen very often in her novels. It can be a direct Biblical reference or scriptures from the Bible. Sermons and songs are also found in her novels. There is a strong basis for this in her life. In one of her interviews Morrison said that there are people who used to speak sermonic language in her family. People used to quote Bible, they have Biblical phrases in regular conversation or they had lyrics or songs. Morrison's mother herself was a singer. She used to sing in the choir. So there was nothing so strange about religion to Morrison. Harvard divinity School professor David Corrasco worked with Morrison on the religious Dimensions in her novels. According to his research Toni Morrison's work represents a rich range of religious tradition and experience in human life. He says that in her books we see African religious tradition, Christian theology and practice. We encounter hymns, prayers, scriptures, sermons and always we find ordinary human beings and the characters created by her are very much seen in the present day world. We see rituals with power, creating even the most terrible circumstances and Holy places which are created by her; Words and gestures that eliminate ordinary human life. The Bluest eye portrays Christianity as either irrelevant to the lives of many or simply a way to pronounce yourself righteous and to criticize those less religious as immoral. Apart from the themes of race and gender, religious aspects are also discussed in the novel

**Theme of Sin and Curse:** In the very beginning of the novel the author writes: "*Quiet as it's kept, there were no marigolds in the fall of 1941. We thought, at the time, that it was because Pecola was having her father's baby that the marigolds did not grow.*"(Morrison Pg5)It is obvious in the above quoted lines that there is something that is against God's will has been done. That is the reason why the land is cursed. Marigolds did not blossom, "*Not even the gardens fronting the lake showed marigolds that year.*" (Morrison Pg5). This means, marigolds did not blossom even though there is water. It reminds us of God's judgement in Genesis chapter: 3:17, 18(Old Testament) God has cursed the land for the sin committed by Adam and Eve.

Characters in this novel are born Christians. Some are very loyal to the Lord but some are very far away from the lord both in their thoughts and deeds. For the name sake they have Bible in their houses. They hung the picture of Christ on their walls (Geraldine). When Pecola was teased by Young Junior, She saw the picture of Jesus and felt that Jesus looking down at her with sad and unsurprised eyes, his long brown hair parted in the middle, the gay paper flowers twisted around his face. (Morrison Pg 93). These folks know in and out of the Bible. After Aunt Jimmy's death, all the ladies have cleaned the house, aired out everything. They stitched together a white wedding dress for Aunt Jimmy, a maiden lady, to wear because they believed that she would meet Jesus (Morrison Pg140). People who came to see Aunt Jimmy's funeral say the Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away. This is symbol of unbreakable faith that job has in the Bible

*"20Then Job arose and tore his robe and shaved his head, and he fell to the ground and worshiped. 21He said, "Naked I came from my mother's womb, And naked I shall return there. The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away. Blessed be the name of the LORD."22 Through this entire Job did not sin nor did he blame God."*(Old Testament Job: 1:21)

The characters in the novel are projected as Christians, god-fearing and faithful. They seek god for help. They use the scriptures to correct their conduct. The narrator says "*Bible say watch as well as pray*" (Morrison Pg 25) . In Claudia's opinion folks don't care for their children. They don't even bother whether their child has had a loaf of bread or not? Mr Cholly Breedlove has been released from the jail. But he did not bother his daughter. Claudia's family takes care of Pecola. Claudia feels ". . . *Bible say feed the hungry. That's fine. That's all right.*"(Morrison Pg27). All the Characters in the novel know that they should follow scriptures, but some characters in this novel

(Soap head church) live as Christians for the name sake.

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**Soap head church as symbol of hypocrisy:** Soap head Church, is a self-proclaimed Anglophile, (a term applied to someone who has an enormous admiration for and devotion to things British.) is a damaged character. He is the storehouse of all the sickness of internalized racism. He comes into the narrative only at the end of the novel, where Morrison attempts to give his full history in too short a space before continuing the narrative about Pecola. He is the one disgraceful African-American character in the novel and a child molester who believes he is better than God. Having dallied with the priesthood in the Anglican Church, he abandoned it to become a caseworker. (Morrison Pg 165) He became a “*Reader, Adviser, and Interpreter of Dreams.*” *It was a profession that suited him well.* (Morrison Pg165) He was called by the townspeople Soap head Church. No one knew where the “Church” part came from—perhaps somebody’s recollection of his days as a guest preacher—those reverends who had been called but who had no flock or coop, and were constantly visiting other churches, sitting on the altar with the host preacher. But everybody knew what “Soap head” meant—the tight, curly hair that took on and held a sheen and wave when pomaded with soap lather. A sort of primitive process. (Morrison Pg167). Soap head Church is the deceitful spiritualist; He is wise enough in his own mad way, though, to recognize the pathos of Pecola’s situation. Morrison uses Soap head Church's letter to explore how some of these forces cannot find redemption, even in the presence of the divine. He questions God for not giving blue eyes to Pecola and creating her so ugly. “*But you too are amiss here, Lord. How, why, did you allow it to happen?*” (Morrison pg180) He is blaming God for all his sins. The letter, itself, is far from clear. In a traditional letter to the divine, one would conventionally express some type of fundamental regret and remorse. The hope would be one would lose one’s ego in the face of the divine. But if we observe the Soap head’s letter, he showed his ego by blaming God as responsible for his sins. He even feels that God did not take care of Pecola, He created her very ugly and he left her. *Tell me, Lord, how could you leave a lass so long so lone that she could find her way to me? How could you? I weep for you, Lord* (Morrison pg180). The lack of coherence in the letter and lack of admission for wrong in the letter is seen not only in the case of Soap head’s letter but is Morrison's way of inverting this traditional understanding. Soap head did not admit his mistakes. The letter serves as a way to show how Soap head Church embodies hypocrisy and a lack of authentic embrace of individual responsibility. Moments in the letter such as comparing himself to God for being able to grant Pecola's wish. He enquires God, how He could be so forgetful in the case of Pecola for not granting her Blue eyes. “*You have to understand that, Lord. You said, “Suffer little children to come unto me, and harm them not. Did you forget? Did you forget about the children? Yes. You forgot.*” (Morrison pg181). Soap head thinks that he can “work miracles”. He believes that he has received power from God. He even made the people believe that he has God’s power within him. “*I told people I knew all about you. That I had received Your Powers. It was not a complete lie; but it was a complete lie.*” (Morrison 179). When he has used his knowledge for Pecola’s wish he feels so proud of him and says “*I, I have caused a miracle. I gave her the eyes. I gave her the blue, blue, two blue eyes. Cobalt blue. A streak of it right out of your own blue heaven. No one else will see her blue eyes. But she will. And she will live happily ever after. I, I have found it meet and right so to do Now you are jealous. You are jealous of me. You see? I, too, have created*” (Morrison Pg 182)

Finally the purpose of Soap head Church's letter is to reflect how the order of things does not eradicate evil and that some of its forms exist. While there is sadness, pain and suffering in the world, evil exists. When the dog is found dead, Soap head Church is asleep, as if nothing is wrong. The letter to God highlights the condition of being in which evil exists and a lack of self-reformation is a part of it. The Bluest Eye is Toni Morrison's first novel for its vibrant sketch of the fear and isolation at the heart of a child's yearning, and the tragedy of its fulfilment. The Bluest Eye remains one of Tony Morrison’s most powerful, unforgettable novels- and a significant work of American fiction especially remarkable for its intersection of race, gender and religion.

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## 11. Leadership Principles that Distinguish Women Leaders: A Study of Anupama in Sudha Murthy's 'Mahaswetha'

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### Introduction

Now, let us know what is leadership and how that leadership principles distinguish women leaders from their male counterparts, for giving more clarity in this case I have taken the example of anupama in mahaswetha written by sudhamurthy. The activity of leading a group of people or The activity of leading a group of people or an organization or the ability to do this.

### Difference between management and leadership

*Leaders are people who do the right thing; managers are people who do things right.*— Professor Warren G. Bennis A pioneer ventures up in times of emergency, and can think and act innovatively in troublesome circumstances. Not at all like administration, authority can't be taught, in spite of the fact that it might be learned and upgraded through training or tutoring. Somebody with incredible initiative abilities today is Bill Gates who, in spite of early disappointments, with proceeded with enthusiasm and development has driven Microsoft and the product business to achievement.

Authority characteristics	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Flexible/Adaptable</li><li>• Self certainty</li><li>• Sense of amusingness</li><li>• Assertiveness</li><li>• Extraversion</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Authenticity</li><li>• Trustworthiness</li><li>• Humility</li><li>• Optimism and warmth</li></ul>

### Leadership principles

There is a great amount of definitions and theories about effective leadership. Each leader chooses their unique formula of success, but still there are keys to authentic leadership that can't be ignored. Below are 10 important principles each leader should know.

#### 1. Leadership Is Behavior, Not Position

Pioneers are the ones who assume liability for settling on choices and bringing change. Pioneers are the ones who engage individuals to find and utilize their most prominent potential. The official position on somebody's visit card won't do these. Individuals are the ones to pick their pioneer. What's more, in what capacity will they do that? They will judge by conduct, state of mind and activities. In the event that you need to be a pioneer, then act like a pioneer and shape a superior reality.

#### 2. The Best Way of Influence is Setting an Example

Every pioneer needs to get the best out of their group. Fabulousness introduction is incredible, as there is constantly requirement for improvement. However, here is the straightforward truth. Rather than advising your colleagues what to do, show it to them by your own case. They are tailing you every single minute. Try to do you say others should do, and the outcomes will dumbfound you. Particularly amid tough times, when opportunities to surrender are huge, you ought to be the person who confronts snags with certainty and determination towards achievement. Make certain, that they will do likewise and stand close by.

### **3. Leading Means Making an Impact**

Consider the best pioneers ever. What was the one thing they had in like manner? Yes, they all had an effect. Administration is not simply setting objectives and viably accomplishing them with your group. Authority is not simply splendid open talking and incredible relational abilities. On the off chance that you need to be a valid pioneer, you ought to have your one of a kind commitment to the welfare of the general public. You ought to roll out a positive improvement.

### **4. Leadership is Chasing Vision, Not Money**

Without a dream, your exercises are inane. Every individual can be exceptionally bustling executing different undertakings, yet the key is committing your endeavors and time to the acknowledgment of your vision. Vision is the thing that moves individuals to make a move and go ahead. Find your exceptional vision and arrange every one of your exercises towards it. Rouse every single colleague that vision.

### **5. Actions Speak Louder Than Words**

It's not a mystery that much talking and less acting has nothing to do with viability. What individuals see influences them ordinarily more prominent than what they listen. Thus, pick activities. Try not to squander your and other individuals' chance on unlimited discussions about your arrangements. Simply understand that arrangements and make sure that everybody will see it.

### **6. Flexibility May Refer to Behavior, Not Values**

Contingent upon circumstances you may pick an alternate style of authority or correspondence. Adaptability is a really viable characteristic, in the event that it doesn't influence your qualities. Every last choice of yours, regardless of the circumstance, must be founded on your quality framework. For whatever length of time that your activities are worth driven, you will have the trust and regard of individuals around you.

### **7. Leadership is All About People**

Might you be able to be a pioneer in a void room by having significant objectives and abilities? Obviously, not. Driving means conveying, impacting and locks in. Relational abilities are the establishment of successful authority. Always enhance your associations with individuals, and the astounding results won't make you hold up.

### **8. It Is Fine To Admit Mistakes**

In the event that everything has dependably been done flawlessly, we would have by one means or another lost the capacity to dissect and move forward. Slip-ups are verification that you are accomplishing something. You won't turn into a more terrible pioneer in the event that you concede your mix-ups. By doing that, you will demonstrate that you are sufficiently insightful to gain from your every last experience.

### **9. Unity Is Strength**

Group is by one means or another the most vital asset for every pioneer. Grasp your group and dedicate your vitality to think about its solidarity every single day. For whatever length of time that your group is astonishing, nothing can keep focused approach to achievement. Ensure that all individuals in your group see themselves as individuals from a solid, brought together family.

### **10. There Is Always Room for Growth**

Keep in mind; fulfillment ought to be a transient feeling. Life would get to be pointless without continuous change. This doesn't imply that you shouldn't acknowledge what you have. This implies you ought to be grateful for all that you have accomplished, yet at the same time attempt to do somewhat more for this world.

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## Leadership principles that distinguish women leaders

There have always been female rulers. Egyptian Queens are believed to have governed from around 3000 BCE, and the first to be named by the sources without any doubt is Ku-baba, who ruled the Mesopotamian City-State of Ur round 2500 BCE. So, leadership has never been new to women. According to me they are born leaders as they manage their families and lead and motivate their children from a tender age. Many of us learn most of the things from our mother rather than our father. Now-a-days the doors have been wide open for women to prove themselves and also lead. This can be clearly seen in the novel *Mahaswetha* written by *Sudha Murthy*, the lead character Anupama shows all the qualities of an effective leader.

The most distinguishing qualities of a women leader are:

- Women leaders are more persuasive than their male counterparts.
- Feeling the sting of rejection, women leaders learn from adversity and carry on with an “I’ll show you” attitude.
- Women leaders have an inclusive, team-building leadership style of problem solving and decision making.

Now let us discuss these characters in our lead character of *Mahaswetha* Anupama.

Anupama was a great and high spirited woman from the start of the novel she did what she enjoyed and was emotionally intelligent. When she got married she kind of turned into a follower of her family to earn their respect through love and patience. Here we can see all great leaders are followers first. She was a great woman when she advised her sister in law against the bad things. But fate turned ill towards Anupama when she got the skin disease and got kicked out of the house, her husband being a doctor did not respond to her plea to take her back to England where he was living. She first thought to die not to become a burden to her father and step mother, then she goes away and lives with her friend where the friend's husband tries to take advantage of her, she leaves not uttering a word to her friend about the situation and finds a job in the college and proves her talent. There she makes many good friends and when one of them proposes marriage she says: “A man and a man can be friends a woman and a woman can be friends then a man and a woman can also be friends.” When Anand her husband realizes his mistake and comes to her she with great courage and magnificence of a leader rejects him as she is up on her feet without any help. Here Anupama exhibited every principle of women leaders that are unique to them

- Perseverance when she is fighting to stand on her feet and not giving up.
- A can do attitude when faced with the problems of today’s society.

By this we can understand not only women are trying to break the glass ceiling with their patience and perseverance but also showing a can do attitude with emotional intelligence and humane touch to become global leaders.

**Harvard Business Review** says: ‘We’ve all heard the claims, the theories, and the speculation about the ways leadership styles vary between women and men. Our latest survey data puts some hard numbers into the mix.’ Our data come from 360 evaluations, so what they are tracking is the judgment of a leader’s peers, bosses, and direct reports. We ask these individuals to rate each leader’s effectiveness overall and also to judge how strong he or she is on the 16 competencies that our 30 years of research shows are most important to overall leadership effectiveness. We ask, for instance, how good a leader is at taking the initiative, developing others, inspiring and motivating, and pursuing their own development. Our latest survey of 7,280 leaders, which our organization evaluated in 2011, confirms some seemingly eternal truths about men and women leaders in the

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workplace but also holds some surprises. Our dataset was generated from leaders in some of the most successful and progressive organizations in the world both public and private, government and commercial, domestic and international. In the confirmation category is our first finding: The majority of leaders (64%) are still men. And the higher the level, the more men there are: In this group, 78% of top managers were men, 67% at the next level down (that is, senior executives reporting directly to the top managers), 60% at the manager level below that. Similarly, most stereotypes would have us believe that female leaders excel at “nurturing” competencies such as developing others and building relationships, and many might put exhibiting integrity and engaging in self-development in that category as well. And in all four cases our data concurred — women did score higher than men. But the women’s advantages were not at all confined to traditionally women’s strengths. In fact at every level, more women were rated by their peers, their bosses, their direct reports, and their other associates as better overall leaders than their male counterparts — and the higher the level, the wider that gap grows. Specifically, at all levels, women are rated higher in fully 12 of the 16 competencies that go into outstanding leadership.

## Conclusion

Women are far better leaders than their counter parts.as in the case of Anupama in Mahaswetha and also in the real world according to statistics. "Leaders must be close enough to relate to others, but far enough ahead to motivate them." *John C. Maxwell.*

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## 12. Feminine psyche in Anita Desai’s *Fire on the Mountain*

*“Men do not want solely the obedience of woman, they want their sentiments. All men except the most brutish, desire to have, in the woman, most nearly connected with them, not a forced slave, but willingly one, not a slave merely, but a favourite.” - John Stuart Mill, The Subjection of women*

The voice against atrocities towards women is getting louder and louder every year. Still women continue to be victims of violence and injustice because victimising women is a practice which got deeply embedded in the socio-cultural processes of living. Women continue to be physically abused and psychologically exploited in their homes as well as society. Today women are perhaps the most talked about, argued about and legislated about begins in the world only because of their bold entry into the so called male-territory. Still they are the much exploited, victimised and marginalized group in the society. All these disadvantages are due to the misconception that women are born to serve, not to rule. In Anita Desai's *Fire on the Mountain* it is tried to prove that Nanda Kaul, the female protagonist in the novel, undergoes psychic pressures such as psychic conflict, confusion, dilemma, struggle, strain, illness and worries due to the impact of various hostile forces with which her mind comes in confrontation. These forces are nothing but problems that a woman has to face in her life; male domination, hypocrisy, the evils of patriarchal social set up, the double standards for the male and the female, male chauvinism, infidelity of the life partner, neglect by children, overburden of household duties, dissatisfaction in marriage and the like. Though Nanda undergoes mental problems due to the strain of these unpleasant forces, she clings to the fundamental characteristics of the feminine psychic pattern such as desire for respect, recognition and love, love of nature, motherly feeling, identification of shadowy character, sincerity in marital relationship, and retreating to an isolated place for peace. *Fire on the mountain* incorporates the story of Nanda Kaul and her great-grand daughter Rakha. Nanda flees life only to realize that it is difficult for her to keep her part out of her mind. In the novel we can notice a critical situation when Nanda retreats to Carignano. When the novel opens we find that she is thoroughly disillusioned with all her emotional bonds, whether matrimonial or filial. She felt lonely and neglected. Her husband's life long affair with Miss David was a source of agony throughout her life. This creates a sickness in soul and she distrusts the social relevance of all attachments and affairs.

Nanda dominates the narrative. She was acting so many roles simultaneously. She had grabbed the roles of a hostess, wife, mother, tailor and queen. But this was a kind of burden on her shoulders as most of them oppose each other. Nanda thinks her work as a burden for she realizes that no one, not even her husband is going to acknowledge this as he is in love with another woman. She never receives emotional and mental sustenance from her husband. She was fed up with the monotonous and the endless chores in the life of a house wife. Nanda Kaul's life has two sides- the public and the private. The former is characterised by the role of an ideal mother, a house wife, an organizer of parties and the centre of her husband's social life. The latter is life of silence, memory and feelings. Nanda's longing for psychic stillness leads her to Carignano. She retreats to her basic feminine quality –going to search of a realm where she can stay still and be peaceful. The main reason for Nanda's frigidity is Kaul's illegal relationship with Miss David. Often a conflict in the relationship arises because of the conflict between the polygamous desires and the partner's demand for a monogamous relation. Women's psyche is more possessive than that of men and hence Nanda, like any other woman expects monogamy from Mr. Kaul. When she realizes that the unexpected is in store for her, the conflict arises in their wedlock. For Nanda, just like most of Anita Desai's female protagonists, the conflict gets intensified and becomes a controlling force on the state of the deeper levels of the mind. The frigidity and the conflict in her psyche thereafter are the basic characteristics of women's essential soul. Her psyche frigidity even leads her to overdeveloping the animus side. The masculine side comes in the place of her genuine or feminine nature of devotion and surrender. Though Nanda's long cherished wish is to have identity of her own, her peculiar psyche possessed by



the animus never leads her to an autonomous personality. Nanda's love life and sex life are attached with one man alone whereas those of Mr. Kaul are with different women. Thus there is a split between sex life and love life, and this causes a psychic split in Nanda. Nanda has undergone psychic oppression due to her husband's infidelity. This is revealed at the end of the novel. The patriarchal social set up allows such lapses on the part of men. It is the wives, who suffer a lot due to this set up. Nanda longs for a free and isolated life. Along with the outward life of Nanda as the vice chancellors wife, Anita Desai portrays her inner life. Her mind even after reaching the Carignano is not tension free. The protagonist's intimacy with the nature develops more intense than her relationship to her male partner. She refuses her previous but exhausted role as a mother and wife and retreats into a landscape. She puts on isolation as a mark of self defence against her previous domestic world of pain, sorrow and psychic struggle and likes to be in the company of nature. The second section of the novel opens with Raka's unwelcome arrival. Nanda expresses what she thinks of the child's name; "Raka- what an utter misnomer, thought Nanda Kaul.... Raka meant the moon, but this child was not round face, calm or radiant" (Fire on the Mountain, 39). This reveals that her reaction to her grandchild does not arise from concern or affection. It is more and more from an analytical tendency based on mental distance. Raka is reclosed by nature and that is what attracts Nanda. She often compares herself with Raka and her maternal love overcomes her detachment. This is one of the occasions when she shows her basic feminine nature. A woman is not made up of stone or brick. She is the every earthly being. Nanda finds fantasy world to escape from reality. Her psychic world is far away from her real physical world. Desai, through the moon image gives an idea of the various strong forces that pull the protagonist to diverging situation and directions and shows how her psychic workings change in these situations. Fire on the Mountain is the story of the lifelong frustration of a woman caused by an unhappy marriage. Even in her chosen life at Carignano, Nanda recalls how she had been ignored by her husband. She feels loneliness even in the midst of people including her husband and a large number of children and grandchildren. Even in her last moments, she utters what is in her troubled psyche. In spite of all her psychic problems, she lives with her husband without any grumbling. Her mind is made such a manner that she is ready to resign to the world of her husband though it is quite undesirable to her. Her thoughts that float through her mind, when she lived with her husband are made known to the readers only much later. When her children settled in life and career, she was ignored. This created a sense of alienation and emptiness in her mind. Darkness and negligence overpower her psyche. This causes ego-depression. Mentally she remains an alien in the family dynamics. This can be ascribed to the inertia of her psyche and this causes psychic split. If we observe the mental state of Nanda closely we can notice that her psyche was ever longing to be alone in peace. But she had to wait, wait for a long time to meet with her mental desire thought not fulfilled. She waits till the demise of her husband. The common basic characteristic of woman such as love of nature, motherly feeling, self-sacrificing, love and eagerness to do feminine tasks are not alien to Nanda. She is a woman who gives respect to the sacred nature of marriage. She retreats to a place of isolation, identifies her shadowy character and becomes defenceless.

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### 13. An alternative literacy movement and literature: A Case of Malabar

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Arabimalayalam, is a lingua franca that developed in the Malabar region of Kerala. In the later period, it gave rise to a creole called Mappila Malayalam under the Mappila (Muslims of Malabar/Kerala) community. The language still survive in Kerala as a variety of Malayalam. The prominent feature of Arabimalayalam is that it uses Arabic and Persian orthographic symbols with some modifications and adaptations for scripting Malayalam. This lingua franca, as it grew into a creole called Mappila Malayalam, with loaned words from neighbouring South Indian languages like Tamil, Tulu, Kannad etc., has subtle politics and culture immersed in its history. The development and functioning of this language can be taken as one of the earliest intellectual anti-colonial/feudal measures taken out by one single community in Kerala. With this language, the Mappilas devised an alternative literacy movement based on the rich literature they developed in it. Before we look into the details of the alternative literacy strategy developed by Mappilas, let us look at the surrounding cultural and political scenario of the Malabar region.

### **Kerala and Arabia: history of connection**

Kerala's connection with the Arabic speaking world goes back to the pre-Islamic period, to the BCEs. Merchants from the Arabic-speaking world has been here since 4th century BCE. Islam as a religion is reaching Kerala only towards the end of 7<sup>th</sup> century. Excavations on a prevalent music genre called "*mappila paattu*" (Mappila song) shed more light onto this. After the death of prophet Muhammed, there were conflicts within the Islamic world, both ideological and political. Dissatisfaction with the selection of Caliphs ended up in dividing muslims to Shias and Sunnis. The Shias, when expatriated from the Euphrates-Tigris valley in the post-prophet era, traversed to Yemen and established a well developed culture with Ma'bar (70 km south of the present capital San'aa) as their centre. The Sayeds, a group in Shias, continued their journey and made settlements in various parts in the world including many Indian states. Bengal, Andhra Pradesh, Tamilnadu and Kerala housed many of such travelers. The Shia settlements in Kerala show a lot of examples for cultural borrowing from Arabian countries, especially Yemen. The very name of Malabar for a region with high population of Muslims in northern Kerala, is assumed to have derived from the settlement the "Sayeds from Ma'bar" made in Kerala. Apart from this similarity in name, there are a lot of other features which Malabar Muslims (Mappilas) share with the Yemeni social life, ranging from the "kallimundu" (lungi) to the famous "malappuram kathi" (knife). There are families in Malabar which still have connections with families in Yemen. The depth of relation this cultural mingling bears hints the other possible exchanges happened. From that platform, it is reasonable to assume that there was a large import of Sufi stories, Arabian music, Arabic language and literature and of course, Semitic myths and religious beliefs too. *Mappila paattu* (Mappila songs) has such an origin. It can also be assumed that the varieties of native language scripted with Arabic letters (Arabi-Malyalam, Arabi-Urdu, Arabi-Telugu, Arabi-Bengali, Arabi-Tamil etc.) would have had its origin in the era of Arab merchant settlements.

### **The colonial history of Kerala**

Another aspect we have to have a glimpse of is the colonial history of Kerala. Through the high middle ages to the late middle ages, Arabs dominated the trades with Kerala. Though this was not a colonial dominance, the maritime interactions had its dominating impacts on the Kerala culture, especially in the coastal regions where the Arabs interacted with the natives more. The trade winds changed direction by 1500s, as the Portuguese anchored their vessels along Kerala costs in 1498. Taking advantage of the internal conflicts between the two prominent nation-states in Kerala, Cochin and Calicut, the Portuguese propelled their vessels in and stood by the Cochin side. But by 1571, they were defeated out of the lands and the internal conflicts intensified to new levels. The Dutch East India company, who also came in taking advantage of these fights, were sent back by constant wars

with the militia of Travancore state by 1741. And gradually, Travancore became a dominant state in Kerala. This remained until the Mysore Kingdom conquered the northern Kerala in the mid 18<sup>th</sup> century. In this time, the British who had already established their presence in northern India, were engaged in conflicts with the Mysore kingdom. This resulted in the Mysorean cession of Malabar in 1792 and the British took over the control. The other two states, Cochin and Travancore, were made into the Princely states under the British ruled Madras Presidency.

### **Arabimalayalam- Rise and History**

There are different accounts on the origin or rise of Arabimalayalam in Kerala. Historians have connected it mostly with the advent of Islam. I would like to propose a different perspective to that in this paper. As we said, Kerala had a long rooted contact with the Arab speaking lands. The merchant visitors from those lands had won the good impression of kings of the spice land too. For a long and effective business relationship, a smooth communication platform was inevitable. It might have been the visitors' attempt to learn the native language for a better involvement with the native community, that tilted the land for the inception of Arabimalayalam in Kerala. And same would be the case in other states like Bengal, Andhra Pradesh, Tamilnadu etc. If we assume the context, it would be something like, the Arabic speaking visitors hear Malayalam and in their attempt to learn that language quickly as possible, they tried to jot the verbal language down in the orthographics they are familiar with, here Arabic. Having the Malayalam words readable for their purpose, they are better equipped to act in verbal discourse with the natives and thereby for improved marshalling of business. In other words, Arabimalayalam was a lingua franca, developed by the Arabic speaking merchants in the Malayalam speaking Malabar. In the later periods, there is a shift happening from this lingua franca to a creole, viz. Mappila Malayalam. The historical turn of that can be assumed as below. Gradually, and clearly, in the reverberations of conversions to Islam, the intimacy the natives have for the visitor-settlers, probably instigated by the communion developed from the sharing of same religion, the *esprit de corps*, deepens until it reaches the climax with the natives adopting the lingua franca developed by the incomer as their orthography. The factor of religion comes onto stage at this juncture. Here it is a historical coincidence that the language of the merchant-settlers with whom the native community actively involved and the language of the Muslim missionaries happened to be the same. Now the factor of *esprit de corps* comes out as the soul reason. But that is only the tip of the ice berg. The socio-cultural scenario has to be looked at as well, to get an answer for the question why did the Mappilas went for a comparatively difficult process of learning a new orthography abandoning the easily learnable and first-hand orthography of the language they speak.

### **Malabar: Social Scenario**

Rise of Arabimalayalam is not a natural development happened over time. There are some other factors also at play and are rather crucial in their role. To understand it, we need to look the social scenario of the Mappila community and their period little closely. This is the period when the Bhraminical civilization reaches its culmination in Kerala, the period of the zenith of caste system. The landed-class had their full right on the lives of the landless. Inequality had contaminated the air they breath. The downtrodden were smothering. Robin Jeffrey's account gives a glimpse of the ghastly state of social situation. "...a Nair may approach but not touch a Namboodiri Brahmin: a Chovan [Ezhava] must remain thirty-six paces off, and a Pulayan slave ninety-six steps distant. A Chovan may remain twelve steps away from a Nair, and a Pulayan sixty-six steps off, and a Parayan some distance farther still. A Syrian Christian may touch a Nair (though this is not allowed in some parts of the country) but the latter may not eat with each other. Pulayans and Parayars, who are the lowest of all, may approach but not touch, much less may they eat with each other. "

### **Arrival of Islam to Kerala**

It was to this troubled stormy sea, another batch of Arabs introduced a lifeboat in the form of a religion of equality- Islam. They promised an alleviation to the drowning slaves of caste system. There blows a wind of change. Coming years witness a massive conversion to the religion of the

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incomers, especially from the communities in the lower rung of the caste hierarchy. Here, we should consider one very crucial factor. There is a popular belief that conversion to Islam in this era was due to the theological greatness of the religion. It cannot be completely true. There might be religion-internal factors in it, but that is not the end of the story. The main motive of the conversion was the gift of equality Islam offered. The equal consideration of all human souls- the pivotal value the propagators of Islam heralded in that time to that particular community. The upholding of human values bricked up on the platform of equality, offered a new birth to the people of the lower castes who were living their days cursing their evil birth. It offered a new meaning to their being. Naturally, a platform which offers such a big change would win the hearts, particularly in an era when the miseries of castism being at its peak. The converted people were disencumbered from the castist obligations and observances. When the Pulayns and Parayans had to stand away from the king in meters, Mappila could sit beside him. This new empowered identity gave the boost for conversions. The feudal barricades, cobwebs and entanglements held the majority aback though.

### **Arabimalayalam: a Political move**

People who have converted into Islam in Malabar, Mappilas, have been enjoying a privileged social life with their first mosque built in 629 AD<sup>1</sup>. Their life was brighter as they stood as the intermediary between the Arab/Muslim merchants and the Kerala Agriculture-owners. The converted agriculture labourers dropped their labour and took up the new job as export agents. Gradually, trade became the signature of Mappilas of Malabar, and they completely abandoned agriculture. This bright times did not last very long for the them. The large colonial vessels in the seaports of Kerala cast a cloud over the hitherto bright Mappila sky. Changes in the international market, especially new power equations and colonialist partitions of the world had brought Portuguese vessels onto the Kerala shores. With much bloodshed, Portuguese snatched the trade monopoly from the Arabs and ruled it over. The exemption of Arabs from the sea waters of Kerala hurt the sentiments of Mappilas. They started revolting against the Portuguese, and unfortunately ended in losing their role as intermediary. Loss of job, religious sentiments etc irked the Mappila temper. In addition to that, unlike the Arab traders, the Portuguese traders came with a colonization agenda. This intensified the native hatred against them. The long history of anti-colonial struggles of Mappilas has its beginnings here. Starting from the sea-war against the Portuguese invasion to Malabar in 1498, it stretches till the Malabar rebellion of 1921 against the British government-Hindu landlord nexus. Banishment of Arabs from the seas of Kerala gave Mappilas a religious insecurity. The absence of the source of their faith gave them an identity challenge. It was the need of the hour that Mappilas had to unite. This historical juncture can be considered the springboard of many a developments that shaped the Mappila "community" of Kerala. Thoughts about formalizing their religious faith into a community springs here. The need of a language to give the community a clear identity was necessary. Immediately, the *esprit de corps* they had developed with the Arab merchant-settlers advised them to adapt the lingua franca they had developed into a language. The community was already taught with Arabic by Muslim missionary, as it was necessary for their religious life. By the late middle ages, most of the Mappilas had Arabic literacy. This led to the birth of the creole, Mappila Malayalam from the lingua franca Arabimalayalam. Gradually this creole was modified and developed to include all the sounds of Malayalam and beyond.

There happened immense borrowings from other languages such as Arabic, Persian, Tamil, Tulu, Telugu etc. as these were the language-lands Mappilas had connections through a common denominator, the Arab/Muslim travellers. The Arabs had already marked their presence in these language territories and that defined an across-the-border communion between all the places they go. Presence of these loaned words became the signature of the Mappila Malayalam. The language had to broaden its phonetic inventory in order to adapt these loans. That means, the script system of Arabimalayalam was not only the adoption of Arabic alphabets to write Malayalam, instead there

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1 <https://www.keralatourism.org/muziris/cheraman-juma-masjid.php>

were modifications made on each side to include sounds or letter that one of the two languages lacks. With this imported sounds and script, Mappila Malayalam stood different from other varieties of Malayalam. The growth of this language was not an independent process. It was carried out along with the literary or artistic production that was done in it. Mappila Malayalam opened up a vast horizon of artistic works, majority of it was in the form of prose and poetry. By 17<sup>th</sup> century, Mappila Malayalam had developed a well grown literary genre in it. The poetic style and artistic quality of earliest of identified Mappila literary specimen, *muhiyudhin maala*, is a living justification for this argument. Though any works predating it has not been identified yet, a blinding abundance of works after it establish the language sound and solid. The Mappila Malayalam literature covered almost all walks of life, mostly in the form of prose and poetry. Themes and topics of it spans over religion, science, fictions and history.

### **Politics of language**

An immediate question would be why Mappilas would reject Malayalam orthography to rebellion against imperialism. The ideology of rejecting one particular orthography and accepting another has nothing to do with the linguistic factors of the particular languages. There was no language chauvinism or prejudice at play here. It was purely cultural and political. An aspect of the cultural turn of it was that, Malayalam, especially with the taste of Sanskrit, wore the gown of a blue blood lord with all evil aspects of casteism attributed to it. Hatred against the grave social system force-implemented by the 'Sanskritised-Malayalam speaking' upper class ignited an emotional rebellion against that social class. As time flies by, there happened a change in the political scenario of the land. The English has gained power, both of economy and governing. British imperialism clawed the cast-mauled society. Naturally, the landed aristocracy acted as the British hammers. All this culminated with the lower class of the natives getting a double burden on them - the colonial suppressions from the English and the already existing casteist social system implemented by the landed aristocracy. They realized that a revolt against the new suppressive dominations should start from a revolt against the foundations of these institutions, that is their language. Rejection of the languages of both the imperialist forces -the British and the land-lord - became the anti-suppression cult. So, there was a prominent cultural and political requirement behind the use of Arabimalayalam. Thus the new affiliation and conflicts painted a political colour on the language. Thus, a lingua franca grows beyond the confinements of a purely business purpose to a level of foundation to literary aspirations of a community along with the basic language function- identity of a community. From there, it further grows to an amazing tool against colonialism with its immense contributions in a community's nationalist ventures.

### **Alternative literacy-Methods**

With this we can fairly assume that there are reasons as cultural or political requirement beyond the influence and scope of religion, in the development and maintenance of Arabimalayalam, and later, Mappila Malayalam. The determination evident in this is that, because of rejecting the English/modern education, Mappilas should not lag in cultural advancements or acquiring knowledge. Development of a compatible stream of knowledge in a language accessible to any one without the intricacies of casteism was a cultural as well as a political necessity. Making up the both sides, cultural and political, Mappilas made the alternative coin to trade out the colonialist supremacy on native culture and polity. Completing the requirements, Arabimalayalam stood as the spinal cord of a community in its ventures to support Indian anti-colonial movement in that era.

### **Era of literary revolts and rejections**

With this back up of a language, Mappilas were better equipped for a covert revolution against the colonial power. They fought against all tools of colonialist imperialism starting from the soul of it- the English language. They rejected the education the British brought. They declined the renaissance it promised. They disputed out the imperialist definitions of knowledge and power. This full-fledged defiance against the British colonial strategies even went to the creation of what can be

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called a 'poetic counter theory', through the development of a whole body of Mappila literature in Arabimalayalam.

### **Rejection of English education**

Mappilas rejected the English/modern education. It is not that the Mappilas *did not get* the English education, it is that they *rejected* it, an informed choice. The Mappilas had all the opportunities to take up English education, to an extent better than some other communities as they had no barriers of casteism to stand in the way. But they decided to reject the imperialist dole outs. They were not ready to accept the British as their master. Thus Mappilas were not availing the so called "modern education" the English offered. There were even religious *fatwas* stating that "English is the language of Hell", and thereby strongly prohibiting any association with it. Since it is apparent that, Islam, theologically, does not dishonour English as a language, the only motive behind such *fatwas* were purely political mobilization. In that way, it was a sheer expression of hatred toward colonialist imperialism and clearly not an instance of linguistic chauvinism. Here, the crucial point is that, though there were some social setbacks, this rebellion against the "modern education" did not throw them back to a pagan culture. And the secret behind this was the parallel education system the Mappilas developed.

### **Education beyond *madrasas***

The only formal education Mappilas acquired was the religious education from *madrasas*. An amazingly pleasant contradiction of this was that, even without the formal education, there happened to have a home-literacy culture in addition to the *madrasa* education, which created a parallel literacy system to the English education. This induced the production of a wide range of secular literary publications in Arabimalayalam and were delivered to each household door to door. There were whole books on short stories, poetry, novels, history, and mathematics as there were on theology. And nothing other than theological books were taught in the *madrasas*. Everything else was meant for 'extra reading', clearly an extra-religious project. This alternative-literacy system was their culture, not just a system of education. In the nooks and huts of Kerala which haven't seen the light of "modern education", girls in veil were reciting the lines of Persian poets. Poetry was the most popular genre in Mappila literature. Translation was another active field. Many great works from Arabic and Persian were translated to Malayalam, and wrote them in Arabimalayalam. Sanskrit and Tamil also came under its purview. They texted their own poems and stories also. The themes of poems covered almost all walks of human life; birth, marriage, death, imprisonment, subjugation, revolution etc. They wrote letters, praises and eulogies in the form of songs. They gave it rhythm and rhyme. The present day letter-songs (*kaththupaattukal*), chain-songs (*maalapaattukakal*) etc. are living examples. Books released in Arabimalayalam on history, science, mathematics, linguistics, medicine and theology were manifestation of immense hard work and deep knowledge. Books like "*Aayirathonnu ravukal*" (One Thousand and One Nights), "*Fatahul Fataah*" (world history), "*Malabar charitram*" (Malabar history), "*Vikramaaditya kadhakal*" (Vikramaditya stories), "*Ashtangahridayam*" (Ashtānga Hridayam ), "*Muslim Panchangam*" etc. were some of the great works came out in for a reading outside the four walls of *madrasas*. By the 19<sup>th</sup> century, there were fifteen Arabimalayalam printing press across Kerala. This alternative literacy system was ardently accepted in the Mappila populace of Malabar, in nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The social leaders of then were adamant that the community should not fall short in knowledge due to the lack of modern/English education. For that they produced all sorts of ethnic knowledge and world literature in Arabimalayalam.

### **Anti-colonial themes**

Anti-colonial literature was a prominent branch of Mappila literature. Mappilas became a major threat to the imperialists with their "community-internal" literature being pungently anti-colonial. The book "*Thahriid*" written by Sainudhin Maqdam I (1467-1521) called for "holy war"

*jihād* against the Portuguese. Sheik Sainudhin II's *Thuhfathul mujahidiin*, and khazi Muhammed's *fatahul mubiin*, etc. are rich with anti-colonial propaganda. These writings also celebrate the brave men who fought and died against the colonial forces. It laments the brutal measures the Portuguese unleashed against the Mappilas and ignites the community for a revolution. Many songs and stories came out that glorify the brave men among them and urged the common man to rise against the colonial forces. This trend of literary-revolt and mobilization continued against the British also. The *fatwas* released in Arabimalayalam against the British are historical examples for this. The 1921 Madras gazette banned the publication or possession of a book published in Arabimalayalam titled "*Muhimmathul mu'aminiiin*" for criticising British colonialism using the Islamic ideology. War songs that contextualized Islamic Holy wars to Kerala context, eulogies, calls for *jihād* etc. were recurring themes in the literature. The emancipatory potential conceived in the shift from the primary devotional-song style to anticolonial-song style during the colonial era was tremendous.

### **The social insulator**

This new language gave an insulation/cover to the community, from both the imperialist forces. Their efforts to stand different from the common Malayalam speaking community and their need to be inaccessible to native spies of the British were made possible with this community-internal language. In that way, unlike the general unificatory function of a language, Arabimalayalam can be seen as a dividing language. A language that insulated the speech community from its social community. This independent status necessitated them a parallel literary stream in their language, the price of which is debated. Mappilas, therefore, developed a community-internal literacy system and measures. The best example for this is that, during this period, in a marriage proposal, if the bride is unable to read any two lines from *muhyudhin maala* in Arabimalayalam, the bride was considered unqualified. While this *muhyudhin maala* was not taught in *madrāsas*.

### **Nationalism and Language**

An interesting point is that, the Mappilas did not attempt to create a microcosm of Arabia in Kerala. The history shows us that in most of the lands where people converted largely into Islam, the native tongue has been replaced by Arabic. The spread of Arabic replacing Qibti (Coptic) language in Egypt and replacing Aramaic and Syriac in Syria and examples for this. But the case in Malabar is different. At this point, why the community did not convert to a complete Arabic speaking community remains as a historical question. This is where the nationalist aspect of the language choice comes forward. Unlike many West-Asian and North-African countries, where converted Muslims replaced their local languages with Arabic, Mappilas stood by their native tongue. Though they could have easily adopted Arabic, which they had to master for their religious existence, as their tongue, the Mappilas opted not to. The superficial modification they brought in was clearly political in this scenario. Being an attempt to withstand the imperialist supremacy on native intellect, the Arabimalayalam publications covered all branches of knowledge required for the sustenance of a society without the help of the imperialist aids. A striking feature of this parallel literacy was that it drew a clear-cut distinction between the religious and secular education. The non-inclusion of poetry and related streams in the *madrāsa* curriculum was an act of making the religious education and extra-religious education (or secular education) different. With this, Mappilas attempted on countering the westerner's dominance-by-knowledge tool by producing all sort of ethnic knowledge and artistic expressions in their own tongue.

### **Conclusion**

If the Arabic part of Mappila Malayalam is removed, what we get is not Malayalam, its more than Malayalam. That means, Mappila Malayalam was not just a transcription of Malayalam with Arabic phonemes. There were additions and modifications that were taken into Malayalam, and that

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too not just from Arababic, but from Persian, Yemeni, and many south Indian languages too. That forces us to assume that Mappila Malayalam is a creole derived from the lingua franca, Arabimalayalam. The results of this language adaptation and the resultant cultural framing that the community had to accept are viewed differently. These different perspectives, as it did through out the course of history of community, engage in continuing debates up to date. The community reformers had to face a tough challenge from one section of the society at the age of reformation. And the validity of the arguments raised as requiring a change in the community's language policy and social standpoints are still questioned. Present day Muslim populace of Kerala divide into factions that stand pro and anti to the Arabimalayalam movement. It has been widely pointed out by many later historians that the communal backwardness of the Mappilas was highly influenced by the Arabimalayalam period. The relentless combats with the colonial forces of different ages is the main reason in it. The anti-colonial attitude and imprudent rejection of colonial favours brought them in conflict with the colonial modernity. Excessive glorification of anti-colonial struggle made the Mappilas "fanatic." The rejection of modern education by the first generation had its negative effects perpetuated. The categorization of education into religious and secular and prioritization of the former and disregard to the latter brought a setback in academic field. The limits the insulating nature of Arabimalayalam put on extra-community interactions secluded the community in a social platform of growth and advancements.

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## 14. Cultural Traumatize: A Psychopathological Dynamics of Immigrants in Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Namesake*

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Jhumpa Lahiri, the first Asian to win the Pulitzer prize and the one to bag honors like Trans-Atlantic Award (1993), O.Henry Award (1999), PEN/Hemingway Award (1999), Addison Metcalf Award (2000), The New Yorker's Best Debut of the year(2000), M.F.K Fisher Distinguished Writing Award (2000), and Guggenheim Fellowship(2002), is the daughter of Indian immigrants who underwent manifold migrations (from India to England to America) and finally settle in America, mostly prompted by the pull factors viz. a good life. Her first published collection of short stories is 'Interpreter of Maladies' and her first novel is 'The Namesake' which received rave appraisals. Mutually these works have as the causal subject, the experience of the exile. As an Indian living in the U.S., she has the experience of growing up concurrently in two worlds and in two cultures. Jhumpa Lahiri, the second-generation Indian immigrant in the U.S. brings out the disconcerting contradictions and issues through her writings to the readers. Cultural traumatize is defined as injure, wound or shock made by the disarticulation of culture. It deals with the cultural trauma and the affiliations of cultural disarray in two countries. This article deals with the psychopathological dynamics of Immigrants in the novel 'The Namesake.' The term psychopathology is the study of the origin, development and manifestation of mental or behavioral disorders and closely associated with one's character. Thus, the characters in the novel picture their throbbing behavioral posture towards the change in their obtainable culture.

In 'Namesake' Lahiri carves about the experiences of a Bengali American family drummed between cultures, identities, and languages, trying to find their own spaces and selves. In many respects, the novel symbolizes an extension of the last story in the collection called 'The Third and the Final Continent' in which a Bengali immigrant looks back on his first years in America. In 'The Namesake', once more she uncovers the identical text. Crossing the border is not only the meeting of the two races but it is altercation of the two value systems, two-isms, as well. As Jhumpa Lahiri herself says, 'My mother has lived outside India for nearly 35 years; my father nearly 40. Since 1969, they've made their home in the United States. But there were invisible walls erected around our home, walls intended to keep American influence at bay. Growing up, I was admonished not to "behave" like an American, or worse to think of myself as one.'<sup>[1]</sup> In her debut novel 'The Namesake', Jhumpa Lahiri seems to be carrying forward the subject of the torment of the individual because of the fanciful and fond wishes of one's family and the working and doings of the society. The novel can be roughly divided into three parts: in the first part that deals with Gogol's roots, Gogol is named and the long cycle of parental anticipation and grapple with past and seemingly inaccessible relationships begins; in the second part, Gogol modifies his name, goes away from home, makes novel relationships and builds a bordered space that excludes his roots; in the third part, after the decease of Ashoke, Gogol literally and metaphorically comes back 'home' and begins to comprehend the magnitude of his roots.

In take of alcoholic wine of any kind by Ashoke's neighbours gave a bitter experience and a cultural stigma for the Indian couple in America. When Ashima was admitted in the labor ward, Ashoke found that his friends were waiting with cigars, and a bottle of champagne. Ashoke find indifferent to such indulgences. He neither smokes nor drinks alcohol of any kind. This kind of practice is found abundant in the novel. The usage of champagne in the normal life of Americans is totally against the Indian traditional and culture. "...a nurse has announced that one of them has a boy or a girl. There are handshakes all around, pats on the back, before the father is escorted away. The men wait with cigars, flowers, address books, bottles of champagne. They smoke cigarettes,

ashing onto the floor” (NS.12) “Instead of cereal and tea bags, there were whiskey and wine bottles on the top of the refrigerator, most of them nearly empty. Just standing there had made Ashima feel drunk” (NS.32) To the maximum a reader can find a absolute cultural traumatize in the Namesake. When Alan, Judy, Amber, and clover came to see the baby, the Indian couple shocked seeing their practice of bringing alcohol and using it in front of the infant that too in neighbours home. Whereas in India, these kind of customs are not found and encouraged. However, for his friend’s satisfaction Ashoke acted like drinking the champagne. “Alan sets down a garbage bag full of Amber and Clover’s old baby clothes, uncorks a bottle of cold champagne. The foaming liquid splashes onto the floor, is poured into the mugs. They raise their mugs to Gogol, Ashima and Ashoke only pretending to take sips”. (NS.33)

R.K.Narayan is one of the most famous Indian writer in English uncovered the equivalent approach as Jhumpa Lahiri mirrored in her writings, through his novella named ‘The x = x + 1 syndrome’ which portrays a typical illness that is faced by an Indian who goes abroad after graduating from big institutes like the IITs or IIMs. As he says, ‘When an Indian professional becomes a ‘Non-Resident Indian’ in the United States, he soon starts suffering from a strange disease. The symptoms are a fixture of restlessness, anxiety, hope and nostalgia. The virus is a deep inner need to get back home’. Like Shakespeare said, “The spirit is willing but the flesh is weak”.<sup>[2]</sup>As said, the novel *The Namesake* received rave reviews both in India and abroad. *The Week* praised it as “It hits many familiar themes; the uneasy status of the immigrant, the tension between India and United States and between family tradition and individual freedom... a coming-of-age novel”.<sup>[3]</sup> Migration is a process that results in the innovation of countless cultural stigma and agony of an individual or a family. This will generate a deficient in a sense of belonging both in the home and host lands. The principal character in the novel, Ashima feels the sense of deficient in belonging both in the home and host land because of exodus from India to America. Ashima is shown as finding solace in thoughts about India and in the watch “which is a bon voyage gift from her parents slipped over her wrist, the last time she saw them, amid airport confusion and tears”. (NS.4)

The novel is a kaleidoscope of the diverse hues of human associations, the conflicts and confusions of the characters emotional pains and afflictions as she portrays the theme of cultural dilemmas and the displacement of migrants. Ashima feels spatially and emotionally dislocated from the comfortable “home” of her father. The majority of the time she remains lost in the memories of her “home”, thinking of the activities going on there. She expends her time re-reading Bengali short stories, poems, and articles from Bengali magazine she had brought with her. However, the most horrifying experience for her is “motherhood in a foreign land. For it was one thing to be pregnant, to suffer the queasy mornings in bed, the sleepless nights, the dull throbbing in her back, the countless visits to the bathroom. Throughout the experience, inspite of her growing discomfort, ..... so far from home, unmonitored and unobserved by those she loved without a single grandparent or parent or uncle or aunt at her side and to raise a child in a country where she is related to no one, where she knows so little, where life seems so tentative and spare”(NS.6)Lahiri elicits the perplexing and intricate expedition an emigrant family makes in order to have a better life in a land, which offers numerous opportunities to anyone willing to try. It offers glimpses into the harsh realities that immigrants have to face while they make an effort to incorporate into the culture of a foreign country, as well as not overlooking their identifiable values and mores. Aruti Nayar says, Lahiri in her novel “brings alive the multiple selves, construct so painstakingly to make sense of the unknown world that is as much a land of opportunities as it is of conflict and confusion”<sup>[4]</sup> The discomfort and the cultural traumatize experienced by Ashima has also been uttered in lucid terms when it is said that Ashima spent hours in the apartment napping and sulking, rereading her parent’s letters and the same five Bengali novels and that for Ashima: “Being a foreigner is a sort of lifelong pregnancy-a perpetual wait, a constant burden, a continuous feeling out of sorts. It is an ongoing responsibility, a parenthesis in what had once been ordinary life, only to discover that that previous life has vanished, replaced by something more complicated and demanding. Like pregnancy, being a foreigner, Ashima believes, is

something that elicits the same curiosity from strangers, the same combination of pity and respect.” (NS.49, 50) The above-cited passage from the text shows us the cultural menace experienced by the character. The character’s mental behavior towards the outlandish culture is revealed with the testimony. She feels that it is a lifelong pregnancy for her to lead a life in America with an odd culture. She suffered a lot compare to her husband since she is a homemaker. Ashoke escaped from the anxiety owing to his profession. Therefore, the victim here is Ashima.

Loneliness is one of the blazing tribulations of the expatriate community in the nation of their choice. In the novel in reference, the Bengali Indian couple Ashoke Ganguli and Ashima Ganguli experience this issue copiously on landing in Cambridge; of the two, it is the wife who undergoes this stress more than the husband does. For the first time in her life, she slept lonely and underwent the pain of loneliness in a strange place where she cannot find any known faces. Then she tries to see her husband through the window but fails. As seen in the text, “It is the first time in her life she has slept alone, surrounded by strangers; all her life she has slept either in a room with her parents, or with Ashoke at her side. She wishes the curtains were open, so that she could talk to the American women”. (NS.3) Ashima realizes that Americans prefer their privacy to public declarations of affection. Eight thousand miles away in Cambridge, she is always nostalgic of her relatives in India. She bewared to raise her child in the midst of society so called reserved and abandoned. The mental misery and the distress in her behavior towards the foreign culture are articulated through this statement. These words have come out of her after a protracted tolerance with the American Culture. After Gogol’s birth, she says to Ashoke, “I’m saying I don’t want to raise Gogol alone in this country. It’s not right. I want to go back”. (NS.33) When Ashoke realizes her anguish, he himself feels culpable for bringing Ashima into an alien country. Ashima suffers from a sleep deprivation in the hushed house with a newborn.

The cultural traumatize and its consequences can be seen at two echelons, first, from the point of view of the parents, Ashima and Ashoke, and second, from that of the children, Gogol and his sister Sonia, the American born second generation Indian-American. Only a typical middle class Indian mother knows how much it would affect her soul when she learns her children take to American ways, which are totally anathema to her social and religious beliefs and practices. When Ashima’s son Gogol dates the American girl Maxine and goes to spend his vacation with the girl’s parents, Ashima feels the gorge in her soul. The conversation as follows: “I’m going to spend a couple of weeks in New Hampshire.” “Oh”, his mother says. She sounds at once unimpressed and relieved. “Why do you want to go there, of all places? What’s the difference between New Hampshire and here?” “I’m going with a girl I’m seeing”, he tells her. “Her parents have a place there.” Though she says nothing for a while, he knows what his mother is thinking, that he is willing to go on vacation with someone else’s parents but not see his own.” (NS.145) Americanized children are given emancipation to silhouette their life individually after they come to go a particular age group. Dating girls, spending holidays with their friends, hugging the peer group is the acceptable culture for them. However, this kind of European culture never ought to be encouraged by Indian parents at any cost. Seeing the culture, Indian parents advised their son Gogol with the evident. Because they know many Bengalis in America, who have married American women, ended in divorce. Gogol’s parents are taken-a-back when he tells them that marriage is the last thing in his mind. “He pities his parents when they speak to him this way, for having no experience of being young and in love”. (NS.117) To the extent, the culture of America has given these Indian parents a great headache. According to the text, it is said that Gogol spent a night with his girl friend. The cultural shock is seen in the novel through the behavior of the character Gogol. It is a sin to have sex before marriage in India and Indians in maximum stick to it. Sex between two willing adults is a way of life in America. This is so normal in America. These kinds of cultural dislocation and foreignness are intolerable for the Indian parents. The text says: “They’d made love for the first time in a doubled bed. They’d gone out for their meals, neither of them able to afford the items on the room service menu”. (NS.119)

Indian parents are also terribly concerned about the welfare of their children. Seeing that Gogol is going steady with Maxine, his parents are very much upset. As Maxine is a typically American woman, Gogol's parents are "His parents are diffident around Maxine, at first keeping their distance, not boisterous as they typically are around their Bengali friends." (NS.148) Growing up with ties to all the three countries Lahiri has lived with a sense of homelessness and an inability to belong to any of these countries. At a press conference in Calcutta in January 2001, she describes this failure of belonging, "No country is my motherland. I always find myself in exile whichever country I travel to, that's why I was tempted to write something about those living their lives in exiles."<sup>[5]</sup> Caught between the two cultures, the characters appear to be returning to their roots towards the end of the novel. Ashima, true to the meaning of her name, is all set to go beyond the boundaries as she decides to stay for six months in India and six months in America. Therefore, she is "true to the meaning of her name, she will be without borders, without a home of her own, a resident everywhere and nowhere" (NS.276) Russell King, John Connell and Paul White rightly argue that for "some groups, migration is not a mere interval between fixed points of departure and arrival, but a mode of being in the world- 'migrancy'.<sup>[6]</sup> "Migrants", says Salman Rushdie, "straddle two cultures.... Fall between two stools."<sup>[7]</sup> The immigrants face difficulty in copying with a new culture, which is entirely different from theirs. The immigrant children or rather, the second-generation immigrants find it more confusing when they get themselves caught between two different cultures. Lahiri herself has commented on her status as a child of immigrant parents. She says: "I wanted to please my parents and meet their expectations. I also wanted to meet the expectations of my American peers, and the expectations I put on myself to fit into an American society. It's a classic case of divided identity...."<sup>[8]</sup> It is not only the Indian suffer in other country, the immigrants from any culture feel the same quandary. For example, Graham, Moushumi's fiance, during his visit to Calcutta, found the Bengali customs and culture "taxing" and "repressed" as there were no drinks and he could not "even hold her hand on the street without attracting snares." (NS.217) Even Gogol and Sonia do not feel "at home" in Calcutta where their parents find solace and console. Whereas Ashman feels miserable "staring at the clouds as they journey back to Boston." (NS.87)

In all the probabilities there could not be any teleological explanation for the condition of the exile, alienation, living in-between and it is a condition, which largely disables human agency. The individual efforts to bring in meaninglessness seem to be futile. This is also the realization of Gogol-the narrative's point of "focalisation" towards the end: "There was the disappearance of the name Gogol's great-grandmother had chosen for him, lost in the mail somewhere between Calcutta and Cambridge. This had led, in turn, to the accident of his being named Gogol, defining and distressing him for so many years. He had tried to correct that randomness, that error. And yet it had not been possible to reinvent himself fully, to break from that mismatched name." (NS.286-287) In conclusion, Ashoke and Ashima's sojourn in the US has not been a happy one; though they have earned some money, they have no joy. Gogol, their son spends most of his youth in dating not only young girls but also a married woman. This is according to our culture is said to be an animalistic one. The only expectation is Sonia who had a normal life inspite of this foreignness. In so many ways, Gogol's family life feels like a string of accidents, "In so many ways, his family's life feels like a string of accidents, unforeseen, unintended, one incident begetting another" (NS.286) Hence, it is no doubt that psychopathological distress and cultural traumatize occupied their family because of the cultural displacement and foreignness. Thus, this article emerges to bring out the causalities made by the multi-regional customs of the present world.

**Abbreviation Used: NS – The Namesake**

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## 15. Alternate History: A Particle in Speculative Fiction

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### Section-1: Alternative history: Origin and Scope

Alternate history or alternative history or historical fiction is a subgenre of fiction (science fiction, literary fiction or historical fiction depending on the story's emphasis) in which the story takes place in a world where something in our history is different than what it is ... basically a key moment in history diverged from what we know it to be. In French, Italian, Spanish, and German, the genre of alternate history is called *uchronie* / *ucronía*, which has given rise to the term *Uchronia* in English. This neologism is based on the prefix *u-* and the Greek for time, *chronos*. An *uchronia* is defined as a time that does not exist or a "non-time".

**Origin:** "Alternate History" was coined in 1954 and was first used in 1977. In writing an alternate history, the author makes the conscious choice to change something in our past. According to Steven H Silver, Alternate history should satisfy three parameters:

- 1) The story must have a point of divergence history of our world prior to the time at which the author is writing,
- 2) a change that would alter history as it is known, and
- 3) an examination of the ramification of that change.

From the beginning, an alternative history has an immense feasibility to merge with innumerable fictional tropes involving cross-time travel between alternate histories or other psychic awareness of the existence of our universe. Cross-time, time-splitting, and alternate history themes have become so closely interwoven that it is impossible to discuss them fully apart from one another. Several genres of fiction have been confused as alternate histories. Science fiction set in what was the future but is now the past through the words of Moon-watcher in Arthur C. Clarke's *2001: A Space Odyssey*, "For a long time, intoxicated by victory, Moon-Watcher stood dancing and gibbering at the entrance of the cave. He rightly sensed that his whole world had changed and that he was no longer a powerless victim of the forces around him."<sup>1</sup> and Winston, in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* by George Orwell, who said that if a story was set in the future when it was written, but now is set in the past, it does not become alternate history. Alternate history is not only an intentional alteration of the historical timeline, but also an examination of what that change might mean. Alternate history also does not include secret history ... where things that are not known to have happened, but would not change history if they did. "To the future or to the past, to a time when thought is free, when men are different from one another and do not live alone—to a time when truth exists and what is done cannot be undone: From the age of uniformity, from the age of solitude, from the age of Big Brother, from the age of doublethink—greetings!" Alternate history is either related to or distinct from counterfactual history—the term used by some professional historians when using thoroughly researched and carefully reasoned speculations on "what would have happened when ..." as a tool of academic historical research.

### Section-2: Historical view of Alternate history

The foremost view of an alternate history has made in the work namely *Ab Urbe Condita* by Livy who had ventured an alternative in 4<sup>th</sup> century BC as the theme of expansion the empire of Alexander, the Great, towards westward instead of eastward. *Tirant lo Blanc* (1490) an epic romance

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in which “*Tirantprescomiat del Rei, de la Reina, de Felip e de la Infanta. E, recollidatota la gent, donaren les veles al prosper vent e navegarenab bon temps e la mar tranquil·le, que un matí se trobarendavant la ciutat de Constantinoble.*”<sup>3</sup> the authorJoanotMartorelltells the story of the valiant knight Tirant when the loss of Constantinople to the Turks. One of the best and earliest works of an alternate history might be the French Louis Geoffrey’s *Histoire de la MonarchieUniverselle: Napoléon et la Conquête du Monde (1812–1832)* (History of the Universal Monarchy: Napoleon and the Conquest of the World) (translated in 1836), which imagines Napoleon's First French Empire victorious in the French invasion of Russia in 1811 and in an invasion of England in 1814, later unifying the world under Bonaparte's rule. In English, "*P.'s Correspondence*" was the foremost complete alternate history byNathaniel Hawthorne in 1845 which recollected the tale of a man who is considered "a madman" due to his perceiving the reality in which long-dead famous people are still alive such as the poets: Burns, Byron, Shelley, and Keats, the actor Edmund Kean, the British politicians George Canning, Arthur Wellesley, Duke I of Wellington, and also Napoleon Bonaparte. *Aristopia* (1895) the first novel-length alternate history in Englishby CastelloHolfordis another attempt to portray a utopian society as “*In Utopia there was political liberty, a complete democracy, while England, under the Tudor tyrants, was fast losing the little political liberty she ever had. Under the cover of Utopia, More penned a scathing denunciation of the tyranny of Henry and his servile judges. And this, too, within the very court of the king and under the eye of his ministers. No wonder that the author of Utopia paid for his devotion to liberty and humanity with his head, on Tower Hill.*”<sup>4</sup>in North Americawhich was not as nationalistic as Louis Geoffroy's work.

### Section-3: New Trends in Alternate history

The utmost number of new trends in an alternative history had appeared in 20<sup>th</sup> century writings such as*Men Like Gods* (1923)through which H.G. Wells had referred “*All the peace and fixity that man has ever known or will ever know is but the smoothness of the face of a torrent that flies along with incredible speed from cataract to cataract. Time was when men could talk of everlasting hills.*”<sup>5</sup>and saidseveral Englishmen who had transferred into an alternate universe featuring anidealistic Britain, Charles Petrie's *If: A Jacobite Fantasy* (1926),and a series of essays had been collected from some of the leading historians of the periodlike British historian Sir John Squire in his anthology *namely If It Had Happened Otherwise*(1931). The other testimony of alternate history is the experimental use of parody since 1930s. The most prolific American humourist*James Thurber*had taken offthe alternate history stories about the American Civil War in his 1930 story. The same approach had been taken by Robert A. Heinlein in his 1941 novelette,*Elsewhen*. At the time of World War II, several alternate history propaganda stories were popular about the possible winners namely Nazis, British and Americans which might be produced both by British and American authors who depicted Nazi invasions of their respective countries as cautionary tales.Time travel has been continued to be a popular theme among the alternate history writers. Vary among the writers is in two ways, one is fulfilled by some writers who had created two histories; the other is the future that existed before the time travelling event. H.G. Wells' *cross-time/many universes* was fully developed by *De Camp*whose story "*The Wheels of If*" (*Unknown Fantasy Fiction*, 1940)had been described the nature of hero which is repeatedly shifted from one alternate history to another. In the late 1940s and the 1950s, writers such as *H. Beam Piper, Sam Merwin Jr. and Andre Norton* wrote thrillers in which all alternate histories are co-existent and travel among them. As far as the alternate history is concerned this type of concept was provided as a convenient frame for packing a miscellany of historical alternatives into a single novel.A veryfew writings like Larry Niven's*All the Myriad Ways*, focus on the reality of all possible universes - “*No. There 'was no luck anywhere. Every decision was made both ways. For every wise choice you bled your heart out over, you made allthe other choices too. And so it went, all through history.*”<sup>6</sup>which have no moral significance.The timeframerolesof the selected writings can neither be brave and clever nor be skilled, but fortunately lucky enough to be on the cosmos and witness the course of events that havehappened. *The Man in the High Castle* (1962) by Philip K. Dick “*And yet, in the sunlight, the silver triangle glittered. It reflected light. Fire, Mr.Tagomi thought. Not dank or dark object at all. Not heavy, weary, but pulsing with life. The high*

realm, aspect of yang: empyrean, ethereal. As befits work of art. Yes, that is artist's job: takes mineral rock from dark silent earth transforms it into shining light-reflecting form from sky.<sup>7</sup>” was an alternate history which had shown the victory of Nazi Germany and Imperial Japan in 2<sup>nd</sup> World War, which had vary from real-world history in several faces such as one of its characters and the author, depicts a reality in which the Allies won the war. Isaac Asimov's short story *What If--* is about a couple who can explore alternate realities by means of a television. The same idea was intensely shown in another novel of his *The End of Eternity* (1955) in which the "Eternals" can change the realities of the world.

Protestantism had clearly shown in the 20<sup>th</sup> century in the Republic of New England through some popular-fiction versions of alternate history such as *The Alteration* (1976) by Kingsley Amis but major events in the Reformation had taken place in some other colonial countries of Asian continent and other parts of the world. The new trends in latest versions of speculative fiction had been shown in a few works: *A Different Flesh* by a prolific author and master of Alternate History, Harry Turtledove in which America was not colonized from Asia during the Pleistocene period; *In the Presence of Mine Enemies*, in which the Nazis had got the conquer in 2<sup>nd</sup> World War; and *Ruled Britannia*, in which the Spanish Armada had succeeded in conquering Britain during the Elizabethan period which had presented through the historical works of William Shakespeare that would have motivated the Britons to rise up against the Spanish conquerors. It is evident that the contemporaries of Shakespeare like S.M. Stirling, Kim Stanley Robinson, Harry Harrison, Howard Waldrop, and others had presented the historical facts through their alternate history works. The immediate moment of 2<sup>nd</sup> World War, several writers for instance James P. Hogan, Norman Spinrad had supposed to inject time splitters from the near future through their works: *The Proteus Operation* and *The Iron Dream* (1972) respectively. The latter one was deliberated to be a science fiction novel which moderated Adolf Hitler's ruling after fleeing from Europe to North America in the 1920s. The United Kingdom made peace with Hitler before the involvement of the United States in 2<sup>nd</sup> World War which had projected in a series of works namely *Small Change* by Jo Walton and *The Indians Won* (1970) by Martin Cruz Smith had presented an independent American Indian nation following the defeat of Custer.

As well, Philip Roth had made a stare at an America where Franklin D. Roosevelt is defeated in 1940 and Charles Lindbergh was elected, leading to rise up fascism and anti-Semitism in the U.S. in his novel *The Plot Against America* (2004). And pioneering author in speculative fiction was Michael Chabon had contributed his novel *The Yiddish Policemen's Union* (2007) to the genre of alternate history which was explored a world in which the State of Israel was destroyed in its infant stage and many of the world's Jews instead live in a small strip of Alaska set aside by the U.S. government for Jewish settlement. A time travel splitter variant has been being involved entire communities which are transported from the present (or the near-future) to the past or vice-versa by a natural disaster. *Island in the Sea of Time* trilogy in which S. M. Stirling had explored that Nantucket Island and all its modern inhabitants were transported to the age of Bronze to become the world's first superpower. And John Birmingham's novel *Axis of Time* trilogy dealt with the culture of United Nations when a naval task force from 2021 finds itself back in 1942 helping the Allies against the Empire of Japan and the Germans. Many science fantasies and other fantasies are set in a world that has a history somewhat similar to our own world with magic. The fantasy, *Three Hearts and Three Lions* written by Poul Anderson in which the Matter of France is history and the fairy folk is real and powerful. *Jonathan Strange & Mr Norrell*, An alternative history novel written by Susanna Clarke, has taken place in an alternative version of England where a separate Kingdom ruled by the Raven King “the Raven King –who was not a fairy, but an Englishman had a somewhat regrettable habit of abducting men and women and taking them to live with him in his castle in the Other Lands.<sup>8</sup>” and founded on magic existed in Northumbria for over 300 years. Not only at the time of English Civil War but at the age of Oliver Cromwell and Charles I, Patricia Wrede's fantasy works decided that the Great Britain has a Royal Society of Wizards as well as Paul Anderson's *A Midsummer Tempest* has

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explored that William Shakespeare was remembered as the Great Historian through both an alternate history and an earlier Industrial outcome.

Prior to the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, England had banished "makers" who were Ben Franklin the finest maker of the continent, George Washington an English army commander and "Tom" Jefferson the first president of "Apallachee", to the North American continent under the control of Oliver Cromwell in Orson Scott Card's *The Tales of Alvin Maker*, an alternate American novel which projected the political division of the continent is considerably misrepresented with two large English colonies: one aligned with England, and the other governed by exiled Cavaliers. The contemporary world of fantasy speculates many works of fantasy of magic which were able to make it function when the magical version of our world's history is set in times of 20<sup>th</sup> century. The distinction between alternate history and a form of secret history (as when Josepha Sherman's *Son of Darkness* has an elf living in New York City, in disguise) is projected in works like *Magic* by Robert A. Heinlein, *Incorporated* where a construction company can use magic to rig up stands at a sporting event and Paul Anderson's *Operation Chaos* and its sequel *Operation Luna*, where genies are serious weapons of war, here the use of magic throughout the United States and other modern countries makes it clear as not secret history. The sequel clarifies this as the result of a collaboration of Einstein and Planck in 1901, resulting in the theory of "rheatics".

#### Section-4: Conclusion

Alternate history writers are not just confined to Europe and the USA, there has long been a staple of Japanese fiction with such authors as Futaro Yamada, Ryo Hanmura writing novels set in recognizable historical settings not only with supernatural but also science fiction elements. In 1973, Ryo Hanmura wrote *Musubi no Yama Hiroku*, a masterpiece of Japanese speculative fiction, which recreated 400 years of Japan's history from the perspective of a secret magical family with psychic abilities. Twelve years later, author Hiroshi Aramata wrote the groundbreaking *Teito Monogatari* which re-imagined the history of Tokyo across the twentieth century in a world heavily influenced by the supernatural. In short, Alternate history is one of the subgenres of speculative fiction which plays a pivotal role to project the world's history admixture of science elements, fantasy with magic and psychic themes of historical figures who have played steadfast roles in history. There is a genuine dearth of research in this field. When stereotyping of characters is difficult and when there is a dominant counter-narrative strain in the writings, a refreshing look is necessary to test our established theoretical frameworks to analyse and research Analytical history.

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## 16. World of Women in Jaishree Misra's Novels

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### Introduction

In most of the societies families are traditional and male dominated. The women in these families have a designed role which does not allow any room for individualism, identity and assertion. Same tradition and domination can be observed even in literary field. For many centuries men dominated literature. We can understand these things clearly when we read Virginia Woolf's essay "A Room of One's Own." Virginia Woolf in her extended essay "A Room of one's own" argues for the literal and figural space for women writers within a literary tradition dominated by patriarchy. The title of the essay comes from Woolf's conception that: "...a woman must have money and a room of her own if she is to write fiction". (p 4)The title also refers to any author's need for poetic license and the personal liberty to create art. The essay throws light on many aspects of women and the problems of women writers. It examines whether women were capable of producing, and in fact free to produce work of the quality of William Shakespeare, addressing the limitations that past and present women writers face. She denies the thinking of the gentlemen regarding the women writers of the nineteenth century. "... female novelists should only inspire to excellence by courageously acknowledging the limitations of their sex." (p70)

Most of the men in their writings represented women in some fixed roles. They have given an image of womanhood, where a woman is a good daughter, caring sister, ardent lover, devoted wife, loving mother etc.... sacrificing her dreams and wishes for the welfare of the family and guarding the honour and reputation of the family. The early nineteenth century women novelists also followed the same tradition of representation of women in their writings. Virginia Woolf mentions about these women novelists in her essay as: "...they came to set their thought on paper – that is that they had no tradition behind them or one so short and partial that it was of little help." (p 70) In the same essay she explains the circumstances that lead the women to write novels rather than any other form of literature. "There is no reason to think that the form of the epic or of the poetic play suit a woman any more than the sentence suits her. But all the older forms of literature were hardened and set by the time she became a writer. The novel alone was young enough to be soft in her hands – another reason, perhaps why she wrote novels. Yet who shall say that even now 'the novel' (I give it inverted commas to mark my sense of words' inadequacy) who shall say that even this most pliable of all forms is rightly shaped for her use? No doubt we shall find her knocking that into shape for herself when she has the free use of her limbs; and providing some new vehicle, not necessarily in verse, for the poetry in her. For it is the poetry that is still denied outlet." (p 72)Woolf also writes how she longs to read the books on the problems of women written by woman rather than men writing about the women. "Where shall I find that elaborate study of the psychology of women by a woman?"- (p 73) In the fifth chapter of the essay we can observe the note of optimism and acknowledges women writing on various subjects like histories, biographies, travel, scholarship, research, philosophies, science and economics: "I had come at last, in the course of this rambling to the shelves which hold books by the living; by women and by men; for there are almost as many books written by women now as by men....that women no longer write novels solely... There are books on all sorts of subjects which a generation ago no woman could have touched... And though novels predominate, novels themselves may very well have changed from association with books of a different feather...She may be beginning to use writing as an art, not as a method of self-expression." (p 4)

Fulfilling the dreams of Virginia Woolf, twentieth century emerged as a new era as it produced many women writers in and around the world who portrayed the women in different dimensions. Particularly Indian women novelists have given a new dimension to the Indian literature. It made a remarkable change in the attitude and perspective of the women writers. These women writers started to express their concern for women and their problems. The themes in their novels are about the miserable plight of women suffering under the insensitive husbands, fathers and other male members of the society. Their novels also talk about the women who question the age old traditions and want to seek individual growth and how they try to discover and rediscover meaning to their life. They started to write upon a variety of subjects related to the women. Through their contributions they are creating awareness for the modern women all over the globe.

Indian English writing started with authors like Sarojini Naidu, Nayantara Sahgal, Rama Mehta, Kamala Das, Anita Nair, Susan Viswanathan, Kamala Markandaya, and Anita Desai. The year 1990 became very remarkable because India became a popular literary Nation as a number of women authors made their debut in this era. Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, Suniti Namjoshi and Anuradha Marwah Roy used realism as main theme of their novels. The list of Indian women novelists also comprises popular names such as Bharati Mukherjee, Nergis Dalal, Krishna Sobti, Dina Mehta, Indira Goswami, Malati Chendur, Gauri Deshpande, Namita Gokhale, Ruth Jhabvala, Shobha De, Arundhati Roy, Jhumpa Lahiri, Kiran Desai and many more... The present day women novelists are shifting their genres to popular fiction which revolves around the lives of the educated, urban, English speaking elite women. The characters are middle class and above middle class with aspirations of social and economic mobility. These growing breed of writers are not afraid of experiments, they are sharing their deepest personal stories with the readers. The fact that they are bestsellers is just another dimension of their success stories.

Jaishree Misra is one among them who is introduced to the world of writers through her first book 'Ancient Promises', which started as a biography and became a best seller in India. The book has invited publicity to Misra through interviews and reviews that appeared in several newspapers and magazines from India, London and Australia. Written originally in English, it drew wide attention when it was published into Misra's native language, Malayalam, and into Greek and German. Like 'Ancient Promises' (2000), Misra's other books present a true picture of the problems faced by urban women in India. Some of her other novels are Accidents like Love and Marriage (2001), Little Book of Romance (2001), Afterwards (2004), Rani (2007), Secret & Lies (2009) Secrets & Sins (2010) and Scandalous Secret (2011). Jaishree Misra was born in Delhi to a Malayali family. When Misra is a year old, her family moved to England for a two-year stay but most of her childhood was spent in Delhi and Bangalore. She did her M.A. English Honors from Kerala University. As a Keralite, and growing up in an army family in Delhi, she grew up with a western lifestyle. She fell in love as a teenager, but traditionally was forced into an arranged marriage with another Keralite. The marriage was a failure and became worse with the birth of a daughter who has severe learning disability. She experienced how the society treated her daughter and determined to move to a more sympathetic environment. She applied for the scholarships in abroad. In 1990 she moved to England, acquired two post-graduate diplomas, one from the University of London in Special Education and the second from the London College of Printing in Broadcast Journalism. She worked with the special needs children and teenagers and with the Social Services. She also worked as a local journalist at the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC). She was a film classifier for the British Board of Film Classification (BBFC). Later she came in touch with her childhood sweetheart who had never been married. After a bitter divorce and custody battle for her child, she married the man she first met as a schoolgirl in Delhi. Misra's long term desire is to start a residential place for young women with learning disabilities in India. She is a close relative of late Thakazhi Sivasankara Pillai, a famous Malayalam writer and Jnanpith awardee. Her experiences, close association with women and deep understanding of their behavior have enabled her to grasp the intrinsic implication of sympathy. She interwove women in her life and their real life experiences together and profoundly

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expressed herself through the characters of her novels. Misra's keen observation of daily activities and incidents in life has been constantly portrayed in her novels. The themes revolve around love, loss, marriage, relationships, and the things that take place in our lives. Misra is an expert in changing genres and calls commercial fiction as her 'natural home'. She stated, "I'd been doing the Indian writer thing of thinking I have to be more literary than I really am. But I enjoyed writing this book and the veering away to popular fiction was easy.... Commercial fiction works very quickly and it's easier to write. The pressure comes with the speed with which they want you to write". Misra added that she was inspired by popular fiction, and writers like Marian Keyes and Joanna Trollope who have attempted social problems in a 'chatty' and 'accessible' way. [10]

Misra exposes the theme of romantic love and marriage in 'Ancient Promises', 'Accidents like Love and Marriage', 'Afterwards' and 'Rani'. In 'Secrets & Lies', childhood and the bonding among the women and their support to one another helps them to go to the extreme ends in need is explored. 'Ancient Promises' is a semi-autobiographical story of a woman, Janaki, who was an affectionate and a dutiful daughter. The book portrays the story of a woman and her agonizing journey. Janaki has been forced to let go of her first love and into an arranged marriage. Her husband and his family are insensitive towards her and her daughter turning Janaki, from a compassionate lover into a restless and miserable wife. She becomes a helpless mother in despair who constantly searches for her own identity. However, she finally ends up to be a woman who pursues her rightful share of happiness that she deserves.

'Afterwards,' a story of love and loss, Rahul Tiwari takes a vacation from London to Kerala in India. He least expects for a life-changing event to occur during a vacation. But a casual glance over the fence at his neighbor Maya changes his life forever. That single glance was just enough to make him never look back and not to return to London. Rahul finds a great friend and partner in Maya as he takes an unexpected role of a savior to Maya. Maya is a married woman who is stuck in a loveless marriage with a suspicious husband. The situations in her life force her to turn to Rahul for help. Maya becomes bold enough to leave her husband and India with Rahul and her one-year-old daughter Anjali. Misra writes of the great power of love, joy and heartbreak that is involved in giving oneself to another which has the greatest transforming power in one's life, for better or for worse.

'Secrets and Lies' is about four women Anita, Zeba, Bubbles and Sam who are beautiful, intelligent and secretive. She describes the strong bond of friendship among these four women that started in their childhood days. Their friendship starts out at a very young age at a school in Delhi, continues as they grow to be adults, and got married. They are friends for more than twenty years. Anita, Bubbles and Sam move to London while Zeba remains in India. Anita is a top journalist working for the BBC, Bubbles is a pampered but bored wife of a billionaire, and Sam is a wife of a corporate lawyer. Zeba becomes a famous Bollywood actress and lives a luxurious life in India. In spite of their success as adults in the society, a secret has always haunted their lives all through the years, until they come together for their school reunion. They confront the secret that has stayed with them to haunt their adult lives.

'Secrets & Sins', Misra examines the life of a Bollywood star, Aman Khan, who meets a girl, Reva Singh, at a university and deeply in love with each other. Even though they are in love, Reva chooses Ben to become her husband over Aman, rejecting him, as she felt Ben is more reliable. Both Reva and Aman watch each other as Reva turns out to be a great novelist in London while Aman continues to excel being a Bollywood super star. However, a Cannes film festival brings them face to face and puts them in an awkward situation where they have to make a major decision to follow either their hearts or their heads.

"A Scandalous Secret" is the story of a mother-daughter relationship in the shadow of a dark secret. It is the story of an 18 year old named Sonya who sets out to confront her biological mother,

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Neha, for giving her up for adoption soon after her birth. Neha had become pregnant when she was an undergraduate at Oxford University, but was persuaded to give up the baby. She returned to India and kept the entire matter a secret, not even sharing it with the man she eventually marries. Eighteen years later, when Sonya is set to launch herself into university life, she writes to her biological mother to ask her all the questions she had always wished to. In all her novels, Misra writes about the new generation women with a broad outlook and a positive attitude towards life. Even though they face a variety of problems, in the end the women solve them and turn their lives accordingly for a happy ending. The women in Jaishree Misra's novels know how to turn the worse situation into better one.

## **Childhood**

Misra skillfully depicts the childhood of women and their experiences at school and college life in all her novels. In 'Secrets and Lies', she writes about the friendship among four girls that continues when they grew older. It reveals the co-operation among them when they are in trouble. When a new member enters, the curiosity and jealousy of the four girls is exposed in a descriptive way. The entry of Lily D'Souza make the girls envious as they realize that she is a stunning beauty and intelligent too. Misra takes the opportunity to expose the influential role of a teacher or the principal in students' lives. Victoria Lamb, as a principal of St.Judes, serves and maintains the school's reputation for 50 years. She plays an important role in turning stylish and well-spoken young women of upcoming rich Delhi business families into women of sophistication even though the parents merely want their daughters to speak proper English. In this book, a reader gets a good grasp of the role of teachers or principals in shaping the lives of the students. Moreover, it reminds us of personal experiences in our lives as we see girls growing into women. The writer depicts the nurture at school and college through the relationships, which are developed among girls in a comforting and encouraging atmosphere that was provided.

## **Marriage**

Marriage is an important event in human life. It is sweet and noble and represents a permanent bond. It starts the great journey of life when two individuals with different temperaments and identities undertake to tread the same path together. Marriage is the one of the major theme Misra constantly portrays in all her novels. Unfortunately, the characters in all her novels confront a loveless marriage. Even though all the marriages in her novels are arranged marriages, there is a breakdown in it, reflecting the breakdown in the Indian society. For breakdown, there will be many reasons and all are depicted in a proper way. In 'Secrets and Lies', Bubbles realizes that her husband is involved with his assistant James. She then understands why she was a choice of her in-laws, who are billionaires and why sometimes the staff shows silent sympathy towards her. Many times, she is too polite, kind, and considerate of everyone else. She understands her husband's situation as she notices that he is much happier when he is with James. Bubbles do not feel that there is any need for her to be considerate anymore and takes an important decision that gives her real happiness. She calls her fitness trainer Giovanni who feels that the very sight of her was enough to make him the happiest man in the world. In 'Ancient promises' Janaki had a very happy childhood but an unexpected arranged marriage ends her up with a disturbed marriage and a divorce. However, one should not come to the wrong conclusion that the book confirms that arranged marriages are a disaster. One has to realize that Janaki has a great family of parents, grandparents and extended family that helps her deal with her broken marriage and come to understand life. The story ends for good in this book as she finds her true love and marries him.

## Women and their bonding

The problems of women are similar whether they are in India or abroad. The writer explicitly explores this fact that women take bold decisions in challenging situations in her books frequently. All of the characters are above middleclass and rich, intelligent, smart, beautiful and self-confident from an urban environment. In spite of their high economic status, they suffer as they experience difficult times and situations but learn not brood over them. With the support of their friends, they solve their problems and make their lives happy to suit their attitudes and situations. In Misra's novels, one can observe the writer giving a new shape to her characters by breaking the stereotype women of olden days and reveals a new woman of the present culture. The stereotypical way of women sitting alone, wailing for their problems in a desperate mood and accepting the fate or destiny has changed tremendously in the present days. This aspect of women's lives has been given more importance in an entirely different outlook by Misra in all of her books. One can notice that the support systems overcome the bias of caste, creed, religion and money and help their friends to overcome their problems.

## Conclusion

The author has an incredible style of writing. All her novels are modern in their outlook and full of Indian spirit and values. Jaishree Misra's works fall under the category of popular fiction. She moves away from the literary world and comfortably moves into the world of serious readers. She writes straight forward narratives which are natural, original and true to life. The novels reveal the writer's keen observation of the society and draw the attention of readers even though the scenes shift between India and London. Misra is a vivid writer who has experienced what she writes. Her own complex life reflects in her novels. Her writings do not imply that arranged marriages are wrong and bring disaster. Her focus is on women and the present day situations. As women have become more and more independent, they are able to see themselves out of certain situations for better lives. Misra exposes the change in the attitudes of women who no longer accept unhappiness in their lives as fate and thrive in it. Instead they make necessary changes for a happier and better life. Women are more skilled than ever and are exercising their independency in making decisions and taking risks for better future. Misra writes mostly about the urban women and the problems that they face in India. Even though Misra's women do not represent the majority of women in India, it is encouraging to see the changes that are being brought into the lives. Further Misra writes how education transforms women to be more inclined to take risks in life that affect relationships - love, loss, marriage and divorce. In her books, she addresses the change of roles of women from being a daughter to a care giver of older parents and from a stay at home miserable wife and mother to be an adventurous woman unleashing herself into the real world to face the challenges to survive and have a better and happier life.

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## 17. Joseph Conrad's "Heart of Darkness" is the intersection of European colonialism and Racism

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Joseph Conrad, christened Jozef Teodor Konrad Nalecz Korzeniowski, was borne to Polish parents on December 3, 1857. In 1902, two of his best books, *Youth* and *Heart of Darkness*, together with a novella, *The end of the Tether*, were published in book form as *Youth*. For Conrad, the aim of art was to capture one moment of life and freeze it, so that mankind might pause and see such a moment for the truth it contained. *Heart of the Darkness* has as its basis a true historical account of European exploration and colonialism. Throughout Conrad's career *Heart of Darkness* remained one of his most popular and highly regarded works. Conrad, who had experienced himself at first hand the actual practices of colonialism, was aware that the noble and exalted intentions and the so-called humanitarian missions to other countries were merely a façade to extract the bounty of ivory, diamonds and gold available there in fabulous quantities. The motive to civilize those ignorant natives was the pretext to exploit the land for profit.

In this novella, Marlow is an adventurer and the narrator of the tale devoted primarily to a journey to the mysterious Dark Continent or the literal heart of darkness, Africa. The superficial view of the tale is simply the confrontation with exotic natives, treacherous dangers of the deep forests, brutal savagery and even cannibalism. Basically this is Marlow's story and a record of things seen and done. This is a sensitive and vivid travelogue which, while describing a journey, is an angry and satiric document on the absurd and brutal exploitation by European colonial powers. This novella is implicitly concerned with the social, cultural and psychological workings of the cultivated and civilized Europeans left to the uncivilized wilderness. This is a great memorable intersection of European colonialism and racism which encountered many nations for many decades in History.

The novella details the story of the seaman Marlow who, fresh from Europe, is sent on a boat journey up the Congo River to relieve Kurtz, the most successful trader in ivory working for the Belgian government. Prior to their personal encounter, Marlow knows and admires Kurtz through his reputation and his writings for civilizing the African continent and sets out on the journey excited at the prospect of meeting him. However, Marlow's experience in Africa inspires revulsion at the dehumanizing effects of colonialism, a disgust that culminates when he discovers that Kurtz has degenerated from an enlightened civilizer into a vicious, power-hungry subjugator of the African natives. At a station Marlow meets the Company's chief accountant who tells him of a Mr. Kurtz, and explains that Kurtz is a first-class agent. Marlow leaves with a caravan to travel on foot some two hundred miles deeper into the wilderness to the Central Station, where the steamboat that he is to captain is based. Marlow is shocked to learn that his steamboat had been wrecked two days before his arrival. At the company's station Marlow watched some Africans digging the mine and their faces show their pain, abandonment and despair. The work was going on and that is the place where some of the helpers (Africans) had withdrawn to die. Marlow says about their condition: "They were dying slowly—it was very clear. They were not enemies, they were not criminals, they were nothing earthly now. Nothing but black shadows of disease and starvation, lying confusedly in the greenish gloom. Brought from all the recesses of the coast in all the legality of time contracts, lost in uncongenial surroundings, fed on unfamiliar food, they sickened, became inefficient, and were then allowed to crawl away and rest". (Page 18). Marlow saw a white thread tied to the neck of dying African. Marlow wonders at that and thinks "Why? Where did he get it? Was it a badge? —an ornament—a charm—a propitiatory act? Was there any idea at all connected with it? It looked startling round his black neck, this bit of white thread from beyond the seas." The manager explains that they needed to take the steamboat up-river because of rumours that an important station was in jeopardy and that its chief, Mr. Kurtz, was ill. Marlow describes the Company men at this station as lazy back-biting "pilgrims", fraught with envy and jealousy, all trying to gain a higher status within the Company, which, in turn,

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would provide more personal profit; however, they sought these goals in a meaningless, ineffective and lazy manner, mixed with a sense that they were all merely waiting, while trying to stay out of harm's way. After fishing his boat out of the river, Marlow is frustrated by the months spent on repairs. During this time, he learns that Kurtz is far from admired, but is more or less resented (mostly by the manager). Not only is Kurtz's position at the Inner Station a highly envied position, but sentiment seems to be that Kurtz is undeserving of it, as he received the appointment only by his European connections.

Once underway, the journey up-river to the Inner Station, Kurtz's station, takes two months to the day. On board are the manager, three or four "pilgrims" and some twenty "cannibals" enlisted as crew. They come to rest for the night about eight miles below the Inner Station. In the morning they awake to find that they are enveloped by a thick, white fog. From the riverbank they hear a very loud cry, followed by a discordant clamour. A few hours later, as safe navigation becomes increasingly difficult, the steamboat is hit with a barrage of sticks—small arrows—from the wilderness. The pilgrims open fire into the bush with their Winchester rifles. The native serving as helmsman gives up steering to pick up a rifle and fire it. Marlow grabs the wheel to avoid snags in the river. The helmsman is impaled by a spear and falls at Marlow's feet. Marlow sounds the steam whistle repeatedly, causing the shower of arrows to cease. Marlow and a pilgrim watch the helmsman die, and Marlow forces the pilgrim to take the wheel so that he can fling his blood-soaked shoes overboard. Marlow presumes (wrongly) that Kurtz is dead. In a flash forward, Marlow notes that the International Society for the Suppression of Savage Customs commissioned Kurtz to write a report, which he did eloquently. A handwritten note, which was written later by Kurtz, states "Exterminate all the brutes!" (Later, Kurtz entreats Marlow to take good care of the pamphlet.) Marlow does not believe Kurtz was worth the lives that were lost in trying to find him. After putting on a pair of slippers, Marlow returns to the wheel-house and resumes steering. By this time the manager is there, and expresses a strong desire to turn back. At that moment the Inner Station comes into view. At Kurtz's station Marlow sees a man on the riverbank waving his arm, urging them to land. Because of his expressions and gestures, and all the colourful patches on his clothing, in between which possessions are shuffled, the man reminds Marlow of a Harlequin. The pilgrims, heavily armed, escort the manager to retrieve Mr. Kurtz. The harlequin-like man, who turns out to be a Russian, boards the steamboat. The Russian is a wanderer who happened to stray into Kurtz's camp. Through conversation Marlow discovers just how Kurtz could be, how the natives worshipped him, and how very ill he had been of late. The Russian admires Kurtz for his intellect and his insights into love, life, and justice, and suggests that he is a poet. The Russian seems to admire Kurtz even for his power—and for his willingness to use it. Marlow suggests that Kurtz has gone mad. From the steamboat, with a binoculars, Marlow can observe the station in detail and is surprised to see near the station house a row of posts topped with severed heads of natives (Africans) who were supposedly the rebels or enemies of Mr. Kurtz. This shows the cruelty of Mr. Kurtz. "Rebels", "enemies", "criminals", and "workers", are the names given to African Natives by the European exploiters. Marlow observed a head closely. "-and there it was, black, dried, sunken, with closed eyelids—a head that seemed to sleep at the top of that pole, and, with the shrunken dry lips showing a narrow white line of the teeth, was smiling..." (p69)

The manager said that Mr. Kurtz's methods had ruined the district. Marlow understood the cruelty of Mr. Kurtz. He felt that there was nothing exactly profitable in those heads being there on the posts. They only showed that Mr. Kurtz lacks restraint in the gratification of his various lusts. He becomes a savage in that Dark Continent plundering ivory. He is away from civilization and even from medical facilities. With the help of the natives who are always naked he formed a gang of robbers in order to plunder ivory. Around the corner of the house, the manager appears with the pilgrims, bearing Kurtz on an improvised stretcher. The area fills with natives, apparently ready for battle. They were all naked human beings with spears in their hands, with bows, with shields, with wild glances and savage movements. Marlow can see Kurtz shouting on the stretcher. But he is very weak. Marlow says about his condition: "His covering had fallen off, and his body emerged from it

pitiful and appalling as from a winding sheet. I could see the cage of his ribs all astir, the bones of his arm weaving. It was as though an animated image of death carved out of old ivory.” (P72). Though Mr. Kurtz is very weak, his quest for accumulation of more and more ivory does not allow him to be calm and peaceful. Previously he plundered a lot of ivory from the Africans and other Europeans in Africa, but now feels deprived and wants more ivory. He is always eager to do any sort of crime in order to accumulate ivory in that continent. But he does not know that he is going to die because of his illness. As Mr. Kurtz is seriously ill and there are no medical facilities, Marlow decides to take him to London in the steamer. But Mr. Kurtz has no idea of going to civilized world. He wants to be in Africa and plunder more ivory. After midnight, Marlow discovers that Kurtz has left his cabin on the steamer and returned to shore. Marlow goes ashore and finds a very weak Kurtz making his way back to his station—although not too weak to call to the natives. “He can’t walk—he is crawling on all fours.” (P78). Marlow appreciates his serious situation, and when Kurtz begins in a threatening tone, Marlow interjects that his “success in Europe is assured in any case”; at this, Kurtz allows Marlow to help him back to the steamer. Marlow observes him closely and says; “I saw the inconceivable mystery of a soul that knew no restraint, no faith, and no fear, yet struggling blindly with itself. .... had only supported him, his bony arm clasped round my neck—and he was not much heavier than a child.” (P81) The next day they prepare for their departure. The natives, including the native woman whom Marlow considers as the African Mistress of Mr. Kurtz, once again assemble on shore and begin to shout. They did not want Mr. Kurtz to be taken away from them. Marlow, seeing the pilgrims readying their rifles, sounds the steam whistle repeatedly to scatter the crowd on shore. Only the woman remains unmoved, with outstretched arms. The pilgrims open fire. The current carries them swiftly downstream. Marlow says about Mr. Kurtz: “Sometimes he was contemptibly childish. He desired to have kings meet him at railway-stations on his return from some ghastly nowhere, where he intended to accomplish great things.” (P 84) Kurtz's health worsens, and Marlow himself becomes increasingly ill. The steamboat having broken down and being under repair at the head of an island. This delay was the first thing that shook Kurtz's confidence. Kurtz gives Marlow a packet of papers with a photograph—the lot tied together with a shoe-string saying that the manager may steal those papers. Mr. Kurtz becomes very weak and says “I am lying here in the dark waiting for death”. (P84) Marlow saw on his ivory facet the expression of somber pride, of ruthless power, of craven terror-of an intense and hopeless despair. Marlow wonders whether Kurtz will live his life again in every detail of desire, temptation and surrende during that supreme moment of complete knowledge. He cried in a whisper at some image, at some vision—he cried out twice, a cry that was no more than a breath: "The horror! The horror! ” (Page 84). Marlow understands that Kurtz is dead. Even before death, Mr. Kurtz does not repent. He does not value any human relationships. He does not think of any of his relatives or friends or even his fiancée in Europe who is civilized. He wants to create horror in the minds of his enemies even before his last breath. Marlow blows out the candle and tries to act as though nothing has happened when he joins the other pilgrims, who are eating in the mess-room with the manager. In a short while, the "manager's boy" appears and announces in a scathing tone: "Mistah Kurtz—he dead." (Page 85) Next day Marlow pays little attention to the pilgrims as they bury "something" in a muddy hole. Thus Kurtz has been buried in the bank of Congo in Africa.

Upon his return to Europe, Marlow is embittered. He distributes the bundle of papers Kurtz had entrusted to him. Marlow gives the paper entitled "Suppression of Savage Customs" to a representative of the company that employed both him and Kurtz, knowing that the man was really looking for papers that might disclose the whereabouts of ivory, and not a humanistic treatise. The company representative refuses the document. To another man, who claims to be Kurtz's cousin, Marlow gives family letters and memoranda of no importance. To a journalist he gives the report on the suppression of savage customs for publication, if the journalist sees fit. Finally Marlow is left with some personal letters and the photograph of a girl's portrait—Kurtz's fiancée, whom Kurtz referred to as "My Intended". When Marlow visits her, she is dressed in black and still deep in mourning, although it is more than a year since Kurtz's death. She presses Marlow for information, asking him to repeat Kurtz's final words. Uncomfortable, Marlow lies and tells her that Kurtz's final

word was her name. But Mr. Kurtz actually does not even mention her name even before his death. He wants to create some horror in the minds of his enemies even before his death. He does not take any ivory with him for which he has sacrificed every thing and everyone. He has no friends or relatives. Until his death he leads a life of savagery, cruelty and anxiety to accumulate ivory in that dark continent in the heart of darkness.

Marlow discovered that the white man who had come to Africa professing to bring progress and light to the darkest regions had himself been deprived of the sanctions of his European social order. He has been alienated from the established ways, rely upon his own spiritual resources and is revealed as weak, damned by greed, sloth, hypocrisy and brutality. He may be so corrupted by his absolute power over the native Africans like Kurtz is, and creates his own terrifying his hell. The behavior of White man in Africa becomes worse than the cannibalism of the blackman. The later adheres to an aboriginal existence which is natural to him. The European, on the other hand, unable to identify with the African environment and lacking the kind of human feelings, becomes a hollow man without humanity and becomes savage.

### Criticism on 'Heart of Darkness'

Joseph Conrad's 'Heart of Darkness' evoked resentment from the African Elite. They criticized the image of Africans created by this novella as black people, uncivilized and savagery. "*An Image of Africa: Racism in Conrad's Heart of Darkness*" is the published and amended version of the second Chancellor's Lecture given by Chinua Achebe at the University of Massachusetts Amherst, in February 1975. The essay was included in his 1988 collection, *Hopes and Impediments*. The text is considered to be part of the Postcolonial critical movement, which advocates to Europeans the consideration of the viewpoints of non-European nations, as well as peoples coping with the effects of colonialism. Achebe accuses Joseph Conrad of being "a thoroughgoing racist" for depicting Africa as "the other world." "Conrad was a seductive writer. He could pull his reader into the fray. And if it were not for what he said about me and my people, I would probably be thinking only of that seduction," Achebe tells Robert Siegel. "The language of description of the people in Heart of Darkness is inappropriate," says Achebe. "I realized how terribly, terribly wrong it was to portray my people — any people — from that attitude." Though Achebe dislikes Conrad's description of Africans, he does not feel that *Heart of Darkness* should be banned: "Those who want to go on enjoying the presentation of some people in this way — they are welcome to go ahead. The book is there. ... I simply said, 'Read it this way,' and that's all I have done." says Achebe.

The description of African people in Heart of Darkness is unpalatable, at least to a conscious African reader. They are seen as and referred to as SAVAGES. This is what the narrator says about the Africans and Africa: "It (Africa) was unearthly and the men (Africans) were — no, they were not inhuman. Well, you know that was the worst of it — this suspicion of their not being inhuman. It would come slowly to one. They (Africans) howled and leaped and spun and made horrid faces but what thrilled you was just the thought of their humanity — like yours — the thought of your remote kinship with this wild and passionate uproar." The "Achebe school" is also angered by the portrayal of the Thames River as representation of modernity against the savage muddiness and hazardous Congo River of Africa. There is also the "wild and gorgeous apparition of an (African) woman" pitied against the serene civilized mood of the intended (white woman). The "worst insult" is the pitying of the thoughtful life-like white men against the grunting men of Africa. Those who disagree with Achebe and company put across a series of arguments that revert back to the ideological environment under which the novel was conceived and written. Their argument is that the writing of Heart of Darkness was done at a time when considering Africans as savages as and lesser beings than non-Africans was the norm. They point out that Conrad set his story in the Belgian (King Leopold II's) Congo of the 1890s when the Africans in the Congo region were being forced to extract ivory and

rubber for the Empire at gunpoint. Those who resisted got killed or dismembered and to imagine a kind of discourse that saw blacks as having equal humanity with other races was unthinkable. They even think that Conrad attacks imperialism because he identifies it with clear plunder and not the pretensions of civilizing the savage and spreading Christianity. Many debates and discussions are going on about Joseph Conrad's 'Heart of Darkness' since its publication and all agree that it is a fascinating narration of symbolic and poetic imagery. Characters are symbolic rather than literal. The art lies in the relation of the things of the spirit to the things of the flesh, of the invisible life to the visible, of the sub-conscious life within us, our obscure motives and instincts, to our conscious actions, feelings and out look. Only a brief examination of Conrad's use of poetic words, imagery, symbol and characterization should suffice to indicate the power, depth and beauty of Conrad's concept of his theme, which is apparent on many levels of understanding.

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### 18. Strength and Masculinity in Ted Hughes' Poetry in 'The Hawk in the Rain'

Thomas De Quincey describes the literature that **moves** as the literature of power and says that the literature of power teaches the higher truths of life. He calls the literature that provides some kind of information the literature of knowledge. He tells that what we owe to Milton is *power*- ‘exercise and expansion to our own latent capacity of sympathy with the infinite where every pulse and each separate influx is a step upwards, a step ascending as upon a Jacob’s ladder from earth to mysterious altitudes above the earth.’ Modern man’s pursuit of material benefit has led to the abuse of the natural world as well as human spirit. The world has lost its psychological and spiritual balance. As the Victorian poet Mathew Arnold laments in the poem *Dover Beach*:

.....for the world, which seems  
To lie before us like a land of dreams,  
So various, so beautiful, so new,  
Hath really neither joy, nor love, nor light,  
Nor certitude, nor peace, nor help for pain;  
And we are here as on a darkling plain  
Swept with confused alarms of struggle and flight,  
Where ignorant armies clash by night.

Science, philosophy and religion have precipitated a crisis in human psyche. Man has lost his connection with nature. He has lost touch with *himself*. He is afraid of confronting the real problems that are eating at the base of his mental peace and tranquility. Life appears absurd and irredeemable. History has failed to change human destiny for the better. Objectivity seems to lead humanity nowhere. Mankind seems to be hopelessly waiting for Samuel Beckett’s *Godot*. The landscape of human mind can well be described as T.S.Eliot’s *Waste Land*. The life of modern man is comparable with Eliot’s ‘*The Love song of J. Alfred Prufrock*’. Prufrock who is an embodiment of split personality probably represents modern man. Instinctual behavior and spontaneity are antithetical to scientific temper and suspended judgment! The epidemic of alienation of man from society, nature, reality, God and the self is all-pervading. Hence, there is the need to revitalize, rejuvenate and re-energize man. Ted Hughes’ poetry serves this purpose of revitalizing and rejuvenating modern man.

Ted Hughes (1930-1998) is one of the major twentieth century English poets. His poetry belongs to the class of *the literature of power* as it works to restore man’s faith in nature as a source of infinite energies by invoking the symbols of physical as well as spiritual energy in nature. His poetry teaches higher truths of life and *moves* the reader in more than one sense by its appeal to the mind, heart and soul. It enlarges our capacity of sympathy with the universe. It is an effort to regain the awareness of Nature’s lost elemental forces that have been pushed back into the unconscious by a poetic invocation to plants, animals, water, wind and stone. The imagery, language, the shamanic and the mythic techniques used by the poet generate a sense of energy through an ecstatic experience.

Speaking of Hughes’ language, Keith Sagar says, “In the best poems in *The Hawk in The Rain*, we find a language characterized by its faithfulness to the facts, the evidence of senses, shaped by a strong inspiration into images which, like those of Henry Moore, seem to have been waiting for aeons within the living rock, the living language, and now, released, will stand for aeons and could not be otherwise. It is a language spiced with great relish for experience, even when that experience is unpleasant or horrifying. Most distinctly it is a language able to cope with the biggest things; it can generate energies equal to the great primary energies of the world.” (Keith Sagar, 1975)... “Here was no deficiency of force, rather a super abundance. The poems crackle with surplus energy. The words leap off the page to strike or grapple the reader.” (Keith Sagar, 1975).

Hirschberg appears ecstatic as he speaks of the nature and function of Hughes' poetry: "Hughes makes contact with a feral energy at the heart of the cosmos, mindless, luxuriant, and capable of bringing death and revitalizing the dead, a terrible power to be both summoned and feared. This force is vastly superior to anything he sees working in man. In fact, it is totally alien and indifferent to man's welfare. How best to cope with this force, to channel it, if possible, becomes his preoccupation." (Hirschberg, 1981).

This paper seeks to present two essential characteristics of Hughes's poetry- strength and masculinity. Many readers of Hughes's poems are awestruck by its strength. His work seems to be a 'concentration' of energy. What does one mean by strength in poetry? In the eighteenth century, *strength* of a verse line implied *the ability to crowd much meaning into a short space*. When a verse line containing compact and short expressions could produce fresh, vivid, lively, impressive and amusing images, it is treated as a 'strong verse line'. Strength is the opposite of diffusiveness. (Davie, 1955) Strength denotes the efficacy of the expression in transforming the subject into an image or a 'speaking picture' and shows the subject to the eyes of the mind. In the context of Ted Hughes, *strength* means vigor or forcefulness of expression in producing fresh, vivid, concrete and impressive images. He has the gift of rendering appearance, movement and sensation. These opening lines of the poem *The Hawk in the Rain*, at once, reveal the strength of Hughes's verse.

*I drown in the drumming ploughland, I drag up  
Heel after heel from the swallowing of the earth's mouth,....*

The force of the wind and the rain is made to be felt in the following lines:

*While banging wind kills these stubborn hedges,  
Thumbs my eyes, throws my breath, tackles my heart,  
And rain hacks my head to the bone,.....( The Hawk in the Rain, p.3)*

Sylvia Plath in *Letters Home* wrote thus;

"Ted writes with color, splendor and vigorous music about love, birth, war, death, animals, hags and vampires, martyrdom and sophisticated intellectual problems too.... He combines intellect and grace of complex form, with lyrical music, male vigor and vitality, and moral commitment and love and awe of the world." (Keith Sagar,1975). Keith Sagar reminds that English is predominantly trochaic, true to its Germanic origins, but in verse the courtly alien iambic drove the trochee underground after Langland's last stand, into folk songs, ballads, nursery rhymes. In Hughes, the old rhythms surface again (in *Hawk in the Rain* twenty-seven of the twenty-eight two-syllable words are trochees) and we see what we had lost in weight, sinew and urgency in all those centuries of artifice and gentility. In his notes to '*The Hawk in the Rain*' Sagar quotes, "It is a return to an alliterative poetry that, pounding, brutal and earthbound, challenges the Latinate politeness of artificial society with ruthless energy and cunning, and so drags the Latinate words into its unruly, self-ruling world that even *they* come to sound northern and Germanic. The pummeling trochees and lead-weighted, bludgeoning spondees have a mesmeric effect, beating and rooting out of us those once apparently safe underlying rhythms of rhetorical and philosophical discourse, mental scene-painting and nostalgic or evocative reflection, with which the iambic pentameter is so closely associated.

If Strength implies the ability of the expression to stir the mind, to embody the experience and to convey reality or what exists in the world, then the following lines from the poem *Jaguar* serve as a good instance:

*..... a jaguar hurrying enraged  
Through prison darkness after the drills of his eyes*

*On a short fierce fuse. Not in boredom-  
The eye satisfied to be blind in fire,  
By the bang of blood in the brain deaf the ear-  
He spins from the bars, but no cage to him*

This same strength can be felt in the following lines from the poem *The Horses*, and the imagery stands as an example for Hughes' keen observation of nature.

*Huge in the dense grey- ten together-  
Megalith-still. They breathed, making no move,  
With draped manes and tilted hind-hooves,  
Making no sound*

Adam Thorpe in his essay *Ted Hughes and The Hawk in the Rain* remembers the 'electric feeling of pleasure' he experienced when he read *The Horses*. He recalls "As I copied it down at my cubby-hole of desk, surrounded by the raucous noise of the pubescent hobbledoys, I too climbed through the silent, pre-dawn woods, chill with frost. I too received the wisdom of the stone-like horses and felt the wonder and fear of the erupting dawn as it burned around the, thawing the world but not their patient heads.....I tried to work out how Hughes had managed to make such extraordinary music without rhyme, as if he was talking to you. Talking in a deep, dramatic way but not in a way that sounded as if he was quoting from a poem I failed to work it out. It was a sort of spell, the runes of which I had to learn by absorption." (Nick Gammage, ed.1999)

Hughes's language is imaginative. Words stand for actions. Words seem to have their own power. They bring about things in all their concreteness. They are functional as well as substantial. They unite word and meaning or the world and word. Things stand before the reader clearly and perspicuously in their magnitudes. Compound words such as 'ploughland', 'last-moment-counting-morsel' in the poem *The Hawk in the Rain*, 'the boa-constrictor's coil' in *The Jaguar*, 'wire-ribs', 'song-thrush' 'red- raw' in *Macaw and Little Miss* 'hour-before-dawn-dark' and 'frost-making' in *The Horses* 'swell the signification' and enlarge the images to generate the desired feelings and emotions. That is to say that the poem embodies 'objective correlatives' for the feelings and emotions. The association between the emotion and the image is established. In the poem *Song* Hughes addresses a lady who resembles an oceanic goddess:

*O lady, when the tipped cup of the moon blessed you  
You became soft fire with cloud's grace;  
.....O lady when the wind kissed you  
You made him music for you were a shaped shell.*

In the poem *Parlour-Piece*, the poet describes love as fire which will burn out any 'straw small talk' if only let out and as flood which will break the dam if only allowed to trickle:

*With love so like fire...  
With love so like flood ..  
.....the eyes  
Where fire and flood strained*

In the poem *Secretary*, Hughes describes the woman in a language which is both functional and substantial

*.. .all  
Day like a starling under the bellies of bulls  
She hurries among men, ducking, peeping,  
off in a whirl..*

... shuts out with the light  
Her thirty years, and lies with buttocks tight,...

In the poem *A Modest Proposal* the lovers who are compared to two wolves approach each other -at every step/Looking backwards and sideways, warring to listen/ For the other's slavering rush. Neither can make die/ The painful burning of the coal in its heart.... sob contentment toward the moon./

“There was nothing fleeting or peripheral about Ted Hughes: his physical stature and the weight behind his words gave the impression of permanence.” Says the Editor’s note to *The Epic Poise: A Celebration of Ted Hughes*. “He was sure of his poetic principles, and his thoughts were always fresh and invigorating. He was incapable of being dull and he was- above everything – his own man. .”(Nick Gammage,1999)

Lindsay Clarke recollects the impression he had of the poem *Wind* “It filled me with a quickening sense of exhilaration and dread. In its appetite for language, its generation and consumption of metaphor, its attention to color, form, scale and stress, and the ardour with which its power of hyperbolic invention stilled itself at least to a steady, unflinching gaze, it seemed to demonstrate exactly why writing mattered.

Like the people in the poem, I felt the wind had gripped my heart. It began to answer passionate questions that I hardly dared to put, while posing others that I wasn’t ready to answer. In doing so, it joined the converging forces that were blowing me through to risky place where, in the long run at least, no other life than a writers would do” .(Nick Gammage,1999)

*The woods crashing through darkness, the booming hills,  
Wind stampeding the fields under the window  
Floundering black astride and blinding wet  
... wind wielded  
Blade-light, luminous black and emerald, ...*

Alan Gould in his essay *Lupercal* says “ I have always found *Lupercal* a dazzling collection, containing what are, in my view, among the finest evocations of feral and country life in the English language. As with Ted Hughes’s first book, *The Hawk in the Rain*, the diction in these poems has feeling-one’s-way ductility, Shakespearian in cadence, as is the metaphysical manner in which perceptions are juxtaposed. ....the intentness of the observing eye...rapture which..is sacral..These poems carry such a charge of sympathy for strangeness of the world of the creatures that the poet becomes our mediator with a dimension of animistic mystery. (Nick Gammage,1999).

Commenting on the keenness of Hughes’ observation of things, Keith Sagar writes, “No poet has observed animals more accurately, never taking his eyes from the object, capturing every characteristic up to the limits of language. So vivid is his rendering, so startling and true his insights, that the way one looks at a hawk, a thrush or pike (or, in later poems, a jaguar, a skylark or a swam of gnats) is permanently altered. But the descriptions generate metaphors, and the metaphors relate the creature to all other creatures and to human experiences and concepts” (Keith Sagar, 1975).

Susan Hill says “His imagery and myths in which his work is steeped, the work’s frame of reference, all of these are fathom deep. Every poem, every stanza, every line, almost every word and (add) another new meaning.”... He is poet to chew on: sinewy, dense, crammed with reference and cross references which taxes our thinking, makes us dig not only into the poems themselves but into the recesses of our own memories, reading and imaginations. (Nick Gammage, 1999).



## Conclusion

Ted Hughes' poetry belongs to the class of 'Literature of Power'. It enlarges our capacity for sympathy with the universe. Hughes writes in a language which is vigorous, expressive, vivid and lively. His poetry evokes the elemental energies of nature through the symbols such as the hawk, the jaguar, the wolves, the wind and the rain. Through the evocation of these elemental energies, Hughes' poetry reconnects man with nature, with primitive impulses and relieves him of the paralysis of the will. In the first collection of poems '*The Hawk in the Rain*', Hughes uses alliteration and trochees which lend the poems strength and masculinity. His poetry serves as an antidote to the mental disintegration or the split personality of modern man, to the spiritual bankruptcy, to the alienation from Mother Nature.

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## 19. 'New Historicism' in the Travel Works of William Dalrymple

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### Introduction

New Historicism, a new theory was first quoted and published during the 1970. Later it was coined and developed by the American critic Stephen Greenblatt whose book *Renaissance Self-Fashioning from More to Shakespeare* and it is usually regarded as its beginning. A simple definition of the New Historicism is that it is a method based on the parallel reading of literary and non-literary texts usually of the same historical period. That is to say, New Historicism refused to privilege the literary text, envisages and practices a mode of study in which literary and non-literary texts are given equal weight and constantly inform or interrogate each other. This new historical perspective is effectively used by the new Scottish writer "William Dalrymple." Historicism is a critical movement insisting on the prime importance of historical context to the interpretation of texts of all kinds. It emerges in reaction to the practice of deducing from first principles truths about how people are obliged to organize themselves socially and politically. The natural laws governing human behavior at all times are formulated, and cultures evaluated by the degree to which they approximate to this ideal pattern. They argue that human nature is too various for such legislation to be universally applicable. They therefore have to evolve a model for apprehending social and cultural diversity different from the scientific, law governed paradigm of the enlightenment. On one hand historicism is suspicious of the stories the past tells about itself; on the other hand, it is equally suspicious of its own partisanship. It offers both its past and its present for ideological scrutiny. From ancient times, philosophers have been eager to separate history from fiction. Socrates enlightened his listener through two imaginary scenarios for philosophical purposes. Firstly, the myth invents a viewpoint through which we can survey the processes of knowledge. Secondly it imagines a comparable escape form the boundaries of mortality in order to explain the progress of the soul. In both cases a philosopher who has just condemned art as intellectually and morally disreputable implicates history in fiction.

Plato in his justification of myth said that it tells a true story in the only terms available. His myths aspire to be history, but in the absence of facts they must resort to fictions. Aristotle in his poetics tried to distinguish poetry from history. History was distinguished from poetry not by greater seriousness of purpose but by the different balance of probability and possibility. He argued poetry was more philosophical than history because of its greater freedom to represent the complete understanding desired by philosophy. In poetry, probability was all; history on the other hand, had to attend much more to what was possible. History must resign itself to what could have taken place however improbable this might be. Provided a fiction was coherent, provided it contained a beginning, middle and end and reached a cathartic conclusion.

History appears to be as vulnerable to criticism. If the historian tells a coherent tale, one that has point and purpose, its probability may undermines its possibility and leaves the author justified as a philosopher and discredited as an historian. History records a host of improbabilities; faithfulness to what happened or could have happened will produce a discourse without point or purpose. So history is philosophically negligible, random in its accuracy and literal in its confusion. Faced with choice, most historians reached a compromise. Macaulay stated that 'It is sometimes fiction. It is sometimes theory.' (stern1970:72) They make their own way of making the possible and the probable interact, balancing truth to the facts against the need for those facts to make sense equally, though, writers of fiction have often had to confront the resistance of the individual facts to ordinary explanation. When we look back to the ancient historians, we find a tangle of common concerns rather than Aristotle demarcation of purposes. Cicero tries to stick to the Aristolelian

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agenda, but he is obliged to concede that in practice distinctions become blurred: Different principles are to be followed. However in the works of Herodotus, the father of history and in those of Theopompus, one finds innumerable fabulous tales.

### **The past in a changing present**

Never before has there been such a vast array of methods available with which to study the past, such a range of subject-matter and variety of audiences, and all to be understood within the broad sense of irony that seemingly encompasses western culture today. Specifically, the impact of postmodernism on the study of history is seen in the new emphasis placed on its literary or aesthetic aspect, but not as before only as stylistic presentation, but now as a mode of explanation not primarily dependent upon the established empiricist paradigm. Even the staunch defender of empiricism, Peter Gray noted that ‘style is worn into the texture of ... History. Apart from a few mechanical tricks of rhetoric manner is indissolubly linked to matter, style shapes, and in turn is shaped by, substance.’ Based on the new and innovative approaches, a new method arose in postmodernism i.e New Historicism which was popularized widely by Stephen Greenblatt. With the help of this technique, a historian can juxtapose the literary and non-literary sources and real essence of history.

### **New Historicism in ‘White Mughals’**

Darlymple’s approach towards history is different. Basically, he is a travel writer who comes up with good exposure to new and innovative views. He brought history of different eras by juxtaposing literary and non-literary texts. His approach to history memorizes the words of Hutcheon: ‘To write history – or historical fiction – is equally to narrate, to reconstruct by means of selection and interpretation. History is made by its writer, even if events are made to seem to speak for themselves.’ (Hutcheon,1985) He reconstructed history with different interpretations. To make his literary project more effective, he travelled all over the country, spent four years with Indians, shared the tradition, culture, language and eventually turned himself semi-Indian. His meticulous utilization of resources can be identified in his fiction and non-fiction. One of his historic fictions is ‘White Mughals’. He used the term “White Mughals” to refer to those British men whom he represents as embracing aspects of Mughal life & culture. ‘White Mughals’ is a fascinating and enthralling love story of James Achilles Kirkpatrick, an East India Company resident at the court of Nizam of Hyderabad and Khair-Un-Nissa, daughter of Hyderabad noble family. While narrating the story of their mutual love and respect against the odds, Darlymple covers the pitfalls of academic & traditional history and also the anecdotes of archival resources. It was said by many that to write ‘White Mughals’ Darlymple apparently adopted Hyderabadhi clothes and Hyderabadhi methods of living. The text relationship with history is deployed through a series of stories that Darlymple came across in his four years journey in Hyderabad. His ease in following every historical monument, important figures and events make him an ideal guide to its past. If Hyderabad does not change, Darlymple can gain physical access to its past through his presence there and can set himself as a guide for the readers. Darlymple’s quest for deep-rooted history owes a debt to Hayden’s White Meta History. White states ‘It is sometimes said that the aim of the historian is to explain the past by ‘identifying’ or ‘uncovering’ the ‘stories’ that lie buried in chronicles.’ He continued his assertion by emphasizing that “interpretation & explanation are central to the historians task. (White 1973)

The role of archival serendipity functions not only to reinforce the sense of a single possible narrative, but also work towards the representation of White Mughal as a book that was somehow meant to happen. The ever-present emphasis on the rarity and authenticity of these discoveries highlights its status as an important and original text. The centrality of these “previously untranslated” document to the positioning of White Mughals cannot be overstated – they “completely transformed” the text. Darlymple highlighted the originality of his text in the preface: ‘None of these (Persian & Urdu) sources had ever been translated into English, and so were virgin territory for those

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unfamiliar with either 19<sup>th</sup> century Deccani Urdu or the heavily Indianised Persian that the manuscripts were written in which meant virtually everyone bar a handful of elderly Hyderabad scholars.’ (Darlymple XXXIV2002) He continued his words expressing his excitement and challenging methods in searching the tedious archival work: ‘ The first real break came when I found that Kirkpatrick’s correspondence with his brother William , preserved by the taller’s descendants the Strachey family, had recently been bought by the India office library. (Darlymple: XXXV2002) In the same text he said that he located the concept of White Mughals from an article “The Romantic Marriage of Major James Achilles Kirkpatrick, sometime British Resident at the court of Hyderabad” which was published in Black Wood Magazine. The article covers a brief, sentimental, amateur family history focusing the colonial rule. The story that was published in Black Wood Magazine became the backbone of Darlymple’s novel. As part of his narration, Darlymple here and there in his fiction described carefully the material properties of his findings: ‘There were piles of letters books inscribed from my brother James A.K, great, gilt leather- bound volumes of official correspondence with the Governor General, Lord Wellesley, bundles of Persian manuscripts, some boxes of receipts and in a big buff envelope, a will ----- exactly the sort of random yet detailed detritus of everyday lives that biographers dream of turning up.’ (Darlymple XXXV-XXXVI 2002) Such passages in Darlymple’s work create a sense of closeness between the reader, the author and his writing process. This meticulous portrayal of historical research emphasizes the beauty of Darlymple’s findings. Though Darlymple has gone through many sources, he has not taken the choice of one over another, or any previous interpretations of the author. He created his own style in expressing his views and interpretations. He has faithfully transcribed of the already present but neglected story available in archives.

## Conclusion

Darlymple would have done little critical examination of the available things but he highlighted the importance of neglected, overlooked areas of Indian History. David Carter makes the point (in relation to fiction) that neither literary criticism nor cultural studies have had much to say about the broad domain of culture that is neither auritically high nor happily popular – the vast middle where high culture values are folded into the commodity for of quality entertainment of discerning life style. His deep and painstaking observation touching every literary and non-literary source is splendid and appreciable. Though not intentionally, but unknowingly he satisfied the basic ideas of New Historicism. So, there is no doubt to bring Dalrymple into the category of few writers who effectively used the principles of New Historicism.

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## 20. Breast-Giver : A Subaltern Study

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In Post-Colonial literary context, the word ‘Subaltern’ acquired immense significance, though its literal meaning being ‘a military officer of inferior rank’. Ever since Antonio Gramsci used the term in his *The Persian Notebook*, different post-colonial writers found breath of their thought in it. Even in socio-cultural theories the term found an importance when Homi Bhabha in his essay “Unsatisfied Notes on Vernacular Cosmopolitanism” pointed out that it means those marginalized social groups who are outside the hegemonic power structure. Ranajit Guha writes in his “Preface to Subaltern Studies”: “... its is a name for the general attribute of subordination in South Asian societies whether this is expressed in terms of class, colour, gender , office or in other way”.( Guha vii) As Guha satirizes Indian nationalism for its elitist bias , and considers the peasantry as the chief representatives of the subaltern , the preposition of Guha was modified by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak while speaking out distinctions between peasantry and the proletariat.

In the same light, this paper will look into one of the most read short stories of Mahasweta Devi’s *Breast Stories*. Mahasweta Devi has acutely observed the unheard and tribal sections of Indian society and brings into notification their oppression. She has been considered a political social activist who is working with and for tribal and marginalized communities like the landless labourers of Eastern India and naxalites for years. *Breast-Giver* is a short story of mother Jashodaand; her plight after rearing so many children on her milk. Mahasweta Devi’s other novels and plays are haunting tales of the exploitation of women. In her novels *Mother of 1084* and *Rudali* we find protagonists raising their voice against their oppression. *Breast Trilogy* of stories *Draupadi*, *Stanadayini (Breast-Giver)* and *Choli Ke Piche (Behind the Bodice)* have a common motif: the breast. In all these stories Mahasweta Devi has put forth the oppression and brutality through which woman folk of India is surviving.

To analyze the story *Breast-Giver* with the help of Subaltern study unleashes the unabridged aspects like the idealization of mother figure and its actual position in Indian society. The story shows the existing ideology of motherhood in Indian society. Unleashing the silence that surrounds the socio-political-cultural issues, Mahasweta Devi, through the narrative on ‘Jashoda’, focuses on the phenomenon of motherhood and that hides beneath it adjective of love and care, the exploitation of woman which goes otherwise unobserved by the naked eye. The name of protagonist, Jashoda is taken from Hindu mythological mother of Lord Krishna. Jashoda had not given birth to Lord Krishna but she reared him with her milk and showered her love and affection upon him. She had given a prior position to Devaki, the biological mother of Lord Krishna.

Before reading Devi’s story *Breast-Giver* the general perception is that a mother cannot be ill-treated, unheard or turned mute. However, reading Jashoda’s account raises so many questions-Can motherhood be a burden? Can it be oppressive? Can it be a reason for a woman’s exploitation? Her words arrest everyone’s attention: Is a mother so cheaply made? // Not just by dropping a babe! (52) Centered on the female protagonist, Jashoda, the tale of the *Breast-Giver* is prominently affluent in its encrusted complexity and concentration. Belonging to an economically weak class, Jashoda the wife of Kandalicharan and mother of twenty children, is a Brahmin by birth. In an unfortunate accident, Kandalicharan becomes crippled and coerced by circumstances. Jashoda adorns the mantle of a ‘Wet Nurse’ to support her family. Though this new employment as a vital prerequisite requires her to be perpetually pregnant, yet it gives her social and political significance in the form of ‘Mother of the World’. In her ‘psuedo-innocence’ she breast feeds almost fifty children and dies of excruciating breast cancer. In Indian society, a special place is given to mother. She is considered human form of God on earth. The ideology of motherhood is both created and reinforced by the invasive Sanskrit discourses like the *Vedas*, the *Epics* and the *Upanishads* in India. This belief on the ancient scriptures

is much revered in Hindu tradition i.e., the religious exaltation is meant to make the institution of motherhood culturally acceptable. In the Indian context being a mother is not only the biological consummation of much awaited fulfillment, but it also is acknowledged as an event of celebration in which culture gives to a woman the responsibility of furthering the family lineage. All this bring about a dramatic reversal in the status of woman – her graduation from a wife to a mother. In the story Jashoda's wheel of fortune turns in her favour when she is magically almost miraculously, is offered to become the 'Milk-Mother' at the master's house, bestowing on her not only economic gain, but also garlanding her with the honor of the 'mother of the world'.

At the literal level, Mahasweta Devi embodies Jashoda's 'mammal-projections' as her possessions, which signifies the commodification of her breasts. But when her body can no further carry on the milk supply, she acquires the cancer of the breasts, i.e., at the metaphorical level, betrayal of her breasts. However a more careful reading implies that it is not motherhood which recognizes woman as vulnerable, it is the meaning endowed by society on mothering that makes it restraining and oppressive. The character of Jashoda brings to fore the emptiness of rituals in which Indians worship the Divine mother Goddess on the one hand and let the portion die in pain on the other. Consequently, after the loss of her fecundity – governed the very part of her life – Jashoda leaves the world unsung, unnoticed, unheard and unidentified. This shows that women always have been deluded by the imposed divine ideal of womanhood, which hides beneath its glossy portrayal, the exploitation of the mortal mother. Mahasweta Devi says, "when a mortal masquerades as God here below she is forsaken by all and she must always die alone" (75). Though mothering, pregnancy and childbirth are some of the sex specific roles that are assumed to be an essential part of every woman's development but these are accompanied with a price of self-denial and all giving characteristics associated with the mother. In the story, motherhood is not onerous for faithful, fruitful wife Jashoda. Her struggle stems from the tragic realization that she no longer can reproduce and be a mother. Motherhood, however, is depicted to be burdensome for the daughters-in-law of the economically sound Haldar household. Feminist critic Simone de Beauvoir has criticized the restricting and domineering aspects of motherhood. She elaborates that motherhood is a boon transformed into bane, used as a bait to distance woman from authority, autonomy, power and participation in every walk of life.

It is indeed the mother, who plays a pivotal role in carving the family structure in accordance with the social-cultural norms. Whenever, women like *Ahalya*, *Draupadi*, *Sita*, *Tara* and *Mandodari* of Vedic times in Hindu tradition are remembered, all sins are seemed to be destroyed. These women always remain the point of reference, because of their qualities of virtuosity, forbearance, devotion, self-sacrifice and obedience for every female in the society irrespective of their class and caste. By rearing so many children on her milk, Jashoda becomes a virtuous woman like *Sita* and *Ahalya*. Everyone in the village pays devotion to her. Even Nabin, who once desires Jashoda's voluptuous body, now developed devotional feelings towards her. She becomes more of an enigma for the entire village. Jashoda magic showered on her the approbation and grandeur equivalent to that of the Goddess. Following which "everyone's devotion to Jashoda became so strong that at weddings, showers, namings and sacred-threadings people invited her and gave her the position of chief fruitful woman" (53). As soon as her usefulness has ended for Haldar household as a wet nurse, her position in the society starts to decrease. She is ignored even by her husband and he refuses to shoulder her responsibility. Her motherhood too remains alone after rearing so many children on her milk. In the last stage of breast cancer, she sees her milk sons all around under the effect of sedatives and she dies betrayed at last, by all.

In a class divide society the empowering and ruling agent is money. Money can earn status and social respectability. Despite her upper caste birth, Jashoda in *Breast-Giver* is not in a dominating position because her family is awfully poor. On the opposite, Haldars, who are lower in position in social hierarchy, can dictate terms only because of their affluence. It is her stark poverty that compels Jashoda to earn her living by breast feeding of the Haldar family. Spivak in her essay, "A Literary

Representation of the Subaltern : Mahashweta Devi's Stanadayini( Breast-Giver)" rightly comments over the role of economy in defining subalternity . she argues that even the Brahminical identity of Jashoda is brutalized in the story. " this...identity is a cover for the brutalizing of the Brahmin when the elite in caste is subaltern in class. In case of class manipulation poverty( is) the fault of the individuals , not an intrinsic part of a class society, in the case of class manipulation , the implicit assumption is the reverse; the Brahmin is systemically excellent, not necessary so as an individual." (Spivak 114).

*Breast-Giver* is a representative text, which explores a dialectical relationship between family based hierarchy of power relationships and the inscrutable legacy of British imperialism in which Jashoda earns her livelihood in the lifetime of Haldaress. When Haldaress dies her family neglects Jashoda's responsibility. Appointment of Jashoda as a 'wet nurse' is a solution of Haldar's sons to maintain the figure and beauty of their wives. This idea is an outcome of westernization in modern times. Jashoda by feeding countless sons of Haldar household becomes a mythic figure. She stands for millions of mother-figures in India who use their physical and mental assets in breeding their own exploiters. Even *Sita* of *Ramayana* and *Draupadi* of *Mahabharata* were victims of exploitation in one or another way. *Breast-Giver* is also to be read as an allegory of exploitation of our 'Mother-India' too bounteous in her beneficence towards a notion of ungrateful people who are ready to betray the interests of their motherhood for their petty personal gains. Jashoda dies a lonely death when she is no longer of use for her kith and kin, they abandon and forget her; similarly, the country too is being used for the personal interests excessively. The story is a parable of India after independence. The very people, who are supposed to protect their country, abuse and exploit her. If nothing is done to sustain her, she will probably die of consuming cancer. If we extend the metaphor, the end of the story might come to mean that India too deeply suffers from the Goddess – infested reverse sexism of the Hindu majority. As long as we continue to see India as a Goddess – mother, she will collapse under the weight of the immense expectations that such an image entails.

Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak depicts that by presenting the image of a fruitful, faithful wife Jashoda, Mahasweta Devi Subtly brings out the paradox in which woman had an entity, but no life form i.e., they were put on pedestal and yet were marginalized at the same time. Through the ordeal of Jashoda, Mahasweta Devi lays bare the silent saga of exploitation of Jashoda(s) in the form of eulogization of motherhood that exists beyond reality. The delineating position of a mother, depicted in the story, raises questions to the commandments given in all scriptures of every religion. These scriptures simply command to pay worship like devotion to mother but modern society has drawn back from the saying of *Guru Nanak Dev Ji*; 'So kyu[n] mnda aakhiye jit jammen raajan', which means a mother , who gave birth to kings, prophets and gods should not be disgraced. She should be given a superior position in the society.

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## 21. South Eastern Diaspora Perspectives in Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Namesake*

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South Asian Nations encompass a multiplicity of ethnicities, religions, languages and cultures. Asian American Literature is produced by the Asians settled in America. South Asian American writers are among the newest voices in a multiethnic Asian America. As Indira Nityanandam has remarked, *“Many of these writers do not tell a story at all. A story in the traditional sense, with a beginning, middle and an end does not exist at all. Instead, they present life in all its complexities, in all its myriad colours.”* In the early stage, the novel in India was mostly dealt with the issues of East West encounter in the public life and there were some novels dealing with social evils in the Indian culture. In these early days the protagonists in the novels usually were westerners coming to India. The earlier novelists who deal with East West interaction tried to present the noble qualities of India and show distinctions between these cultures. However, the Diasporic novelists have changed so radically in its handling of human relationships that the East-West binary of characterization has probably disappeared for ever. In the later stage, the theme of East West encounter shifted from public life to personal enquiry. It tried to explain the complexes in human being due to the interaction between the East and the West cultures. One of the earliest novels, which dealt with the influence of the western culture upon that of Indian was, A. Mahadevaiah's *“Thillai Govindan”*. It was a story of South Indian Brahmin who lost his faith in God due to the influence of the Western ideology. His faith is restored after reading the Bhagavad-Gita. In the same period, Saratkumar's *The Princes of Destiny* came out with same theme: the protagonist has to choose between the love of an English girl and the marriage with an Indian Princess. Raja Rao's *“The Serpent and the Rope”* was one of the excellent works having the theme of East west interaction. The journey of woman novelists from Toru Datt to Kiran Desai is quite impressive. The theme of East West confrontations had taken sensitive rout in the novels of Ruth Pravar Jhabvala's *Esmond in India* (1958) and *Heat and Dust* (1975). Anita Desai too used the same theme in her novel, *“Bye Bye Black Bird”* (1971). Kamala Markandeya's *A Silence of Desire* dealt with the tussle between the rationalism of the West and the religious faith of the Indian culture. *“Her novels consist of both these elements of racial difference.... The biological as well as the social.”* Bharati Mukherji's *Jasmine* (1989) deals with the problems of a Punjabi girl in USA as an illegal immigrant.

The novelists like Salman Rushdie Jhumpa Lahiri and Kiran Desai- started writing about the fusion of the cultures and the result of it upon their lives. Cultural factors are no longer outside forces, they are engaging the mind of people and they are struggling with them. Some of the contemporary South Asian American writers are, Meena Alexander (1951), Bharati Mukherji (1940), Chitra Benerjee (1957). Jhumpa Lahiri (1967) belongs to the second generation of Indian Abroad. She is a Bengali American who has been lauded as a teller of immigrant tales, now is at core a New England writer. So her stories reveal a fine awareness of the problems of the adjustment faced by Indian emigrants and the primary concern is on Post Colonial situations. Lahiri's real name was Nilanjana Sudhesna, which was good name but she was known with her pet name *“Jhumpa”*. She was grown up in America under the supervision of a mother who wanted to raise her children to be Indian. The frequent childhood visits to India and her parents are still a part of the Indian world even despite their immigration to America thirty years ago had influence over Lahiri. Even Lahiri states that *“When I first started writing I was not conscious that my subject was the Indian-American experience. What drew me to my craft was the desire to force the two worlds I occupied to mingle on the page as I was not brave enough, to allow in life.”* She was the first person of South Asian origin who wins an individual Pulitzer Prize for *Interpreter of Maladies* a short story collection. As she is the writer of Diaspora her themes deal with the cross cultural conflict. *“.....her stories writes*



Dubey` evince that the racial and cultural memory is very much at work and `feeling at home remains a difficult task.4. Khushvant Singh is full of praise for her. He says “without striving to impress, without witty twain of phrases, Jhumpa manages to hold the reader`s interest, she reminded me of Somerset Maughman”.

Lahiri wrote only four books they are Interpreter of Maladies (1999), *Namesake* (2003), *Unaccustomed Earth* (2008) and *The Low Land*. ` *Her characters often exist simultaneously in two cultures; the American reality and the sphere of Indian tradition, her stories expresses the conflict of Indians or Indian immigrants with themes such as marital difficulties, miscarriages, and the disconnection between the first and second generation United State immigrants. Crisis related to names is very important in this work`” says Shoba Mishra in *Indian Writings in English* (2006) by Binod Mishra and Sanjay Kumar. The novel deals with the themes like conflict in relationships. It also describes many of the issues that Indians face in America. Lahiri explained the background of naming her protagonist as Gogol, Lahiri met a young friend of her cousin`s on a trip to Kolkata who was named Gogol; it was after the meeting that Lahiri really got thinking about names. She says “I always knew my character would be named Gogol” Among the Russian authors she read; Lahiri says she likes Gogol, but not as much as Chekov and Tolstoy.*

Jhumpa Lahiri`s *Namesake* revolves around an immigrant story of two generations of an Indian Bengali family and their encounter to acculturate themselves in the West. The importance of a *namesake* and identity is central concept to the novel. The novel portrays to the story of an immigrant couple to America after an arranged marriage in India. Immigrant psychology and behaviour is the central themes moved between events in Calcutta, Boston and New York City. The entire novel hovers around the identity crisis, the feeling of alienation and exile experienced by the first and second generation. The characters of *The Namesake* in their struggle for destiny and their attempts to love and overcome loneliness transcend their ethnicity and reflect the universal predicament of modern humanity. Lahiri`s *Namesake* describes the Diaspora struggle to keep hold of culture as characters create new lives in foreign cultures, relationships, language, rituals, and religion all help them characters maintain their culture in new surroundings even as they build a “hybrid realization” as Asian Americans Ashima often feels upset and homesick and moves alone in three room apartment which is too hot in summer and too cold in winter. She feels spatially and emotionally dislocated from comfortable home of her father which was so full of loving ones and hence yearns to go back home. At the very beginning of the novel the issue of names and identity is presented. As Asthma`s water breaks she calls out to Ashok, her husband. However she does not use his name because this would not the tradition of Bengalis not call their husbands with their good name. According to her `its not the type of thing Bengali wives do.....a husband`s name is something intimate and therefore unspoken, cleverly patched over.

Bengali children are given two names; a `bholonam`-a good name for the outside world, and a `daknam`-a pet name to keep with Bengali tradition. Ashima, Ashok and the doctor discussed about naming of the baby and was given pet name `Gogol` as his official name sent in a letter from Asthma`s grandmother in India, gets lost in the mail. As a child Gogol rejected his proper name `Nikhil` and wants to be called `Gogol by the society and the family. This discussion made on the first day of kindergarten causes him suffer years together. Throughout his life he suffers from the uniqueness of his name. When Gogol`s sister is born, the Gangulis are ready with the name, Sonia/Sonali. Gingili`s wish is to raise Gogol and his Sister Sonia with Bengali culture and values. Gogol starts experiencing an identity crisis and starts alienating himself from his parents. Amardeep Singh rightly says in *Names can Wait; the Misnaming of the South Asian Diaspora in Theory and Practice`* rightly says, `Lahiri in an interview revealed that Jhumpa is her pet name. Mr. Lawson Gogol`s teacher insists him to read the works of writer Nikolai Gogoll. When he understands the history of Nikolai Gogol he applies for change of his name. Anyhow Ashok gives him the permission to change his name stating that `In America anything is possible to do as you wish` (100). Finally he changes his name to Nikhil which was supposed to be his good name. He

introduces himself to all his girl friend's as Nikhil though he remained Gogol for his parents for ever. For the first time Gogol introduces himself stating "I'm Nikhil," and Kim accepts it gladly. "Nikhil", 'she says, blowing a thin plume of smoke toward the ceiling. Again she turns to him and smiles "Nikhil," she repeats. I've never heard that before. That's a lovely name. (90) Gogol shifts to New Haven and then to New York and starts alienating from his family. He began to dislike Bengali Custom and traditional home and did not want to visit his family even during the weekends. In New Haven Gogol gets introduced to Ruth, but after sometime he breaks up his relation with her. Then Maxina enters in to his life Gogol introduces Maxina. Marina's parents accept Gogol whereas Gogol's parents are unable to accept their relationship. This shown how Indian culture is deep rooted in the first generation immigrants. Maxina is open about her past life and speaks to Gogol about her relationships without any regret. Gogol compares his parents with those of Marina's. By that one can understand that Jhumpa Lahiri seems on the side of American culture gradually influences the second generation immigrants.

Maxina is surprised to hear that his parents had an arranged marriage, which his mother cooks Indian food everyday and puts on a sari and a bindi. *Really? She says not fully believing him*  
*"But you are so different.*  
*I would never have thought that (138)*

Gogoll visits his parents and he learns the fact about his father's attachments towards the name Gogol. Ashima and Ashok separated because of Ashoke's extension in MIT. Ashok starts living in Cleveland and visits her every three weekends. She slowly learns to live all alone, to escape from loneliness she works in a library at Cleveland. After Ashoke's death Gogol becomes reserved and distances himself from Maxina, as well as his US-American friends. Sonia is one of her growing-up year had refused her gifts after taking a Hinduism class, in college, coming home and protesting that they weren't Christians" (285). As Edward w. Said rightly pointed out; "because nothing is secure. Exile is a jealous state. What you achieve is precisely what you have no wish to share, and it is in the drawing of lines around you and your compatriots that the least attractive aspects of being in exile emerge; an exaggerated sense of group solidarity and a passionate hostility to outsiders, even those who may in fact be in the same predicament as you (178)

Gogol clears things with heavy heart and vacates his father's apartment. He remembers the duty of a son to shave his head on the demise of a parent. Ten days following Ashoke's death Gogol his mother and Sonia eat a mourner's diet. On the eleventh day they hold a party to mark the end of the mourning period. After the death of Ashok Gogol's sense of responsibility increases and his relationship with Maxina comes to an end. The family celebrates Ashoke's birthday, and commemorate the day of his death too, by dropping a garland over his picture and anointing his forehead with sandal wood paste.

After stepping out from Maxina's life, Ashima wants him to settle. When Moushumi says about her past Gogol comes to know that they both are facing same situations. Within a year Gogol and Moushumi are married in a Hindu ceremony in New Jersey We can observe Indian way of thinking about her life with Graham. He feels himself that the men on the streets are staring at Moushumi constantly even though he is beside her. They are at a party given by Moushumi's friends Astrid and Donald. Moushumi tells everyone how Gogol changes his name. This makes Gogol to recall the story about his father's accident. Moushumi thinks about herself that she was not dependent on her husband, comparing to her mother. A sort of misunderstanding started between them. Moushumi and Gogol's married life ends in divorce. Ashima is by then ready to understand the situation and does not blame Gogol, Instead supported her son morally. Ashima has taken a decision to stay six months in India and six months in States, and Gogol and Sonia in America respectively. As the Diasporic individual Gogol is outside of the fixed boundaries that define both spaces- those of his Bengali home and his American one.

Towards the end of the novel Gogol understands the importance of the culture; the novel deals with some of the social strategies that immigrant parents adopt for their children. In the novel one can find a constant struggle of first generation immigrants and their children's struggle to find their place in society. Ashima struggle with adapting to different cultures. The second generation tries to respect their roots while adopting foreign society. Sonia decides to marry a half chine's boy Ben. Moushimi's extra marital affair shows how the second generation migrants are becoming multicultural. Gogol right from his childhood experiences identity crisis as his name itself was misnamed. When he goes for a project in his sixth grade he undergoes alienation and identity crisis. He feels lonely when he does not find his name anywhere in the graveyard. He starts hating his name.

*"He hates that his name is both absurd and obscure:  
That it has nothing to do with who he is'  
That it is neither Indian nor American but of all things Russian''.*

Even though his parents explain the importance of his name he is unable to continue with the name.

When Mr. Lawson talks about Nikolai Gogol, Gogol is not amused. And finally he decides to change his name and applies for convincing his parents. Gogol and Sonia are unable to adjust themselves when they visit Calcutta. His parents are disappointed with the alien ways of Gogol. Even though Gogol and Sonia are born and brought up in the US. They feel frustration of being different from most of the kinds they knew. Sonia is totally Americanized despite of the objections of her parents. After her father's death, she extends her support to her mother. But Gogol is not fully in tune with his identity until he realizes that it is embellished by both cultures. He does not have to be one or the other; he does not have to choose. He is made up of both, and instead of weakening his pride strengthened by this.

Gogol's relationship with Ruth is shadowed by deep rooted Indian Culture. He wished that his parents could simply accept her, and her family accepted him. This shows Gogol as a man having influence of the Indian Culture. Though he tried to be an American and lead the American way of living. He respects the Indian institute of family and marriage. The roots of Indian culture laid deep in Gogol's mind results the end of relationships with Marine. After Gogol's father's death Gogol wants to share his time with his family so that his relationship with Maxina deteriorates. Maxina admits that she feels jealous of his mother and sister that struck Gogol as absurd. A few months later Gogol separates himself from Maxina. At the end of the novel Gogol realizes the importance of the culture he feels nostalgic at Pimberton road, the place he had grown up.

The second generation tries to respect their roots while adapting to American society. One can find Ashima being attached emotionally with the home where her family lived together; she wanted to keep the home at Pimberton as her husband had seen it before his death. She feels that for thirty years she missed her life in India. Now she would miss her job at the Liberty, she would miss throwing parties. During her thirty two years of stay in America Ashima retains her culture in dress and values as well as assimilating the American culture for her personal growth and for the sake of her children.

Lahiri in her works depicts the American cosmopolitan society. The western world is quite different from the Eastern world in several aspects. Their openness and frankness in their sexual relations and the way they spend extravagantly throwing parties give an unusual feeling to the Orient. Her novel describes multicultural lifestyle especially with the second generation immigrants. Jhumpa Lahiri's protagonists suffer from cultural introspection. They have their conflict of consciousness between two selves the native and the adopted; she has unravelled modern man's facts

of crisis and despair in the labyrinths of life, existence and reality. They have their cultural journey towards home and identity, being recognized as an unsettling race through alienation, cultural displacement, sex, modernity, urbanism and mulled boundaries between time and space, life and death identity and authenticity.

The novel *Namesake* is a reference guide of South East Asian Diaspora. Lahiri presents as pointed by Kour, that “*the immigrants in their enthusiasm to stick to their own cultural beliefs and customs, gradually imbibe the cultural ways of the host community too.* According to Savita Singh the novel sums up the theme of root and wings. Where roots stand for the deep rooted beliefs traditions, customs, the identity one is born with one’s beginning, where as wings stand for freedom; scaling new heights exposure for dreams and ambitions of life. A man is always in pursuit of new wings trying to disentangle him from the roots. This result in anguish and alienation. The characters in the novel *The Namesake* attest to its reality.

As a diasporic writer she enriches the American culture with her Indian background and Eastern learning. The immigrant sensibility of the novelist strives to make immigrant more rational and friendlier to promote assimilation. The world of Bengali immigrants who struggled to integrate into main stream North American culture while maintaining the customs of their home land and the world of foreign land into which the Gangulis try to integrate. By the end of the novel one finds Gogol accepting his situation as well as Ashima who throughout her life feeling culturally displaced, finally gets adjusted to both the situation. “Jhumpa Lahiri’s novel not only speaks to immigrants but also to the original settlers on different levels. It is different from the exotic outpourings of Indian Immigrant writings in English”. Remarks Shoba Mishra in *Indian Writings in English* (2006) by Binod Mishra and Sanjay Kumar.

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## 22. The Mosaic of Feminist Perspectives in the Select Indian Writers

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There are different perspectives regarding feminism like “Feminism is the refusal to define all women and therefore all human beings solely in terms of sex” (Castro, 1990, p.2). It is an active desire to change women’s position in society. (Mitchell, 1986) A feminist believes that women suffer discrimination because of their sex, that they have specific needs that remain negated and unsatisfied, and that the satisfaction of these needs would require a radical change in the social, economic, and political order (Delmar, 1986). Feminism is an effort to bring insights from various female experiences together with research and data gathering to produce new approaches to understanding and ending female oppression (Bunch, 1983). There are several ways to categorize feminists and feminist theory, and critiques depend in part on the perspectives taken. (Noddings, 1990) The anatomy of woman is different from that of man but according to Simon-De- Bower women are not born they are made. Women are women not because of their anatomy but because of the patriarchal society and social conditioning. They are expected to play gender defined roles in the male-dominated world. But the misconception about feminism is that feminism is anti-male, a bunch of angry women who want to be like men fight for their rights. They wanted domination over men. But many men do not even think about feminism as being about rights- about women gaining equal rights. The main aspect of feminism is to make men realize that women are as human as men both emotionally and intellectually and they should be understood and respected.

Twentieth century witnessed a growing awareness among women regarding their desires, sexuality, self- definition, existence and destiny. The rise of feminism is responsible for the creation of a new woman securing equal opportunities through legislation. It beautifies the women with decorum and demands adoration for their intellectual and creative fecundities. The feminist writings have encouraged women empowerment and helped them to transcend their deprived status. These writings contributed greatly to bring about a change in the social milieu, propagating the unexpressed agony of the suppressed women. The common trait among all the feminist writers is their revolutionary spirit through which they strive to write and restore the tarnished images of the woman and glorifying it.

India is not isolated from the global trends of feminism that swept through Europe, America, Canada, Australia since 1960s. Western education in India under the British rule made woman realize her individuality and her rights. Gradually women gained economic independence and her quest began for her identity and knowledge. Feminists in India like their feminist counterparts all over the world, seek gender equality: the right to work for equal wages, equal access to health and education, and equal political rights. But Indian feminist movement is different from the western feminist movement as it is not only women’s liberation movement, but it is a reformative movement. There were various problems like sati, Child marriages, derogatory position of widows and the problem of women education and others. Indian feminists also have fought against culture-specific issues within India's patriarchal society, such as inheritance laws and the practice of widow immolation known as Sati.

It is ironical that in India the first feminists who fought for the rights of women are not women but men. Many social reformers like Eswar Chandra VidyaSagar, Raja Rama Mohan Roy, Swami Dayanand, Mahatma Phule, Maharshi Shinde, Maharshi Karve, Agarkar and a few others fought for women’s cause. They achieved success in their endeavors as many relevant changes were made to ameliorate the pathetic condition of women in India. The Vice Roy Lord Bentinck banned Sati

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in 1829. Remarriage of widows was sanctioned in 1856. Child marriage was prohibited in 1929. In Europe Plato was the first feminist because he expressed his view in his book *Republic V* that women should be trained to rule (*Republic*, Book V). In 1850s Ishwarchandra Vidyasagar started many primary schools in the villages of Bengal. Since then women also started clamoring for education for which they had been indifferent for ages. These attempts provided the much needed impetus and made the Indian woman take the first step towards social emancipation.

With the attainment of independence various reforms were made by the government to ensure development in the country. Soon, a new sphere of literature appeared where the writers wrote on themes projecting the miseries and complexities of human lives and concentrating on individual predicament. The tragic lives of the Indian women affected the women writers. These writers believed that it was their duty to arise public consciousness with their writings. So they used literature as a weapon to fight with the social injustices and bring social reforms in the interest of subdued Indian woman, they designed women charters in their works by careful observation and examination of the intimate regions of women carefully. In Indian writing in English feminism flowed from the pens of Amritha Pritam, Kusum Ansal and Sarojini Sahoo who broadly linked feminism and sexuality. Their writings propagated the idea that women have control over their sexuality and reproduction. Other poets like Kamala Das, Eunice de Souza, Mamatha Kalia, Gouri Deshpande, Imtiaz Dharker, Sujatha Bhatt and Menaka Sivadasani had totally upset the phallogocentric discourse of Indian English poetry by introducing a new array of thematic concerns in new voices. This paper focused on the feminist streak in the Indian English writers.

### **Kamala Das**

Modern Indian English poetry written by women has found its first genuine representative in the fiercely individualistic and iconic figure of Kamala Das. She is a trend setter with her unique style, emotionally charged diction. She rebels against institutionalized social justice, gender bias and hypocrisy. With her fiercely individualistic, iconoclastic, anti-stereotypical and candid poetry she shattered the complacency of the Indian readers. K.R. Srinivas Iyenger observes: *Kamala Das is a new phenomenon in Indo - Anglican poetry, a far poetic cry indeed from Toru Dutt or even Sarojini Naidu. Kamala Das's is fiercely feminine sensibility that dares without inhibitions to articulate the hurts it has received in an insensitive man-made world. While giving the impression of writing in haste, she reveals a mastery; of phrase and a control over rhythm. The words often pointed and envenomed too, and the rhythm so nervously, almost feverishly alive.* Her poetry speaks for the Indian common woman who was ruthlessly treated by male hegemony and prejudiced culture. She wrote about the themes of love, marriage and the relationship of man and woman. Her first collection of poems 'Summer in Calcutta' fell like a stone in the calm lake of Indian English poetry and created ripples in the minds of traditional writers. And they hurled venomous criticism towards her. She took both accolades and brickbats equally with her courage. She was a puppet in the hands of her autocrat father. She had a very unhappy childhood as she was neglected by both her parents. Her mother Balamani Amma was a reputed poet in Malayalam. She spent all her time in writing poetry and neglected her children. Even marriage was a punishment for Kamala Das because she had failed in matriculation. So she wrote:

*.....Choose my clothes for me  
My tutor, my hobbies, my friends  
And at fifteen with my first saree  
You picked me husband."*

When she was denied love and respect and was ill-treated, she expressed her desire to defy the social restrictions imposed on her. She wished to forget her womanliness by wearing a 'shirt' and her 'brother's trousers' and cut her hair short like men but the categorizers demanded her to:

*Dress in sarees, be girl,  
Be wife, they said.  
Be embroiderer, be cook,  
Be a quarreler with servants.  
Fit in....” (Introduction)*

Her husband treated her as a cook and a sexual object. Her husband’s coldness made her dissatisfied with her life and made her marriage a failure. Kamala Das through her poetry presented a tortured woman who pleaded for understanding and compassion from her husband. In many of her poems like ‘Love’, ‘A Request’, ‘Substitute’, ‘Captive’, ‘The Invitation’, ‘Convicts’, ‘Conflagration’, ‘Calcutta’, ‘The Freaks’, she pointed out the domination of her husband and expressed a passion for freedom from the bonds of love less marriage and emotionally challenged husband.

*You called me wife.  
I was taught to break saccharine into your tea and  
To offer at the right moment the vitamins.  
Cowering  
Beneath your monstrous ego, i  
Became a dwarf, I lost my will and reason, to all your  
Questions I mumbled incoherent replies. (Substitute)*

She realized that men view women as sexual objects and they assign no value to the intellectual fecundities of women. So in a mood of frustration, anger and despair she bursts in the poem “Conflagration”:

*Woman, is this happiness, this lying buried  
Beneath a man?*

Her helplessness makes her write satirically:  
*Here is my husband’s home; I am a trained circus dog  
Jumping my routine hoops each day.*

The power imbalance makes woman a slave to man. She does not like woman’s acceptance of meaningless commands and her subjugation to the male efforts to make woman inferior to man. The man woman relationship should be with mutual love, mutual respect, equality and reciprocation. In her poem “I shall Someday” she expresses her ardent desire to break free from the shackles of marriage and false love:

*I shall someday leave, leave the cocoon  
You built around me with morning tea,  
Love words flung from the door-ways and of course  
Your tired lust.....*

Kamala Das gave a clarion call to all the women who became the victims of tyranny in the male dominated society to rise and protest against the ill-founded social order. She revolted against the traditions and conventions of Indian society with such fury and frankness as was never witnessed before in Indian English literature. She was unhappy because women did not protest against domestic slavery and passively accept the gender defined roles. She did not want women to be treated as superiors to men but as equals to men. Her poetry addressed the grievances of women. She universalized the experiences of women by asserting that,

*We are all alike  
We women  
In our wrappings of hairless skin (Composition)*

Kamala Das inspired many women writers. Eunice –De-Souza says “Women writers owe a special debt to kamala Das”.

Mamta Kalia is a true successor of Kamala Das, A bilingual poet like Kamala Das, she writes in two languages both in Hindi and English. She has contributed two collections of poetry to Indian English, ‘Tribute to Papa and Other Poems’ and ‘Poems-78’. Like Kamala Das she also deals with the themes of love, marriage and family relationships. She writes highly confessional and autobiographical poetry Like Kamala Das. Her poetry is a protest against the traditional Indian society, a rebellious revolt against the discriminative values of man centric world. She fights for the cause of women with her power packed poetry garnished with irony and sarcasm. She gave voice to the middle class Indian woman in her poetry.

In her poem ‘Tribute To Papa’ she clashes with her father who is an upholder of traditional values. She finds a lot of generation gap with her father and questions his adherence to traditions in her poem.

*Who cares for you, Papa?  
Who cares for your clean thoughts, clean words, clean teeth?  
Who wants to be an angel like you?  
Who wants it?  
You are an unsuccessful man, Papa.  
.....  
You have always lived a life of limited dreams.*

She finds it difficult to defy the sentiments of her tradition-bound father. So she writes:

*Everything about you clashes with  
Nearly everything about me.  
You suspect I am having a love affair these days,  
But you're too shy to have it confirmed  
What if my tummy starts showing gradually  
And I refuse to have it curetted?  
But I'll be careful, Papa,  
Or I know you'll at once think of suicide....*

Indian society believes that daughters are the upholders of the family respectability and traditions. They have to sacrifice their emotions for the sake of the family honour. Women after their marriage are compelled to sacrifice their self-interests for the sake of family even then nobody recognizes their talents. So in an ironic tone she writes about her lackluster wedded life in a poem

*“Sheer Good Luck”,  
So many things  
Could have happened to me...  
But nothing ever happened to me  
Except two children  
And two miscarriages*



Marriage seems to her destructive and hazardous as the condition becomes more pathetic when the husband is not able to acknowledge her talents and even sacrifices made by her:

*Love made a housewife out of me  
I came with a degree in textile designing  
I skill in debates, dramatics and games  
You don't realise  
You don't sympathise.*

Even her professional life has failed to give her solace and left her in utter boredom. She is sandwiched between her personal and professional life. In a poem "*Love Made a House Wife Out of Me*" she wrote about the depressive house hold chores under which her artistic talents are buried.

*Unmade beds, dirty linen  
Papers long folded, slippers thrown,  
.....  
A sinkful of plates  
And a head full of ache.*

Most of her poetry speaks anger, disillusionment and dissatisfaction. In the patriarchal society marriage shrinks woman to a pigmy. She becomes a doormat in her in-laws family. Nobody understands her needs and emotions and she has to serve everybody in the family to attain the title 'good wife, good mother and good daughter. She often acts as a shock absorber in between her husband and children. So she gives vent to all her gathered pent up emotions in her writing. She herself admitted,

*"Instead of fighting, I start writing. People around you always try to fit you into a frame – parents, peers and partners.....I snapped myself into two bits like a pod.  
One bit was obeying, towing and rowing; the other raised its head well past midnight and scribbled away in dairies, on the back of envelops, on office file covers." (Kalia)*  
*I write  
Because I cannot bite.  
It's the way  
The weak ones fight.*

According to Vashiahth "*Mamta Kalia is no strident, feminist activist .... Yet her poetry shares a vital concern with the basic proposition of women's demands for an equitable life. She has not only the passion for individuality but also supports the feminist agenda for liberation from patriarchal oppression, and other limitations.*"

Another poet who emerged as a promising new voice in the modernistic phrase of Indian English Poetry is Imtiaz Dharkar. She is one of the few women poets with Muslim background. She has contributed three volumes of poetry to Indian English "*Purdah*"(1989), "*Post cards From God*"(1994), "*I Speak for the Devil*" (2001). *Purdah* is observed by Muslim women and is associated with Muslim culture. Dharkar agrees that *purdah* was necessary to women in the beginning of Islam because the Arabian countries were torn by strife and *Purdah* ensures safety for women from the vulgar and veil looks of men. But now it is a flagrant violation of basic rights, freedom and dignity of women. It alienates and isolates woman from the world. Dharkar views *Purdah* as suppressive of intellectual growth repression of the personality of women. In her poem '*Purdah*' she writes:

*One day they said  
She was old enough to learn some shame.  
And –*

*Purdah is a kind of safety.  
The cloth fans out against the skin  
Much like the earth that falls  
On coffins after they put the dead men in.*

Imtiaz compares purdah with that of a coffin. Her poem is a protest against purdah system. Her poem “*Honour Killing*” is about a woman who asked for a divorce and was brutally killed for that in the lawyer’s office. The poem is power packed exercising great impact on the readers and forces the readers turn their attention towards the female concerns:

*At last I’m taking off this coat,  
This black coat of a country  
That I swore for years was mine...  
This black veil of faith  
That made me faithless  
To myself,  
Gave my god a devil’s face,  
And muffled my own voice.*

Dharkar is viewed by Bruce King as “Consciously feminist, consciously political, consciously that of a multiple outsider”. She has an honest expression and courage of conviction. In a poem ‘*Greater glory*’ she exposes the humiliating plight of god in the hands of selfish, self-centered and shameful conduct of man.

*God was hijacked long ago  
Held hostage in empty churches  
Desecrated temples,  
Broken Mosques”.*

A critic observes Imtiaz Dharkar’s humanistic and feministic concerns with her anguish and agony and sympathy and protest give the message silently, though it’s deafening explosion has been felt everywhere.

Eunice-De-Souza was born in a Goan Christian family. She was educated in Bombay and United States of America. She has published four volumes of poetry, *Fix* 1979, *Women in Dutch Painting* 1988, *Ways of Belonging* 1990, *Selected and New poems* 1994. She has also written four books for children. Many of her works deal with the women oppression and male –domination. She believes that gender discrimination is due to social constructs. She criticizes the catholic hypocritical community in her poetry. Her first poem in her poetry collection is ‘*Catholic Mother*’. In her poem she delineates the silent suffering of a woman in bearing seven children in seven years.

*Francis D’ Souza  
Father of the year  
By the grace of the god he says,  
We have had seven children  
(in seven years)  
We are one big happy family  
God always provide  
India will suffer for he  
Her wicked ways  
(these Hindu buggers got no ethics)*

The poem mocks at the Father of the year. It reveals the attitude of faith which overrules commonsense. He is so unmindful of his wife's agony during the child birth. The woman is weak and docile who permits the man to exercise power and domination over her and lets the man oppress her. Moreover the woman is often condemned for giving birth to a girl child. She has to face the wrath of both family and society. Eunice-De-Souza believes to some extent women are also responsible for their plight as many women in India give preference to male children showing contempt towards their own sex. Even Eunice-De-Souza was unwelcoming, because her mother wanted a son and was disappointed when Eunice was born. So she was hostile towards Eunice-De-Souza.

The poem 'Forgive Mother' shows her conflict with her parents. She rebels against her family upbringing. She exposes the gender based discrimination that her mother holds. Her mother is a representative of traditional social orders where the woman is treated insignificantly. While addressing her mother she says:

*Forgive me, mother,  
that I left you  
a life-long widow  
old, alone.  
.....  
In dreams  
I hack you.*

The mentality of the society towards a girl child and the effort to condition her to fit in stereotypical roles irritates Eunice which she reveals in her poems. There is a current of anger in her poetry. She is compassionate towards the women folk who are victimized and who accept the social norms set by the society.

## Conclusion

These new generations of women poets are unafraid uninhibited and motivated by feminist ideologies. The conflict in their minds between feminist learning and tradition-bound roles has left them bewildered and perplexed. They have portrayed the psyche of women and the crises in their lives in a male dominated society. Their search is for the identity of women, so their writing is not merely a self-expression but also a means of self-exploration and self-assertion. "Feminism in India has interestingly been less of an ivory tower effort and more of grass-roots enterprise". The pragmatic approach to feminism led to the activities like spread of education, economic self-sufficiency, preservation of the rights of women and particularly creating awareness for liberation from conservative super-structures.

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### 23. Feminist Perspectives in Manju Kapur's *A Married Woman*:

#### A Revolution to Empower Women

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Feminism is a movement which advocates granting the same political, social, and economical rights to women as those enjoyed by men. Throughout the world, women have been deprived of their basic social-legal rights by a patriarchal order. In the domain of patriarchal culture, woman is a social construct, a site on which masculine meanings get spoken and masculine desires enacted. The factor which changes a girl into a woman with finality is not simply her anatomy, but the process of social conditioning which influences and moulds her psyche to desire and pursue traditionally accepted and encouraged feminine roles only. To change the conventional image of women constructed by the orthodox society, it is necessary to discourage the habit of defining woman as an essence whose nature is determined biologically and whose sole identity is to produce human species. Twentieth century has witnessed a growing awareness among women regarding their desires, sexuality, self-definition, existence and destiny. Manju Kapur's *A Married Woman* (2002) also attests to many propositions being propounded about feminism. The narrator highlights how traditional, middle class Indian attitudes towards marriage are conventional and caught in the clutches of male exploitation and dominance.

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Manju Kapur is one of the most renowned women writers of the contemporary era in India. Her characters depict the vulnerable condition of women in the Indian society and also delineate how they are being kept ignorant about education and emancipation. In all her novels she tries to give vent to the gender discrimination still overtly prevalent in the field of education. Kapur's first novel *Difficult Daughters* has received a wide international acclaim and been awarded the commonwealth writers' prize. The book was in the best sellers list. Her second novel *A Married Woman* is an epoch-making literary work that claims and carries two major feminist issues. One is radical feminism and another one is Marxist feminism. Radical feminism is a philosophy emphasizing the patriarchy as dividing rights, privileges and power primarily by gender. The radical formula of male superiority is heart-felt. The radical feminism opposes existing political and social organization in general because it is inherently tied to patriarchy. Marxist feminism arises out of the doctrine of Karl Marx, whose theory is centered less on the material aspects of life than on the more broadly defined social ones.

Central to Marxism is the idea of the division of labour, which is central in the capitalist system. Marxist feminists base their arguments on the moral right with reference to the corruption of wage and labour that is reported in the expression of class distinctions. What appears to have gone unnoticed in Marxism is the perception that in the capitalist system there is a stripping away of the spiritual qualities of life as a person is reduced to being a mere cog in a machine. There is a tendency in some feminist writings to discuss the relationship between feminism and prostitution in much the same terms, thus stripping away the transcendent and spiritual qualities of prostitutes and leaving only a mechanistic view of prostitutes within prostitution. Kapur carefully articulates and emulates the Radical and Marxist feminism in various sequences and motivating motions of female characters relating to Astha, the protagonist. Her picture in the fiction seems to be more of a man than a mere character in the novel since it is mostly seen 'art and artists are inseparable.' Virtually liberal feminists are not more reactionary than the radical feminists. They apply liberal principles of freedom, equality and justice to women. But radical feminists are committed to bring a basic change to the women emancipation without any compromise.

The novel *A Married Woman* centers round a middle class Delhi-based Hindu family. Hemant, an America-returned Delhi business man, married Astha, a middle-class educated Hindu girl. At the start their married life runs smooth and they have two children, a son Himanshu and a daughter Anuradha. Astha teaches English in a school for class twelve students. Their conventional marriage is smooth, sound and healthy till Astha meets Aijaz Khan, a secular muslim involved in Militant left wing theatre group. Their mushrooming friendship is nastily brought to an end when Aijaz meets his woeful fate in communal disturbances over Babri Masjid in Ayodhya. Astha meets Pipeelika, the widow of Aijaz. Pipeelika is a qualified Hindu girl from mother's side. She is M.A. in economics and sociology. Astha and Pipeelika enter into lesbian relation. Their love relationship ends when Pipeelika flies to US for her Ph.D and Astha returns to her sappy family attachments, as she feels.

The two feminist theories mentioned above may be applied to this novel. The social institution of marriage and the role of woman relating to social and traditional affairs are tactfully articulated by Kapur. It is a story of Astha, a Delhi based idiosyncratic middle class family girl. She has an arranged marriage where all the relations were perfect. She becomes a mother and a good house wife, managing her duties as a teacher. She was happy with her husband, his family and her children. Her mother, a conservative and orthodox traditionalist, says: 'when you are married our responsibility will be over. Do you know sastra say it without getting their daughter married; they will be condemned to perpetual rebirth'. (1) Astha strongly objects: 'I don't believe in all that stuff and I think an educated person neither should you.'

This protest may be a strong feminist voice against traditionalists who suppress women autonomy. This may be a version of radical feminism. Astha strongly opposes her mother in demanding the discrimination of gender and sex. This gender discrimination may be a strong foothold of radical feminism; 'Ma did not you have a son to look after you when you are old. You cannot take anything from a daughter? Why did you stay with me?' Socialist feministic attitude is reflected in the character of Astha. Astha's mother sells her plot and gives the money to Hemant, hoping only he could manage it. It is the feeling of Astha's mother that neither she nor her daughter has the stamina and worth to handle the money and use it meticulously. Astha challenges it; 'Really Ma, don't you think women are responsible for their investment?' (97) The socialist feminist's concept is sexual division of labour which may be an integral part of political economic theory having major connection between politics and economy. This political economy is the Marxist theory which aims at classless society. In crude form, it is known as democratic socialism. This concept is reflected in Astha's character when she finds faults in her father and mother-in-law for bringing up of Hemant to never regard women as beings to be consulted in their own lives. (98) When Hemant comes back from his business trip, he finds his wife Astha pregnant for the second time. His real attitude comes out dissipating the western culture of not caring to have a male child. This makes Astha nervous and

she outrageously pours out her thoughts to wipe out gender discrimination: 'But Ma I want a daughter; in America there is no difference between boys and girls.'(67)

In India the women who are going to become mothers are given importance and feel that the children are god's gift be it a girl or a boy. A childless woman is ill treated by the society hoping her life is wasted as she is not able to reproduce. There are superstitious beliefs that childless women should not be seen before they move out for work, as the day will end in fiasco. The people of older generations do not even drink a glass of water given by her hand. She is totally isolated from the society as if she had committed a sin. Even if she has a child and gives birth to a female child, the society feels she had a burden to the society. Hemant, though feels he is westernized in his thoughts, he craves for a son like an Indian father, who feels he had honoured the pride of his elders. Hemant wanted a son and his mother hires a pundit to perform special pujas for her grandson and when Astha feels alarmed about her situation and work he says 'You just go and talk to some children about poems and stories, organize few clubs and come back.' (68), these comments certainly condemn male dominance. Manju Kapur says in an interview with Ira Pandey, 'I am exploring the space that women occupy in domestic relationships. It is a world I know... she is a wife, a mother, a daughter in-law in fact' (The Hindu, Jan 5, 2003). The world of Manju Kapur is full of marriage and familial ties. There are two major dimensions: cultural confrontation and lesbian relationships. Kapur considers lesbianism better than male chauvinism. The plot of the novel revolves around this theme.

A study of few feminist theorists has also been included to expose how patriarchy creates havoc in the lives of women by denying proper education. With the British invasion, Indian men became aware of women education but the enthusiasm died out half way. So even after 65 years of Indian Independence, the condition of women has barely changed. Manju Kapur's novels circumscribe the condition of women education since Independence till the present era. Mary Wollstonecraft deftly asserts her claims about women's hindrance towards freedom and independence by these two most straightforward sentences in her masterpiece *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* (1792). It has been rightly said that this novel *A Married Woman* speaks as much to the problems of women in the twenty-first century as it did to those of the contemporaries of Wollstonecraft during the 18th century. What makes the book so grounded even in this era is that – the social and economic realities of women's place in society has barely changed since then. *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* voices woman's right to education. Wollstonecraft delineates that not only is it an inherent right of women to be educated, it is a social imperative as well; else succeeding generations would inherit their parents' ignorance instead of their wisdom. According to her opinion the most perfect education is to enable the individual to attain such habits of virtue as will render it independent (31). Manju Kapur explores a totally different aspect of educating a girl in her novel, *A Married Woman* (2003). Like any other woman of her age Sita, Astha's mother, though a working woman believed in the superstitious and the age old conventional ways. Her only aim was to send Astha to a well-settled family. To send Astha to her in-laws house, she sent an application to god everyday in the form of prayers. Her application was forwarded and Hemant was recruited in the post of a husband. While her father was not too old-fashioned like her mother and thought that a girl certainly needs independence, which can be attained only through education. He firmly believed that everyone's future lays in their own hands and so his daughter should plan for her future with the support of her parent's guidance and books. He was always interested to take care of his daughter's education. As it is crystal clear that there were none to guide him in his career, he always encouraged her about her potentials, her flair for painting and her way with the words; he insisted that with a bit of practice in Mathematics, her feeble point, she could sit for the competitive exams and excel as a public servant. His strong implication was that a good job makes a girl independent. But this manipulative way of his is another way of finding a good match for his daughter. He comforted his wife in private that if Astha could outshine in academics, she could have a chance for the IAS and find a good husband there. Thus, the final destination fixed for their daughter is marriage, only their perspective differed. This patriarch, being a bureaucrat himself, shrewdly camouflages his real intentions, while encouraging his daughter to study hard. He too never thinks beyond the boundary of marriage, as typical Indian parent. Thus,

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*Contemporary Literary Perspectives*

Kapur presents and represents feminist perception in a range of forms and folds in the novel *A Married Woman* that places her among the front-ranking feminist writers parading the cause of women liberation in all accomplishments.

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## 24. Depth and Emotion, Amusement and Imagination in Kiran Desai's The Inheritance of Loss

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Human beings undergo unique feelings akin to feeling like depth emotion, amusement and imagination. Several Indian English Diaspora writers have applied these elements in their works including Kiran Desai, an award winning and prosaic writer of her novel "The Inheritance of Loss". The novel is about globalization, immigration and class, in addition to the elements like "Depth and Emotion, Amusement and Imagination" expressed through its major characters such as Sai, Judge, cook, Gyan and Biju. Each and everybody imbibe this kind of feelings but when its exhibition varies from person to person. The minds of the youngsters are reflected in this novel. Kiran Desai depicts the characters of Sai, Judge, cook Gyan and Biju very effectively. Sai outbursts her inner emotion when she is alone. When her parents died, she was sent to live with her maternal grandfather, who hadn't had any contact with her or her mother since either of them was born. Another character in the novel, Biju is the son of a judge's cook. The cook is an illegal immigrant in the US who tries to make a new life. The novel shows the internal conflicts in India between groups, at the same time as showing a conflict between past and present. Many leading Indians favour being typical English ultimately they forget the traditional ways of Indian life, shown through the characters Sai and Biju. So my paper deals the in between the characters how the depth and emotion, amusement and imagination takes place a main role in kiran desai's the inheritance of loss.

### Role of Depth and Emotion in English literature and this novel

Depth and emotion beautifully rendered in the novel, "Inheritance of Loss" clearly distinguishes between general fiction and variety fiction. It has a character, a dramatic plot, tension and above all mystery. Without depth and emotion, in a literary fiction emotional complexities arise. In the novel, the reader easily identifies essential desires and depth revealed through their actions. It evokes strong sympathy towards the characters. Establishing emotional lines of a story takes many careful readings of the story. Tracing emotional line in story can also help them determine the intensities for emotions as they relate to dramatic plot structure. Another related term of emotion is sentimentality. It is emotion rejected by a reader when the emotions have not been earned through action unbelievable character development. Continuously the author uses clichés or tired descriptions, or simply inappropriate authorial ideas. It is believed that literary fiction, emotions of character must be complex and logical but not sentimental leading to extreme changes. Hence, each great literary story depends upon different emphasis and requirements of emotional complexity. It will be seriously considered in English literature. Moreover this depth and emotion usually connects the characters into different shades. The perplexity was really amazing among the characters. The same thing observed by the readers in novel writing.

### Role of Amusement and Imagination in English literature and this novel

The division and the role of the narrative into self-contained fragments give memories the same status as present events. This variation, made visible on the page, explains the reserved gloom of the judge, for whom demanding memories are a kind of punishment. It is clearly expressed, "He was silly to be upset by Sai's arrival, to allow it to generate this revalidation of his past". But he is obligated to relive scenes from his unfortunate marriage, in all their "loneliness and shame". Self-disgusted after his years in England, he vents his offense on the young wife he meets again on his return to India, subjecting her to years of contempt and abuse. All these shows in sad situations give

somewhat amusement since difficult situation makes mind work like a rocket. It gives solutions and disappointment. Kiran Desai depicts the same element through the characters of the Judge and Sai. Muse is another word for “think.” According to the Muses of Greek mythology, it is the spirit of inspiration. It is wonder many novelists mused for divine to beautiful women and their muses. The form of amusement that lasts long term is called as amusement in literature. In literature amusement gives lot of impression on different aspects like comedy, tragic comedy, classism, neo-classism, soliloquy extra...

Imagination is a wonderful gift from God to human beings. Desires are fulfilled through imagination though not possible in real or existing life. Such feeling gives so much of pleasure. Literary point of imagination is a great virtue. The topic of imagination is broad and different. It deals with an extended family of interrelated concepts and capacities. Imagining covers everything from the simple mental image, to the philosophical counter-example, to the most inspiring act of creation. It takes in both dreaming and logical thinking, reverie and hypothesis formation. To bring order to this range of mental phenomena it helps to make an initial distinction between what the articles call sensory and cognitive imagination — roughly, between forming a mental image and entertaining a possibility in the conceptual style.

The present paper considers the role of these elements in literary production. It explains that allows us to make present through images what is absent from the present world before us and to reconfigure that world through the image-layering interpretive practice of because. This article also discusses the ethical imperatives of imagining and suggests that literature can be considered as a transgressive expression of freedom and as the cultivation of a double vision that not merely shapes fictional worlds but also reshapes one's life. Imagination has different kinds namely cognitive imagination, sensory imagination, and practical imagination. Further, it argues for the educational importance of and sketches strategies for developing it in the classroom. It explains that is a necessary ingredient in the operation of practical reasoning and considerations that limit or constrain and direct it are in the nature of the case integrated with other functions of practical reasoning, with critical rationality and with constraints of relevant reasonableness. This paper describes potential practical applications of education. According to Fryer (1958), it begins by exploring the relation of language and literature. He asks, "What is the relation of English as the mother tongue to English as a literature?" (p16) And before he can give an answer, he has to explain why people use words. He identifies three different uses of language, which he also terms types or levels of language. "The language of consciousness or awareness" is our means of "self-expression," our means of responding to the natural environment: "the world as it is." This language produces conversation. "The language of practical sense" is our means of "social participation," our means of taking part in our civilization. This language produces information. "The language of literature" is our means of entering the world of imagination: "the world we want to have." This language produces poetry, first of all.

According to Coleridge (1777-1832) imagination has two forms; primary and secondary imagination is merely the power of receiving impressions of the external world through the senses. Both in their parts and as a whole, it is a natural act of mind; the human mind receives impressions and sensations from the outside world, unconsciously and unwillingly imposes some sort of order on those impressions, and reduces them to shape and size. Hence, the mind is able to form a clear image of the outside world. In this way clear and reason perception becomes possible. Thus imagination creates new shapes and forms of beauty by fusing and unifying the different impressions. It receives from the external world. Fancy is not creative, it is a kind of memory, if randomly brings together images, and even when brought together. They continue to retain their separate and individual properties. They receive no colouring or modification from the mind. It is merely mechanical combination and not a chemical fusion. Coleridge explains the plot by quoting two passages from Shakespeare's 'Venus and Adonis' (1592-1593) the following lines from this poem serve to illustrate fancy: Wordsworth was only in the practice of poetry and he considered only the impact of

imagination on poetry. Coleridge on the other hand, is interested in the theory of imagination. He is the first critic to study the nature of imagination and examine its roles in creative activity. Secondly while Wordsworth (1770-1850) was fancy and imagination almost as synonymous, but Coleridge is the first critic to distinguish between primary and secondary imagination. His treatment of the subject is on the whole, characterized by greater depth, penetration and philosophical subtlety. It is his unique contribution to literary theory. Some of the great writers and critics' opinions about the imagination as follows... "I am enough of an artist to draw freely upon my imagination. Imagination is more important than knowledge. Knowledge is limited. Imagination encircles the world." Albert Einstein: "Anyone who lives within their means suffers from a lack of imagination." Oscar Wilde: "Looking back, I guess I used to play-act all the time. For one thing, it meant I could live in a more interesting world than the one around me." Marilyn Monroe:

### **Depth & Emotion, Amusement & Imagination**

The dictionary meaning of depth and emotion are 'the measurement or sense of distance from an observation point, such as linear perspective in painting', 'a kind rough feeling towards the persons and their conditions especially in anger and disappointment. The deeper emotions of this novel characterized the qualities of certain elements represents the feelings of depth and emotions. This novel does get at the why, it does explore what it means to be Indian, whether in India, including a man formerly of the upper class, if only barely, as well as his servant; or in America, as an illegal immigrant. However, it is more realistic with the characters finding themselves in the situations that were not imposed to them but mostly of their *own* choices. The characters have choices, despite the fact that those options are limited because of the harsh environment that they happened to live in.

It may not be as current as Aravind Adiga's *The White Tiger* although it is also about the changing landscape of a small Indian town. However, Desai's storytelling is more engaging as she has this rare ability to take you in a roller-coaster ride and by her playful verses, in deep thoughts by her heartfelt message, in gratitude by being in a better state in life than her characters, (Of Sai, Biju, Cook, Gyan) in aversion to any form of racial discrimination by following the sad fate of Biju hopping from one job to another as an illegal alien in the USA. Yet, in the end, one feels cheering for her characters and identifies with the characters.. The storyline spans from the deceptively tranquil remote east to the seemingly loud and happening west. Biju, one of the chief characters, fights tooth and nail to get a visa for the USA and finally succeeds in setting his foot in the 'Land of Dreams' but eventually takes off his rose-tinted spectacles and does some extensive soul-searching which ultimately throws up a volley of difficult questions in his face so that he is reduced to reconsider his vocation. Soon he sees the whole world around him crashing down and converting into one composite being- his father who has been slaving his miserable life away in servitude, thousands of miles away, to a bloodless retired Uncle Scrooge-like civil servant who cares for nothing else in the entire world but Mutt, his pet bitch: He loses the soundness of his mind when she goes missing. Sai- the civil servant's orphaned maternal granddaughter who is head-over-heels with her youngish tutor, cook, who was father of Biju. Always thinks about what is good and what is bad. His son working in abroad as a immigrant perso. He confronted with his deeper emotion in his heart only. He was always scolded by judge with his usual mistakes. Gyan, which constantly blows hot and cold on her much to her righteous indignation. Yet, she cannot take her mind off him. So, she braves the elements and communal riots on a rain-drenched afternoon to seek him out only to get a raw deal in return. She goes back home mortified. Will Gyan come back to her and requite her love? Finally the judge, who was so emotional and greater amusement in his views, at the same time he did not like his grand daughter, but as virtual person he taken his grand daughter to his home (kalimpong). He was quite against with the emotional revolutions. In his deeper level the kind of happiness. The haunting hopelessness and individual disavowal mark the theme at every step and Kiran Desai has done a fine job in spotlighting this stark feature which shines through, so to speak, the entire stretch of the narrative. She also substantiates by way of the atomised depictions of her characters the grim

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universal fact that some people, no matter what the circumstances, do not change; rather they refuse to change. At the near end, interestingly, the reader's craving for hope becomes insupportable and sure enough hope glimmers from the Himalayan summit; just let the mist float by and you could 'reach out and pluck it'. There is no denying the fact then that 'The Inheritance of Loss' fully qualifies as a true-blue Booker book.

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## 25. Parallelism in Markandaya's *Nectar in a Sieve* and Silko's *Ceremony*

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This paper seeks to outline the similarities and differences between Indian writer Kamala Markandaya and Native American writer Leslie Marmon Silko's exploration of rural life and the relation of people with land. I have tried to establish my argument that the people who are very close to nature across the globe have a very close attachment with land and they love and respect land which is a sacred being to them. I have also depicted the fact that everyone has to come back to one's own roots to establish identity and to find peace. Moreover another important theme highlighted is adapting to change. This argument is carried out at the backdrop of two important novels Markandaya's *Nectar in a Sieve* and Silko's *Ceremony* which are quite parallel to one another. Along with the themes mentioned, destructiveness of contact between two cultures is very clearly depicted by both the novelists. Known for writing about culture clash between Indian urban and rural societies, Markandaya's first published novel, *Nectar in a Sieve*, was a bestseller and named a notable book of 1955 by the American Library Association. She writes how British try to bring modernism in rural India and what is its converse effect on Indians. The British began the process of modernizing India. But their modern "advances" like the tannery, created a clash between traditional ways and new ways. The tannery symbolizes the force of change. Ruku, Markandaya's protagonist blames much of the unpleasantness of her life on the tannery, as it was the thing that disrupted her peaceful life. The tannery does cause much of her misfortune simply because it radically changed their traditional village life.

Like Markandaya, Silko too believes that Indians are best off when they remain within their traditional culture. Her writing is about culture clash between Native American and White societies. Silko in her novel *Ceremony* tells the story of a Laguna war veteran Tayo's quest for sanity which he achieves finally in his own roots. Thus in *Ceremony*, the protagonist, Tayo finds his cure and salvation within an Indian context. Silko here emphasizes the need to return to the rituals and oral traditions of the past in order to rediscover the basis for one's cultural identity. Both *Ceremony* and *Nectar in a Sieve* are narrated by old women who are the important characters in the novels. Both the novels are in the story format with flashbacks; present and past incidents. This flashback point of view allows the whole story to be Ruku's own reflections on her own life. She tells us the story as past tense, and she occasionally adds foreshadowing and interpretation that she couldn't have known at the time. In regular first-person mode, a narrator is able to tell a compelling and straightforward story. The usage of first-person flashbacks, though, is an opportunity to elevate the simple narrative to thoughtful reflection without cluttering the story itself. Similarly Silko switches back and forth from Tayo's childhood to his time in the Philippines to various moments after his return, following no order except the order of thematic connections between the different events. While the prose sections of *Ceremony* are primarily narrated in a third person limited voice, the poems vary between first and third person. They announce the elements of this theme that will recur throughout the novel. The Native Americans of the Pueblo see time as cyclical rather than linear. Silko produces a text that emphasizes this notion by using a nonlinear narrative structure. In most of Western literature, the story is narrated from beginning to end and from earlier to later. In *Ceremony*, it is often difficult to distinguish between primary and secondary narratives, or between past and present. Silko switches back and forth from Tayo's childhood to his time in the Philippines to various moments after his return, following no order except the order of thematic connections between the different events. The entire novel is narrated in the past tense, so whether an event actually occurred before Tayo's birth or in the midst of the ceremony, it appears to happen at the same time. The effect of this is to recreate a Pueblo sense of time, where all things are cyclic and where their immediacy is related not to how long ago they happened but to how important they feel in the present.

Both Markandaya and Silko write about the life of rural people. Markandaya's experience is based on observation whereas Silko has personally experienced native life. Markandaya is an Indian

writer living in England and writing in English about a life of rural poverty that is not exactly her own. She was sometimes criticized as less than authentic because she writes about the life of rural poverty-stricken existence which she herself didn't live. She addresses the best and worst aspects of rural life and poverty, which she saw while traveling through South India. Because Markandaya has a sense of the reality of living in rural India, her characters are realistic. Markandaya imbues her characters, particularly Rukmani, with strengths and weaknesses that essentially typify the rural Indian existence. Rukmani is hopeful and persistent, but she often reacts with emotion when it comes to her family. Markandaya sympathizes with her characters, but she manages to ground their emotion in very real events. Ultimately, Markandaya's distance to her own Indian culture serves as both a strength and weakness to her writing. Unlike Markandaya who lived away from the rural India, Leslie Marmon Silko grew up on a Laguna Pueblo reservation. *Ceremony* is set on the same Laguna Pueblo reservation where Silko grew up. All of Silko's work draws on her personal experience as a Native American. As she often points out in interviews, Native American culture is passed on through from one generation to another through the process of storytelling. Tayo, the main character in *Ceremony*, is also a figure in traditional Laguna stories. All of Silko's works prove her concern with the preservation of Native American culture, including traditions, languages, and natural resources, in combination with an awareness of the reality of cultural mixing.

Kamala Markandaya resembles Silko in most of her characteristics as a writer. Their protagonists are invariably drawn from the underside of society the voiceless and marginalized sections. Both the novelists opine that adapting to change is essential to survive and to live happily in the contemporary society. In *Ceremony*, the contact between Native American and white cultures is largely destructive. The whites arrived on the American continent and established systems that prove fatal to the indigenous peoples. Silko in *Ceremony* presents an attempt to contend with the reality of a mixed cultural landscape in a way that allows Native American culture to persist, even as it changes. Tayo himself embodies the contact between Native American and white cultures, as he bears his mixed racial heritage in his green eyes. Tayo must learn to make use of the white parts of himself and of the world around him, without abandoning his primary allegiance to Native American traditions. Traditional native medicine of the medicine man Ku'oosh fails to cure Tayo of his insaneness because Ku'oosh knows only traditional healing ceremonies which are not applicable to Tayo's contemporary illness. Betonie the contemporary medicine man uses modern methods to cure Tayo of his psychological disease. He says, "The ceremonies have always been changing." (126); these changes are necessary as this growth keeps curing ceremony strong.

Both the novels depict the aspect that sticking to ones root is essential to survive. In *Ceremony* Toyo's Cousin Rocky and his mother are the best examples to prove how giving up roots destroys people. Rocky and Toyo's mother choose the American life as they feel ashamed of their own native society. They wish to be successful in American mainstream society. This results in their death. Tayo though goes to participate in war supporting American he never forgets his roots. He returns and hence gains identity. In *Nectar in a Sieve*, the arrival of the tannery marks a turning point in Ruku's life as well as in the course of the novel. The impact of the tannery on her family including the loss of her oldest sons, and the increasing impact of the weather on the rice crop and the family's finances through flooding monsoon rains and the onset of drought. The drought claims the crop as well as Ruku's sons Raja and Kuti. Ira turns to prostitution to try to help the family and save Kuti - it seems that the family's fortunes could sink no lower. Thambi follows his brother to the tannery, telling his father he will not work the land that does not belong to his own family, as it will bring them nothing. Nathan is hurt by his sons' words and rejection of his lifestyle but does not protest their decision. Ruku and Nathan's fifth son and the only one who does not leave the village, Selvam grows into an intelligent and caring young man. Selvam is offered the chance to surpass his mother's teachings and work with Kenny to build a hospital in the village and to receive medical training. His loyalty to his parents is proven when he offers to give up this opportunity to help save the family land. Selvam also remains close and loyal to his sister Ira and her child and pledges to care for them

for their lives. Selvam survives as he is close to his land where as his brothers are destroyed for rejecting land.

Nature provides constant challenges in the novel. The poor who work on the land are most affected by nature's fury as is clearly seen during the flood and drought. Despite nature's ability to harm, Ruku still finds it a beautiful and peaceful thing - in fact, it is one of the reasons that draws her back to her village. Ruku's statement that nature is like a wild animal one has tamed is fitting proves that nature plays an important life in her life. Silko also talks about nature in her novel. Natives depend on natural rainfall and their primary occupation is agriculture. Living in the desert land that comprises much of the southwest of the United States, the Laguna are constantly threatened by drought. Many of the traditional stories and ceremonies revolve around ensuring adequate rainfall. The primary signal of the spirits' displeasure with something the people has done is a drought, and one of the greatest feats of a destructive spirit is the creation of a drought. But the white teachers tell Native Americans that their stories are not true and that their understanding of the world is not valid. Most significant, the white teachers present a completely different view of science and nature, and, as a result, the younger generations of Native Americans want to abandon traditional farming practices. This creates an agricultural crisis that is exacerbated by the pollution of reservation lands by white mines and military industry. In addition, white towns attract Native Americans with the prospect of white-collar jobs and good pay. However, as Josiah tells Tayo when he is a child, everything has both its good and its bad sides. While too little rainfall can be disastrous, so can too much, as Tayo learns in the Philippine jungle. Tayo commits a grievous error when he forgets this lesson and, in the midst of a flood, curses the rain. Whether or not Tayo's curse is actually responsible for the drought on the reservation, it is essential for his health as well as for that of his community that he learn through his ceremony to respect the patterns of nature. Once he does that, the rain returns. Thus we find that both the novels talk about the effect of urban development on nature and the consequence reaction of the nature.

In *Nectar in a Sieve*, Ruku is forced to learn to deal with numerous changes and hardships that occur in the journey of her life. Both novels have various themes such as Hope, Consequence of Change, Juxtaposed position of Traditional Values with Modernization, Man with Nature and finally Familial issues. Family is central to Indian rural life. Extended families often live together. When a woman marries, she traditionally joins her husband's family. Sons are valued and are expected to contribute to the family's finances as soon as they are able. Women are the primary caregivers for the children but, as we see in the novel, they also assist their husbands with the farm work. Ruku's family was the most important thing and the one thing she could never fully lose. Her family bonds were certainly tested - she lost sons to death, to moves and to personal weakness but maintained strong relationships with the family that was left. She also understood the importance of love and acceptance of family members even when their decisions or beliefs were not her own. Her relationship with Puli shows her understanding of the need for family bonds. She attributes the lack of such bonds to much of Kenny's unhappiness. Kenny was away from his family and hence he was disturbed. Ruku's discomfort with the tannery came from the fact it disrupted her traditional lifestyle. Traditional values of family are broken by the tannery: no longer do sons follow in their father's footsteps, and daughters are easily led astray. In Native American society women are central to family. They help their men in hunting and are not just confined to home and children.

A recurring idea or motif throughout the novel is change. Ruku must deal with many changes in her family, her village and in herself. She learns to adapt to changes instead of letting those changes break her. Nathan understands there is no going back and they must learn to live with the changes or else will not be able to live at all. Above all else, Ruku must learn to deal with change in her life. The arrival of the tannery is the biggest and most disruptive change but there are countless others: her marriage, motherhood, the fates of her children, moving to the city. Nathan instructs Ruku on the importance of adapting or bending to change in order to survive in life. Ruku's encounters in

the city also show her discomfort with modern things: female doctors in pants and latrines for example. The negative effect of urbanization is very clearly depicted in both the novels. The people who easily adopt the mainstream culture and progress suffer at the end whereas the people who stick to their culture and land survive. Markandaya's protagonist Rukmani's neighbours, "threw the past away with both hands that they might be the readier to grasp the present, but Rukmani was unable to give up her rural life, and hence "stood by in pain, envying such easy reconciliation" (29). By the end of the novel Rukmani has lost nearly everything. They were evicted from their land. Thus Rukmini and Nathan head to the city in hopes of living with one of their sons who had left the farm in search of work years ago. But they never do find him. Immersed in the chaos of the city, they feel alienated. They are suddenly without a home, a community, or means of living. Rukmani then takes the final decision of her life. She decides to return to the land with which she was deeply connected. Even Native Americans believed that the land and the mothers are same. Silko's character Tayo had promised his uncle Josaiah to take care of land. But he accompanied his cousin Rocky to join army and his separation from land resulted in his illness. "The land is dry because earth is suffering from alienation of part of herself; her children have been torn from her in their minds; their possession or unified awareness of and with her has been destroyed, partially or totally; that destruction characterizes the lives of Tayo and his mother, Auntie and Rocky, Pinky and Harley, and all those who are tricked into believing that the land is beyond and separate from themselves. The healing of Tayo and the land results from the reunification of land and person (Allen 128).

## Conclusion

Women writers are important for the field of literature and environment as they are the carriers of culture. The relationship of women with land is very close and thus they feel alienated if they try to adopt urban life or urban culture. Woman is nurturer like mother earth which is considered to be of great strength and endurance. If we focus on the novel *Nectar in a Sieve* we find that the main protagonist Rukmini's relationship with land is inseparable and she has to return to village from city to maintain the relationship with land after her failure to settle in urban society. In *Ceremony* too we find characters suffer in their effort to imbibe urban life giving up their rural life. In both the novels change is due to the influence of mainstream society who destroyed the native land and rural people. The contact of Native Americans and white cultures in *Ceremony* is destructive. In *Nectar in a Sieve* the arrival of tannery destroys the life of rural people. "There is no going back. Bend like the grass that you do not break." (p.32) Nathan gives this advice to Ruku when she laments the coming of the tannery. The tannery brings many changes, most are unpleasant, but Nathan realizes they cannot return to their quiet former life. If they are not flexible enough to adapt to the changes, they will be broken and unable to live. Thus both the Writers prove that adapting to change sticking to one's roots is essential in order to live peaceful life.

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26. Manjula Padmanabhan's *Lights Out: A clarion call*

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One of the famous Indian writers, ManjulaPadmanabhan successfully tried her hand at all types of literature. It includes plays, travelogues, comic strips, short stories, novels and children's books and additionally she is an artist, cartoonist and illustrator. "Today ManjulaPadmanabhan has one of the highest profile CVs in the world of Indian literature (2). All her works have versatile themes ranging from mystery to science fiction. Manjulapadmanabhan's first play *Lights Out* (1984) has been performed on stage and on television, *Hidden Fire* (1991), and her fifth play is Onassiss award winning "Harvest" (1997). She has illustrated 21 children's books and her collection of short stories, *Kleptomania* and *Hot Death, Cold Soup* published in India and UK. Her comic strip *Suki* appeared daily in "the Pioneer" from December 1991 to November 1997. Her novel *Escape* (2008) reveals the life of the only girl in the world. "Getting there" is a semi-autobiographical novel. As an Illustrator she produced "I am different! Can you find me?" (2011), *Unprincess* (2005), *A visit to city Market* (1986), *The Enchanted Jungle* (1979) with Tara Ali Baij and Indrani and with Maithily Jagannath and *Dropsy Dragon* in 1984. As a 21st century woman, ManjulaPadmanabhan uses the techniques and tools of a modern world in her works. She focuses more on present social problems prevails in Indian society. *Lights Out* has been woven by Manjula to showcase the pain of women and irresponsible behaviour of people, particularly upper middle class in society. *Lights Out* is an account of eye witness of an incident that took place in Santa Cruz, Bombay (Mumbai) in 1982. A group of urban upper middle class people watch the brutalization of a woman in neighbouring building, fail to rescue the victim, and instead became eager spectators and good commentators.

The first scene of the Play reveals the drawing – dining area of a sixth floor apartment in a building in Bombay. The focal point of the space is a large window to the rear, its curtains drawn back. Through it, one can see the sky and just a suggestion of the roof top of the neighbouring building, unpainted, under construction. Bhaskar, the head of the house relaxes in sofa but his wife Leela is in tension with anxiety. She enquires Bhaskar about lodging a complaint in police station about the crime that takes place every night in their neighbouring building. Bhaskar reluctantly ignores her fright and suggests her to listen to music and to practice meditation to ignore the sounds that come from the neighbouring building. A woman victim cries for help but nobody responds and tries to check the crime. Instead of calling police, Bhaskar criticizes Leela that if he informs, they might laugh at him. Manjula through the character of Sushila, neighbour of Leela, voices that watching a crime must make us responsible. But Bhaskar treats it as rubbish.

Leela: That's what I said at first! But then.....

Bhaskar: Sushila's a fool.

Leela: We don't even really watch it, do we? I mean, I mean, I don't. But....you do! You watch it!

Bhaskar: Yes. I mean, I have.

Once or twice. (138) Bhaskar behaves as irresponsible social being. He watches the crime when it happen, feels that it is not his business what goes on in the next-door compound. Leela hardly dares to call guests to their house as they might come across the crime that happens. But Bhaskar invites Mohan, Delhi friend to his house. Bhaskar says to Mohan about the incidents that take place every day. Mohan shows interest to watch the crime without hesitation. Mohan doesn't want to involve in rescuing the victim and feels nothing wrong to watch a crime when it is happening. Manjula voices through Sushila that watching crime is equal to committing crime. Mohan reacts that intellectuals always confuse the simple issues and believe nothing harm in simply watching a crime. In Present society, people are so engrossed in forgetting their responsibility as social beings and incidents that take place in their surroundings do not bother and in no way these incidents are directly related to their personal lives. Social apathy is increasing among the people due to metropolitan culture. People never try to come out of their boundaries and hardly find time to see what happens around them. This increases crime rate in present society. Nobody cares about others and if anything

happens to them, then they blame others for irresponsible behaviour. Their sensibility becomes indifferent towards events surrounding them. Manjula views this tendency is high in upper middle class people.

Through *Lights Out*, dramatist gives a clarion call to overcome such sluggish behaviour towards the inhuman incidents. In present society, traditions, culture, basic human values and moral values are breaking away under the advancement of science and technology and modern politics. Individualism is the chief characteristic feature of the present society. Social commitment is neglected due to individualism. This tendency gives chance for many social evils. Even educated people ignore their responsibility. Manjula wants to awake the consciousness of these individuals to face the reality. When it comes to women issues, the rate of sensitivity is high and debatable among intellectuals and common people. Efforts are made by Government to protect women rights and to check their exploitation at family and in society. In spite of legislative measures, women suffer incessantly under many social evils and becoming victims of extreme cruelty and violence. They are raped, murdered and harassed physically and mentally.

As a society how responsive are we to other's need? This is the question Manjula Padmanabhan addresses in her play *Lights Out*. (chandra11) Manjula highlights the growing social apathy in present society. People confine to selfmade boundaries and never try to peep into the societal problems. Due to this crime rate has drastically increased in society. In *Lights Out* the responsible citizens of society Bhaskar and Mohan reluctantly ignores and diverts the crime to religious or traditional ceremonies. Leela psychologically disturbed by the incident at neighbourhood, but her fright and tension is totally overlooked by her husband. As a female she can sense the pain and struggle of woman victim. Mohan is adamant to watch the crime and views its unnatural not to look and to get involved.

Leela: But I'd be too frightened to go to their help!

Mohan: Who said anything about help? I'm talking about looking, that's all...

Bhaskar: Besides – you're the one who wants to have this thing stopped...

Leela: I want the police to come and clear them away. I don't want to go there myself!

Mohan: Just looking isn't the same thing as going to help...

Leela: Well... but what about the screaming!

Mohan: Is it for help?

Leela: Isn't it for help?

Mohan: Or is it just in general? That matters, you know. After all – it could just be some, you know, drama... (150)

Manjula condemns the views of people like Mohan. She tickles the minds of audience through *Lights Out*. Bhaskar and Mohan analyses the pitch of the voice of the victim to anticipate the intensity of crime but not readily rescuing the victim. Mohan feels the crime in neighbouring building is hardly private and he doesn't want to entangle in other people's private lives. He doesn't want to respond to the screams of victim unless if it is a murder. Is in this way a responsible social being behaves in Indian society? This is the question Manjula creates in the minds of audience in *Lights Out*. All over the world, Religion is a powerful tool to make people to follow the traditions, culture and faiths. Constitution guarantees the freedom to worship as we please so long as we don't offend the sensibilities of others. Bhaskar and Mohan come to an conclusion that there would be some kind of religious ceremony, like ear piercing, nose piercing, walking on chunks of hot coal, demonic possessions, taking place in the neighbouring building. Leela's friend, Naina and her husband surrender arrives to house and Naina grasps that the incident that takes place in neighbouring building is a Gang rape not a religious ceremony. Assailants are kicking, hitting victim with their fists. Naina forces to call police, but Bhaskar ask what proof does she has that it is a rape. Bhaskar speculates the victim is a Whore and describes there would be no meaning to use word "rape" to her. Leela: A Whore is a woman without shame.

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*Contemporary Literary Perspectives*

Naina: But – does that mean that only decent women can be raped?

Mohan: Of course!

Bhaskar: After all, what does a whore have to lose?

Naina: Why – I mean...

Mohan: Come on! A whore is not decent, so a whore cannot be raped!

Naina: (stubbornly). But then—if only decent women can be raped, what is the point in being decent?  
(175)

Manjula makes the audience to be irritated with unending discussion about incident. Through *Lights Out*, she creates a spirit of resistance towards horrible crime. She gives a clarion call to all social beings that it is an alarming time to fight against violence. Leela and Naina request to call police. Exhausted Leela hysterically shouts to call police. Bhaskar and Mohan decides to call police. The other character, Surinder, husband of Naina, enters the scene at last and getting knowledge about the incident responds in a humanistic manner and suggests not to call police, instead kill those animals like people. Surinder decides to attack them, but bhaskar and Mohan hesitate to do so.

Mohan: Why should we get involved in what these people do?

Bhaskar: After all, they haven't actually done us any harm.

Leela: We just want them to go away somewhere else...

Surinder: Listen. Listen. What do you think those turds are doing? Just screwing one woman, is it? And they have nowhere else to go so they come and do it here. Is it? After putting on the spotlights, so that all you nice people can watch? (He pauses dramatically.) They're screwing this whole bloody colony, dammit! They know that we're all standing here! Shitting in our pants, too scared to do anything but watch! They're making jackasses of us! (Appealing to Bhaskar.) You! Don't you see that?! (181)

Surinder counseling works, Mohan and Bhaskar decide not to call police and attack assailants face to face. They decide to take knives, petrol, acid and camera to take pictures of the incident. However, neither Surinder nor the others notice that the sounds outside have ceased. The assailants and woman vacates from that place.

In *Lights Out*, Manjula Padmanabhan presents a silent character Frieda, remains constantly in sight on the stage, performing her duties as a servant at Bhaskar's house. She observes and listens very carefully the discussion but she remains neutral. Manjula leaves the wonder what Frieda thinks to the audience. Frieda might come across such atrocities in her life or she wants to work peacefully for livelihood without any tension. It is obvious that Frieda supports attacking assailants, so she readily brings knives without instruction by Bhaskar. Unlike Leela, she is bold enough and dares to face reality.

Violence against women both at home and in society is a serious issue in Indian society. Fear of violence is a cause of women's lack of awareness in activities beyond the home. Within the home they are dominated by male and subjects to suppression. Crime against women is multifaceted; they are oppressed, murdered, raped, and harassed physically and mentally. Manjula questions... Who is responsible for inflicting torture on women? Manjula Padmanabhan gives a Clarion call through *Lights Out* to face the reality boldly. It's high time for the people of complex Indian society to develop a spirit of fellow feeling by placing themselves in the shoes of victims and unite to fight or raise strong voice against all types of violence, particularly on women.

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## 27. Poppies raised Disturbance, dislodgement in the Sea of Poppies

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### Disturbance and dislodgement in characters life

Over the last two decades Amitav Ghosh covered insecurities, dislocation, dislodgement, disorientation, destruction and fragmentation in his novels. Amitav Ghosh's *Sea of Poppies* is most high-flying script and he has taken the historical incidents about First Opium War. *Sea of Poppies* is the first part of his *Ibis* trilogy released in 2008. It was shortlisted for the Man Booker Prize. The novel is setting British India in 1838, about fertile agricultural lands are swamped by the flower of Opium and their effects in the life of Indian people at pre-independence. He has chosen historical journey that is First Opium War.

The novel is divided into three divisions. Those are Land, River and Sea. Ghosh describes the characters as poppy seeds originate in large numbers from the field to form a sea, where every single seed is uncertain about its future. 'In the old days, farmers would keep a little of their home made opium for their families, to be used during illnesses, or at harvests and weddings; the rest they would sell to the local nobility, or to pykari merchants from Patna.'(SOP 29)

Britishers encourages turning Indians lands to opium. Indian people developed to produce opium that the British are exporting to addicts in an increasingly resistant China. Caste, culture, tradition, poverty, hungry are ruled Indians life style. Hungry Indian peasants, meanwhile, are being driven off their land, and many are recruited to serve as plantation laborers in far-off British colonies like Mauritius. '...this was the fleet of the Ghazipur Opium Factory, carrying the season's produce to Calcutta, for auction. The fleet was accompanied by a sizeable contingent of armed guards, burkundazes and peons, most of whom were distributed among the smaller pulwar boats.'(SOP 222)

Meanwhile, the clouds of war are looming, as British opium interests in India press for the use of force to compel the Chinese mandarins to keep open their ports, in the name of free trade. In *Sea of Poppies*, Ghosh gives a clear picture about torture and punishment devices used by the British as labourers and lascars in opium factories.

An explanation of the conditions common in the Ghazipur Opium factory disclose the inhuman working circumstances of its employees. '... two hundred and fifty men working in that room, and twice that number of running-boys – yet such was the assemblers' concentration that there was very little noise, apart from the pattering of the runners' feet, and periodic shouts announcing the completion of yet another ball of opium.' (SOP 97)

Deeti is central character in the novel. Poppy fields mainly used for preparing Opium. Opium made many disturbances in her life. She belongs to a high caste. Her husband Hukam Singh worked in the Ghazipur Opium Factory. Along with her family many people lost their identity. There is no difference between men and women to Britishers. 'How had it happened that when choosing the men and women who were to be torn from this subjugated plain, the hand of destiny had strayed so far inland, away from the busy coastlines, to alight on the people who were, of all, the most stubbornly tooted in the silt of the Ganga, in a soil that had to be sown with suffering to yield its crop of story and song?

It was as if fate had thrust its first through the living flesh of the land in order to tear away a piece of its stricken heart.’(SOP 399) Wedding night, she was drugged with opium by her mother-in-law, so that her brother-in-law Chandan Singh could rape her and complete the marriage in place of her infertile husband, she gave birth to a girl child that is Kabutri. Her day starts in poppy fields, life twined with poppy supplies. People used poppy items for many functions. At first they start farming in their own lands for regular use, but when the Britishers start business and encourage poppy items they also have taken the farming in support to their satisfactory life. ‘After massaging poppy-seed oil into Kabutri’s hair and her own, Deeti draped her spare sari over her shoulder and led her daughter towards the water, across the field.’ (SOP 7)

She doesn’t feel any security in her own house. This is caused to dislocate from her native place forcefully escape from her troubles and becomes as a lascar. In one event, she goes to get back her sick husband from the opium factory in Ghazipur. She is insulted by the factory officers because her husband is an opium addict. She hopes her husband to stop taking opium but he doesn’t want to stop it in one circumstance, he said... ‘You should know, he said at last, that this is my first wife. She’s kept me alive since I was wounded: if it weren’t for her I would not be here today. I would have died of pain, long ago.’ (SOP 34)

People are forcefully transported abroad as a lascar, coolies from colonized countries to new countries. Loads of inhabitants missing their lands, life, habitual works, they filled by poverty in the course of poppy fields. Men, women and children lost their identity. When Deeti identified a ship nearby her field at Ganga her daughter questioned her about the ship. Deeti feared about the conditions. ‘... Wasn’t that the kind of ship you saw? The one like a bird? Strange that it showed itself to you. Don’t say that! Deeti cried, throwing her arms around the girl. A tremor of dread went through her and she hugged her daughter to her chest.’ (SOP 73).

When her husband dies, Deeti sends Kabutri to stay with relatives. Deeti looks almost certain to meet her fate when she is forced to consider sati ritual but then Kalua, the untouchable caste ox man from the neighboring village, comes to her rescue. They together flee from the village. This is not tolerable to the high caste villagers. Many companies’ supply coolies uploaded to abroad.

Poverty, hungry play a vital role for developing poppy fields. Britishers encourage people to grow poppy fields. ‘It had brought in a shipment of *chalan* opium, from one of the Company’s outlying, sub-agencies, and was being unloaded by a long line of coolies.’(SOP 7-8) Munniah another woman introduced on the board of Ibis to Deeti, her life is spoiled by an illicit relationship with a man working in opium factory in her village and becomes pregnant.

Heeru, is left by her husband in a fair due to her disease of forgetfulness. She also becomes as a slave in Opium factory in China. Sarju, commits a mistake in the delivery of a Thakur’s son because she is banished away from her village to Mauritius. Before she dies on the ship she gives Deeti seeds of poppy, bhang and dhatura to keep with herself for future use in Mauritius.

After receiving seeds from Sarju, Deeti realizes how important it is to take something for their future and as an agriculturalist seeds are most important in their life. They are like an asset for them. Ratna and Champa both sisters married to a pair of brothers whose land was contracted to the opium

factory and then confiscated for not being able to pay rent and driving them out to leave their village and go to Mauritius in search of their luck.

Another woman named Dokhaneer travelled with her husband to escape from the oppression of her abusive mother in law. And she is happy that her husband has joined her in her escape. She is unaware of the hardship and inhuman living conditions of plantation workers in Mauritius. 'The mandarins do indeed seem quite set in their course. The other day, they beheaded some half-dozen opium-sellers, right at the gates of Macao. Strung up the bodies in full public view, for everyone to see, Europeans included. It's had an effect, no doubt about it.

In February the price of the best Patna opium had sunk to four hundred and fifty dollars a chest.' (SOP 259) Neel Rattan Halder, a wealthy rajah whose dynasty has been ruling the zemindary of Rakshali for centuries, is confronted by Mr. Burnham with the need to sell off his estates in order to pay for the debt he had incurred when trading opium with China at the height of the opium trade. Neel Rattan and his late father's have business dealings with the colonizers.

'That year, 1837, was the first in which Burnham Bros, failed to generate profits for its clients. In the past, when the opium ships returned from China, at the end of the trading season, Mr Burnham had always come in person to the Raskhali Rajbari – the Halders' principal seat in Calcutta.' (SOP 87)

But now that the opium trade has come to a standstill, as a result of the resistance shown by the Chinese authorities, he is left with no money to clear his loan. Benjamin Burnham was an Opium Trader. He sent labour from India to abroad.

Since trading began with China in the sixteenth century there was a high demand for tea, silk and porcelain in Britain. But due to the low demand for European commodities in the East, Britain had a large trade deficit with China and had to pay for its imported goods with silver.

After the territorial conquest of Bengal in 1757, the British East India Company pursued a monopoly on production and export of opium from India.

When Mr. Burnham proposes to settle the loan for Halder's zamindary, Halder refuses the deal as the zamindary is his family's ancestral property and selling it would mean turning his back on his many dependents living in his household and zamindary. He is tried for forgery, but it is a sham trial orchestrated by Burnham and his cronies. The court punishes him by sentencing him to work as an indentured labourer for seven years in Mauritius. He is direct sufferer of Opium. '... Raskhali estate: for some years, it had been rumoured that the East India Company was to relinquish its control on opium production in Eastern India.'(SOP 215)

Neel's wife Malti is a silent sufferer. She suffers due to the mistake committed by her husband. Ah Fatt, a half-Chinese, half-Parsi opium addict from Canton, meets Neel in Ibis. Neel tries to change Ah Fatt but he rejected. He explained about it as the medicine for diarrhea and dysentery but as the dose increases it becomes addiction.

‘Later, Neel would come to learn that not the least of opium’s properties is its powerful influence on the digestive system: in proper doses it was a remedy for diarrhea and dysentery; taken in quantity it could cause the bowels to freeze – a common symptom in addicts.’ (SOP 322)

The East India Company bought opium from local traders and later directly from farmers, and sold it at auction in Calcutta. In 1773 the governor-general of India, Warren Hastings, decided to establish an East India Company opium monopoly in Bengal, encourages Indian peasants to plant huge sheaves of poppies and then illegally exporting the exceptionally high-quality opium to China to counter Britain’s deficit.

From there much of it was smuggled to Canton in China by foreign traders, eventually leading to the First Opium War (1839–1842). At the time of Opium war East India Company sends coolies too many areas to abroad.

With the support of the head of the lascars, Serang Ali, he becomes the second in command of the ship, when it was refitted to carry indentured labour to the island of Mareech or Mauritius instead of the tradable opium. ‘He had thought that lascars were a tribe or nation, [...] each with a leader who spoke on their behalf.’ (SOP 13)

Paulette was being ill with Burnham’s family because she wanted to disguise herself, and she chose Ibis to transform herself as a lascar. As the stories merge, each carrying its share of joys and sorrows, they suffered from opium later in the Ibis become a shelter to those in poverty. ‘The town was thronged with hundreds of other impoverished transients, many of whom were willing to seat themselves half to death for a few handfuls of rice. [...] food was so hard to come by that people were glad to lick the leaves in which offerings were made at temples.’ (SOP 203)

After much strife and bloodshed on board the vessel, Neel, Ah Fatt, Jodu, Serang Ali and Kalua manage to escape, unaware of the destination the sea waves will carry them to.

## Conclusion

The natural inclination of Amitav Ghosh to journalism, academia, and quest for novelty, skillful blend of history with situations, revelation of subterranean connections and analysis of history of some domains is evident in his work, *Sea of Poppies*. He has borrowed relevant material for the novel from the rich sources of the historical backgrounds of 19<sup>th</sup> century cultural imperialism and the migration of the North Indian indentured labourers in large numbers to various British agricultural estate colonies.

He gives a colorful arrangement of seamen, prisoners, laborers and *girmitiyas*, sailing forth in the hope of transforming their lives. He tries to give a clear picture in the post colonial Indian realities through the *Sea of Poppies*. Its fate is a disordered journey across the Indian Ocean, its purpose to fight along with Indians, China's dislodgement and disturbance nineteenth-century First Opium War written by twentieth century writer.



*Sea of Poppies* is Worldwide past incidents the immigration, dislocation, dislodged, western culture observes in twentieth century generation writers writings. The pitiable condition of Indians in the past and present, in India has been explained.

Diaspora is an undercurrent throughout the *Sea of Poppies*; especially it begins in the starting of the novel, with Deeti's sailing abroad, Opium made many disturbances in her life. Some people of India, especially the dwellers in the villages, are so attached to their lands and homes that they cannot bear even the idea of departing with them.

Despite the displacement being within the district or state or country, it hurts their hearts and they feel so nostalgic about their earlier places. The next thing is unless one very closely observes the people and their sentiments; this thing cannot be understood well.

In *Sea of Poppies*, the Diaspora is external. The people in the novel have witnessed once again the heart-rending spectacle of people being evacuated and forcibly sent forcibly hundreds of miles away from their own places of living because of their comfortable life, and forming poppy fields.

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## 28. Dysfunctional Democratic Behemoths: Politician Mandarin Nexus in Upamanyu Chatterjee's "The Mammaries of the Welfare State"

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"The Mammaries of the Welfare State"(TMWS) is an interesting record of Corruption, Caste, Clout that plague the Indian administrative and political set up and in turn malign the very entity of the 'Welfare State'. The novel is evolved from the astute and satirical pen of Upamanyu Chatterjee, the renowned bureaucrat -Postmodern Indian novelist that was published in 2000 and fetched him 'Sahitya Akademy' award in 2004. In fact this novel is a sequel to Chatterjee's maiden novel "English, August: An Indian Story"( E,A) in 1988, in which he created a sweet, lovable hero 'August or Agastya Sen. Of course in between his second novel "The Last Burden" appeared that picturised a family drama of the straining relations among the members of a modern urban educated family. It is obvious that Chatterjee could not stop loving his first hero Agastya and so he has woven another massive story around him. "The Mammaries of the Welfare State" (TMWS) has its back drop same as that of his first novel E,A. The protagonist in the first novel is an anglicized, urbanized youth just entered into the career as bureaucrat, where as in its sequel, he is now no more 'English' or 'August', but simply 'Agastya', a true son of the soil, who put on eight years of service in the 'Steel Frame' of the society and was made to be a real Indian 'Babu'. The leitmotiv in the first novel 'bureaucratic lunacy' is blended with 'political venality' in its sequel TMWS, that entirely brings out the duo's corruptive practices to exploit the Welfare State. Rochelle J. Almeida tells that The Mammaries of The Welfare State (TMWS) was Chatterjee's third novel which was inspired by an editorial entitled "The New Class" that appeared in the 'Sunday Statesman' of March 8, 1992."

TMWS is a potpourri of political - bureaucratic filth and their illegitimate bond. The novel houses a host of bureaucrats and politicians seeking high positions, craving for power, underlings manipulating things to make a secret quick buck, and many more parasites like theatre groups, attendants, drivers and other free loaders who are at snapshot ready to gobble up whatever that comes their way. Every one's aim is to milk the boobs of the Welfare State dry to their own advantage. There is always greasing hands, getting 'cuts', enjoying free government accommodation, state sponsored foreign trips, hikes in salary, perks, celebrations, erection of statues and what none! Thus no stone was left unturned by Chatterjee to make a mockery of the follies and failures of the Welfare State. He points out that the concept of Welfare state is distorted and the welfare is not reachable to the poor, needy and citizens of the below poverty line. But the welfare is made handy only to the people in office, in power, somehow attached to the government or its representatives. Corruption has almost been officialized, all pervasive and nobody seems concerned about it. Chatterjee sharpens his sarcasm and wit to blow out the misappropriation of the sources, power, energy, wealth of the nation and ridicules the failure of the system. He is successful in stripping the system stark naked and in the form of hilarious satire, he focuses light on the wrong doings of the administrative and political setup. The narration is comic but the issue is too serious to be ignored. It's really appreciable on the part of the author to scan through the polluted bureaucracy in which he himself is the part and he unhesitatingly attacks it with his massive and sharpened tools of wit and satire. Murari Prasad observes, "He (Agastya, the protagonist) detests the bureaucratic setup, dominated by hierarchy and statistics, and seeks cravings... The novel is particularly harsh on the self seeking politicians and avaricious bureaucrats who feed on the dugs of the Welfare State."

This paper gives a glimpse of how Indian bureaucratic and political system is completely corrupted and thus makes this huge democratic country a dwarf in the aspect of concrete development. The Law makers(legislators) and Executives(bureaucrats) who are supposed to be the main pillars of the Welfare state have become the dysfunctional democratic forces, plundering the State and exploiting at any given situation. The novelist makes an attempt to spill the beans out of as

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many departments in the Government, say, Ministries, Treasuries, Public health, Heritage and culture, Labour, Construction, Personnel Housing, Police, Govt. Hospitals, Mines and so on. He is successful in bringing out various elements into lime light such as misappropriation of funds, grants, power, manipulating promotions, appointments, transfers, resorting to nepotism, hooligans, murderers, sandal wood smuggling, hunger strikes, street performances, fire accident, and ghoulish incidents of sexual abuse, plague diseases, dirty offices, unnecessary official procedures, long and boring memoranda, wasteful official expenditure, problem of accommodation, evasion of electricity bills, income taxes, luring music CDs, matinee idols and many more.

Chatterjee is gifted with a rare talent of wit, satire and black humour who is concerned with the official absurdities of the native land and comments in a poignant satirical language that serves as an obvious contrast to his contemporary writers who mostly deal with the theme of 'Diaspora'. Other unique features of this novel is, using a score of acronyms for different government schemes and organizations like HUBRIS, BOOBZ, DIPRAVED, KJEA and so on. These titles seem to be funny but it is Chatterjee's way of christening the useless committees, organizations that open the doors for corruption and devour the funds instead of fulfilling the motive behind the very purpose of those government schemes. Further, he ridicules the nepotism adopted by the 'Aflatoons', the large extended first family of the nation. He mocks at the patrimony of the Aflatoons and states that as many of sixteen Prime Ministers ruled the Welfare State over seven decades after getting independence.

The idea of Welfare State dates back to Plato's era, in which there was 'Ideal Republic'. But it mainly proclaimed about two classes of people, Rulers and Ruled which doesn't suit to the present. The modern concept of Welfare State is adopted first by German Chancellor Bismarck in 1840 by introducing support programmes like old age pension, accidental insurance and medical care. But the term 'Welfare State' was popularized by Anglican Archbishop William Temple, the author of 'Christianity and the Social Order'.(1942). The aim of the novelist is not to resolve the issues that he raised, but to make us understand ever pervasiveness of the deeply rooted evil of corruption in all walks of the life of the people of the Welfare State. It appears in the form of greedy minds misusing power, sources, amenities, grants and any other thing that is available to a public servant or its representative. In the name of Government everyone is at his best to exploit the State. As the picture on the cover of the novel depicts, the State is compared to a she-goat with a huge udder. The Civil Servants the Politicians, their subordinates and the underlings are ready to squeeze the mammarys dry off to its last drop. The protagonist Agastya says, "I smell a rat all the time, it is the odour of corruption"(109)

Boothnath Gaitonde is an advocate's clerk, a well behaved law abider and the dweller of the largest slum in the city of Bhayankar. He gets a court stay order when the Municipal Corporation authorities tried to demolish the shacks of the slums. He argues : "If the Welfare State is the driving force, - me lord-we (slum dwellers, petty workers) are the wheels". "I have been in Bhayankar now, me-lord, for twenty-two years, in which time the Welfare State's done nothing for me for free- which is as it should be. I'm not a freeloader. And I 'm not complaining. I've paid in bribes for my ration card, my photo pass and my electrical metre. I've been bribed in return for my vote-but that's all fine, it's the proper procedure. Self-interest is the only commandment-naturally -of the Welfare State, the rest is waffle."(14) His words make it clear that any citizen of the Welfare State should bribe to get minimum facilities extended to him which is entirely contrast to the idea of Welfare state. He also confesses that during elections their votes are bought by the politicians. It's the common man's experience that the corruption has become inseparable part of one's life and has been officialized. He works in the city; he is one of the millions that make the city work. If the working class vacate the slum and move away from the city, who can attend the works in the offices in the city and in the bungalows of the steel frame early in the morning or late into nights? This event in the life of Gaitonde made him to choose politics and his career rose to the position of a member of Legislative

Assembly and later Member of Parliament through his own party 'New vision Democratic Party', leaving the slum back. He also becomes a potential rival to Bhanwar Virbhim, the local public representative over a long period. Gaitonde, though had some leftist ideology, not too idealistic. He has his own plans to make a way for his growth in the politics. He always waits for a chance to plague the Welfare State. He takes up the issue of blind girl who got her eye gouged out by Karam Chand, an attender in the blind hostel. He plans a protest, takes up a rally in which sixteen inmates are injured in the police action. Gaitonde was ready to make the best use of the situation to exploit the administration and keep the government in irksome position. He was waiting for the crisis to use as ladder for his growth in the political career.

Bhanwar Virbhim, a senior politician served as Member of Legislative assembly, Member of Parliament from Madna and also served the state two times as Chief Minister. In between his two terms, Virbhim served as Deputy Minister for Information and Minister for Culture and Heritage at centre. He is intelligent, ambitious, determined, ageing frightful hoodlum. Bhanwar plays caste card posing as Don of the masses. "I am the voice of the down trodden. I am the soul of all the depressed, backward, repressed, suppressed and unrecognized castes".(104). Bhanwar is highly loyal to Jayati Aflatoon, the de- facto Prime Minister. She is the wife of a cousin of the Prime Minister Bhuvan Aflatoon. Bhuvan and Jayati were school mates and Bhanwar Virbhim was backed up a lot by Jayati. Bhanwar has a son, Makhmal Bagai who is notorious with his frightening temper, a gun lover, moves around the city in his lorry like Tata Safari, abducts and molests the girls in the moving vehicle, murders the victims like his father if the occasion demands. He likes to be called Prince of Madna and demands respect and prominence. "...over the years, the outrageousness of Makhmal's offences against society and the law had kept pace with his father's increasing clout."(105). Later Makhmal became addicted to the lusty musical songs 'Listen to Love' music CDs of Rani Chandra.

On one occasion, his hooligans attacked Rajani Suroor, the leader of 'Vyatha' a theatrical troupe that gives street performances. Rajani was seriously injured, hospitalized and was comatose. The Welfare State is helpless and can never hinder the hooligan-politician behemoths and their unlawful growth. Ironically, due to complacency nature, people remain silent and are forced to respect those leaders and thus somehow come under their poisonous clout for their selfish gains. "It is one of the functions of the munificence, the kindness of the Welfare State to allow within it the worst rogues to become utterly respectable."(105) When a journalist asks him if his criminal record would embarrass him in his political career, he replies "Not at all. Why? Look at our Parliament. One hundred and seventy four Honourable members have criminal records. I think you want the State to discriminate against criminals exactly the way in which it discriminates against the lower castes. What is your caste? May I know? We are innocent until proved guilty."(106). Instead of feeling guilty, he claims that it is a politician's right to indulge in criminality and manipulate everything. Makhmal feels safe under his father's political clout and under the canopy of the caste. He also plans to celebrate the fiftieth birthday of Jayati grandly. While the millions of down trodden, underdogs suffer from poverty, discrimination due to their poor social status, injustice and inequality, the politically established persons enjoy the power and wealth using the same caste card. It is really ironical and once again brings home the point that caste applies to only to the financially poor and slum dwellers. Paradoxically, the very caste card has become the poor man's weakness and the rich man's strength in the Welfare State.

Makhmal is incompetent and dangerous and his father has no choice for him except joining him into politics. He helped his father during elections, taking jeep full of goons to capture, frighten, distribute cheap whisky, beating up the rival party men, shooting rounds in the air and so on. His father appointed him as one of the General Secretaries of the party and wanted him see the world and learn something useful for his political career. "His father had wanted him to learn some of the facts of life, to rever wealth, not to remain forever retarded, to grasp that money was infinitely more powerful than the gun, that nothing was socially more respectable than power, that to be on the right

side of the law, one simply needed to be above it.” (286). Makhmal Bagai’s record of violence earned him Z- category protection, he also went to Madna prison for a few weeks and his father thought that it would better his Curriculum Vitae. After having released from prison he straightly goes to consult Raghupati, the senior IAS and his mentor to discuss his political future. “He wished to be the Minister of State for Coal and Mines for he’d heard that bribes for the lease of a mine could touch a crore of rupees. Think big, think quick, that was his style.”(288).

The owner of the Madna International Hotel is Dinakar Sathe, brother of cartoonist Govind Sathe; a friend of Agastya in E.A. Dinakar is always in touch with the local political giant Bhanwar Virbhim for he believes in power and observed how Virbhim rose to higher plains with mounting speed. He then liberally contributed to his personal and party needs. In return as favour, he was sanctioned the first bar license in the town, permission to add two more floors to his hotel against prohibited municipal laws, a plot at throw away price that had originally been reserved for a children’s park. He was many times protected by Virbhim when news papers published child labour in his teak farm. The political leaders make cohorts in their segment and also make it an heirloom for next generation. Obviously the people with foresight like Sathe brush shoulders with these politicians for a quick buck and for protecting clout, thus both parties milk the dugs dry off the Welfare State.

Bhupen Raghupati, an IAS advises the crooked young politician Makhamal Bagai to read, learn, stop slapping rival party men and leave the guns and fast cars. But Bagai replies negatively, “I must have a reason to discipline myself. In the last three years, I’ve attended as a special visitor nine sessions of the Assembly. The anti craft scandal, the sugar deal, the bank fraud, telecom fiddle, fodder swindle, urea scam,.....bomb blast, riots after riots. Not a whisper, in three years about welfare, about the good of the common man, whoever he might be. Why should I discipline myself?”(289) The dunderhead Bagai witnesses the deplorable condition of the Assembly and its futile discussions leaving the very welfare of the common man for which the honourable house is constituted. It is very obvious that the law makers are busy in accusing one another of their scams, estimating the amounts that one has devoured up, leaving the plans of welfare of the needy. R.P. Singh rightly observes: “The Welfare State, here, does not mean a state for the welfare of the people but a hunting ground for predatory sharks who masquerade as public servants.”

Raghupati was the Chief Revenue Divisional Commissioner at Madna and served in different positions at centre. He is an obese, betel-leaf eating, tooth gaped and had brutish mouth, listens to Mutesh when he was being massaged by his lanky in his puja room. He sparked off a riot because he removed a peon from the work when he was Asst. Collector at Koltanga. Raghupati is an icon of proud, vicious corrupt Civil Servants. He is the ultimate symbol of greed for power and position, completed twenty three years of service and he is a perennially hungry carnal man. He is the mentor to Makhamal Bagai the son of Bhanwar Virbhim. He is lustful, abuses all the underlings, a pervert and finally ends the life of Chamundi, his young masseur after homo sexual abuse. He is a devotee of Baba Mastram, a god man and an astrologer and Raghupati takes his advice to do anything and release his Shakti. His idea of the Welfare State, and even many of the civil servants is ‘Suck above, Kick below’. In his view, exploiting others is exhibiting his inner power. To Raghupati “Everything sounded and looked, smelt, tasted and felt like sex.”(86)

“Twenty three years of service of the Welfare State had cracked him up. Its waste, inefficiency, sluggishness, and futility had honed his sense of time running out at the speed of light and there by sharpened as well his consequent excitement that was half-foreboding.” (87) “He (Raghupati) is controlled by passions larger than him’.(89) As he suspected, two unfavorable incidents took place in his life. He was sued by her assistant, Miss. Lina Natesan Thomas for his misbehavior or rather bottom pinching at a water cooler at the Golf Club, and secondly, a bizarre incident took place in his puja room owing to his perversion that lead to make him a murderer of his servant Chamundi.

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**Dr. Sharada Allamneni and Dr. S. D. Sasi Kiran, Editors**

*Contemporary Literary Perspectives*

One morning his underling Chamundi, a tribal youth was massaging him in the puja room. Raghupati, an extremely sexual pervert, aroused and attacked him for his desire, and like a prey before its mighty predator, Chamundi remained speechless. After few minutes, Raghupati picked up the brass incense stand and lashed at the boy's nose. The boy cracked his skull against the wall and collapsed in a trickle of blood. But Raghupati doesn't seem offended and never tried to save the boy. Instead, he manipulated the things and declared that he simply slipped to his native forest against to the fret and fever of the city life. The power given to him being a Civil Servant was utterly misused, to the extent of murdering a youth after a couple of minutes of perverted carnal pleasure. He committed such a ghastly sin in his puja room before idols of many Gods indicting that his religious worship, meditation, reverence to gods does not stand before his physical desires and greed for everything whether it is flesh or pelf.

R.P.Singh comments, "Carnal desire is a running motif at the level of phantasy as well as physically, and forms a crucial component of the exploitative psyche of the mandarin-politician nexus."

Bhupen Raghupati, Bhanwar Virbhim and his son Makhmal Bagai the crooked trio- are the icons of the corruption at its peak with thousand hoods. Kum Kum Bala Mali, the actress of the yester years, submits a representation to Bhanwar, the cabinet Minister regarding the problem of her official bungalow. Then Raghupati, secretary to Ministry of Heritage fancies her and plans a dinner with her and mutters, "The entire edifice of the government, Madam, is based on a quite feudal system of favours. It's even been drafted into our rules and regulations in the form of the powers of discretion granted to our public servants to interpret the law.....all have favours to seek and grant, like barter system in a primitive society." (268) Raghupati is ever horny, plays 'Love, Like, Hate, Adore' game on paper like a teenager and fancies everything sexually. For him 'money is sex is power.'

Chatterjee attacks on how the Government officials make waste expenditure for even petty personal fulfillments. Dr. Onorari Kansal the chairman of the eponymous Commission misuses State government helicopter to bring his favourite sleeping suit from his home, an off-white kirta- pyjama that he forgot. In another episode, a matinee idol, a nominated member was allotted an official bungalow. When his tenure completed, the film hero vacated leaving the electricity bills unpaid over years that amounted eight lakh rupees. "Matinee idol left behind at 21, Ganapati Aflatoon Marg, among other things an outstanding electricity bill of some eight lakh rupees .....Only people without clout paid their electricity bill.."( 282) Is it not really sucking the dugs of the Welfare State till last drop ? In contrast, in the district of Madna, Agastya himself had found concrete evidence of at least eighteen cases in which poverty had forced families in the block of Jompanna to sell themselves, literally body and soul, as bonded labourers for seventy-five rupees per year. "The bounty of welfare extends in all directions and knows no bounds; only the niggardly and the short sighted think of economics. In a large country, you have to think big."(283) R.P Singh rightly observes : "...The Mammaries of The Welfare State has its theme the day to day regimen of the corrupt and depraved mandarins of the welfare state. People like the high state official Bhupen Raghupati, the politician Makhmal Bagai. The astrologer baba Mastram, the artist Rajani Suroor and several others play out the daily drama of venality and depravity on the bare bosom of 'the Welfare State'- (51)

Chatterjee introduces 'Aflatoons', a political dynasty and the large extended first family of the nation. He mocks at the extravagant use of the title 'Aflatoon' for many buildings, parks, monuments, institutions, hospitals, gardens, community toilets, stadiums and many places are named after them. The title is used as a clout, for protection for illegal activities. As the novel progresses, we see Agastya confronting with the daily mis- happenings around him and the bureaucratic colleagues'

venality. Though he exhibits ennui and disinterested at the beginning of his service, he becomes habituated spectator and grows into a matured Civil servant, observing the official follies.

Agastya states, “In my eight years of service, I have not come across a single case in which everybody concerned didn’t try milk dry the boobs of the Welfare State”(23). This statement shows his keen interest to observe the senior colleagues and how the exploitative psyche of the mandarin-politician nexus topples the original concept of the Welfare State and takes completely antonymous perception when it comes to practicality. Murari Prasad says, “Eight years passed since Agastya joined the IAS, and in the course of time he has mutated from ‘a malingering probationer’ into an honest and clear sighted civil servant. He is acutely sensitive to the tardy and wasteful bureaucracy in the Welfare State that is contemporary India”.(7) Agastya has not left his usual disinterestedness in his bureaucracy but now and then he muses to resign, not exactly to leave the position, but he sees some futility in the system itself.

Nandini Lal in her review ‘Bleating Bureaucrat’ says, “Sen’s cynicism is only a mask for rage and despair.”

Agastya feels that Welfare State is overloaded with many employees, officers and the routine that takes place in the offices are not really of much importance. Still they are intelligent enough to keep themselves busy, in other words, this wasteful expenditure, unnecessary proceedings are strategies to manipulate and just to show that they are working if possible suck the dugs of the Welfare State dry. “At any point of time at least one Department in the Secretariat is transferring one of its offices from one room to another; since movement is action, a permanent housing problem is itself proof that the government works”(16). Like this he mocks at the functioning style of the Welfare State. He ridicules various schemes, loans and privileges that are being misused by beneficiaries as well the sanctioning authorities. He says that in his earlier office, the government leased out a kiosk alongside the stairs to a physically handicapped on payment of one rupee a month as rent. That guy had started Xerox and started making a sound business as there are many offices in the building and around. Later he managed to get sanctioned of three various loans such as ‘The rural Poor Self-Employment Generation Scheme’, ‘The Physically Handicapped Economic Self sufficiency Project’, ‘The Depressed Classes Financial Independence Plan’. These three loans are to be repaid in a period of twenty years, that comes around four hundred rupees a month as EMI. He almost stopped paying that meager amount too. Later when the new government assumed the charge he applied and got his loans exempted. Of course the handicap greased some hands up to five thousand rupees. After Agastya joined there, the handicap applied for permission to install STD and ISD telephone booth. It took two years to get permission, getting clearance from Telecom, Municipal, Parent Department and finally after obtaining everything the handicap sub leased the kiosk for two thousand rupees a month to another guy without legs. And the first handicap once again came with a new proposal to permit him to start a ‘Cooperative Society For the Physically Handicapped’ beneath the stairs. The second handicapped person can straight approach the officials and get some other loans sanctioned instead of paying two thousand rupees a month on his sub lease. The episode reveals the setbacks and backdoors of the Welfare State and how one can exploit it to the maximum extent possible. It also shows that many Government schemes are getting overlapped and only a few deserved are benefited. The real needy, depressed classes are unaware of the benefits extended to them.

Agastya says, “ I am dishonest, but not corrupt. I use my office phone to make personal calls—that’s, strictly speaking, being dishonest, but I have not yet had my palm greased. ....I did try once to milk a lakh or two out of the Welfare State ...it was out of that dairy farm, Department of Culture and Heritage”. It was about making documentary film on endangered Tribal heritage. He and his friend mapped with a handy cam, Agastya says “But at last minute, our middle class pusillanimity and squeamishness spiked our plans” (26). Agastya reads the mindset of bureaucrats and says that when

there was a problem locally, the Civil servants wish to have another bigger crisis. Madna was effected by Plague, there was A.C. Raichur' declaration of hunger strike, Rajani Suroor was attacked by Makhmal Bagai's hoodlums and was comatose. At that juncture, Prime Minister was about to visit Madna to see his hospitalized friend Rajani Suroor. So the big event of PM's visit would erase all other small crises. He refers it to Matsyanyaya. "... , by Welfare State standards, just wasn't critical enough. When faced with a crisis, what all civil servants longed for was a bigger crisis. In the bureaucratic mind, the tensions of demonstration, for example, were easily resolved by an outbreak of the plague.....It was a bit like the ancient law of *Matsyanyaya*, of the Big Fish gobbling up the Little Fish, and of being gobbled up in turn by even Bigger Fish." (163) Because no bureaucrat is readily willing to resolve the problems immediately. Their general listlessness, complacency nature, the authority of the highest office and mostly the nexus with the law makers make them feel secured and go on manipulating the things to their advantage. Agastya calls Matsyanyaya in his own words Nutsyanyaya. "He could find an example of lunacy wherever he looked in the Welfare State, but no one else seemed to bother, most found it funny or pleasantly incomprehensible."(164,165) In the Welfare State no individual is harmed directly, if there is some deterioration of the rules or regulations. But it cankers the whole system, if they fail to grasp that, it would eventually devour up everybody.

The administrative environment is pro-corruptive, and it's really a hard task for Agastya to keep himself away from that polluted administrative regime and he might have been a black sheep in the sight of other inherently fraudulent colleagues. Along with Agastya we see a very few non - corrupt -yet officers in the novel who do not indulge into venality. Chatterjee writes: "There have been times when completely honest-and comparatively honest – officers- Agastya Sen, for example, and Dhruvo Dastidar, Kumari Lina and HariHara Kapila – have wondered whether they are in fact as honest as they have always thought themselves to be – the idea of honesty having become more and more slippery with the years – and secondly, what good being honest has done them."(271) So even the once honest, upright persons may let lose their integrity in due course, may succumb to ever pervasive and alluring enticement of the adulteration. Chatterjee says 'of course, one could also make hay in inclement weather. Truly the land of opportunity, the Welfare state could boast of thousands of officials, great and small , who had not let a single chance to rake it in slip by ..." (270) . The accountants charge a percentage for each salary, increments, allowances emoluments, sanctioning officers get fifty rupees per day for allowing unauthorized absence, drivers getting extra fuel bills, peons submitting fake overtime bills, officers get cuts for passing the bills , everything under the sun is worth for greasing our palms. ".....The list is long, varied, and intricately interwoven and the corruption is insidious". (270)

R.P.Singh aptly says "one gets a full –view glimpse into the multidepartmental degeneration of the entity called Welfare State. The core of this degeneration is a satanic hunger for power, pelf and flesh, with the concomitant devilish commitment to satiate it.(50-57) The Civil servants are very few in number when compared to other categories in the government. But the mandarins enjoy the comforts, princely salaries at the cost of the other classes. "Needless to add, the crème de la scum floats far above economy- measure circulars, which apply – with solid severity – mainly to the submerged 96.4 percent of the employees of the welfare state- namely the millions of peons, and asst. Grades, I ,II, III and IV,... dafadars, Junior Clerks, drivers, book – keepers, Deputy clerks, attendants, auditors, Senior clerks, stenographers, cashiers, principal clerks, typists, accountants, stenotypists ..." (62)

There is another IAS officer Chanakya Lala, who gobbles large sums. Dr. Kapila wonders at his greed at that young age. Lala hails from good family, highly educated, a member of the Steel Frame, reads good books and plays golf with other officers."He is tall, bespectacled with a womanish sway in his hips in his walk. He stinks of perfume' His policy is 'Suck above, Suck below'. He invariably shares his booty with the dacoits who are his political masters and whichever of his official



superiors are willing”.(249) Dr. Kapila also talks about the sycophantic civil servants , “...If I ask them to eat my shit, they’ll gobble it up with pepper, chilli powder and gratitude”.(252). He laments that in the present Dark Age it is all degradation, the ethics are at stake, with the changing times there is moral decline.

He has three senior officers who were his immediate superiors in various Departments. Dr. Bhatnagar, the Liaison Officer, sometime boss to Agastya. He calls himself an Economics man and has high opinion of himself. He throws an impression to all around him that he is the pillar of the Steel Frame and always busy with affairs of the State. He always craves for importance in the group, makes fuss of the things, and gives large, useless dictations to his PA. In his office they call Bhatnagar ‘Bakra uncle’ and his wife ‘Sherni aunty’. He had two kids Bitiya and Baby. They misuse the office vehicles, phones and services of the staff. The second one is Dr. Srinivas Chakki , an entomologist, Joint director in the Department of health. Chakki says that he is an entomologist who knows well about the insects that plague human beings. Chatterjee creates him as an interesting and upright knowledgeable officer and more over he is author’s mouth piece to question the corruption prevailed among the bureaucrats and politicians. He actually was affected by plague when deputed to Madna. He was at large for some time and was kept in the dirty hospital of Madna. He is outspoken and records everything in the book “The Magic of Aflatoon”. Even Agastya contributes some stuff to his book. At the end Dr. Chakki is suspended for his columns and articles published in various magazines that are against to government and administration.

The other elderly senior most IAS is Dr. Hari Hara Kapila. He served in various capacities, non corrupt with real knowledge in Economics. His observations and comments are genuine and Agastya has highest regard for him. Finally Kapila rises to the position of Principal Secretary to PM. He also likes Agastya and recommends him for the training programme abroad. Chatterjee mocks at the mandarins’ greed for foreign trips. When a civil servant enters the administration of Central Government, he is interested to talk about international agencies like UNICEF, ILO, WB, IMF, FAO and plans to move around the world, visit cities like Paris, Kuala Lumpur, Bangkok, Geneva, New York. Their lust for travel abroad is for handsome daily allowance that is paid in dollars. Moreover, they will be received by Indian diasporas and minimize their expenditure. Chatterjee says that they manage to save in a week’s trip is equivalent to two months pay. They enjoy the trip at the expense of the State, accommodated in star hotels, provided comfortable travel, snazzy suits, women in skirts, insane sightseeing, wining and dining, high risking whoring and the handshakes in meetings in which nothing is ever discussed decisively. “.....having experienced all that and having gained two months’ pay in the process, the civil servant returns home to find his job rather shabby and dull, without any fizz”.(236) And they start speaking lingo of External affairs. Dr. Bhatnagar, after his trips, starts regularly corresponding to Ambassadors, High Commissioners of the countries he had visited, of course with his wife many times. He calls his P.A. Satish Kalra and orders to send fax conveying thanks, warm regards from his wife and self to them. Even Agastya is sent to Europe for training. Unfortunately, Agastya is not after making money out of the trip. It is a tense-making programme for him with strict schedule. So he laments on phone to Dhruvo “Everything was efficient, formal, cold and different” (397). He is summoned to Madam Europe Olympia’s office, the Director of the training programme. She is aware of Indian participants and their lack of interest in learning. She says. “You perhaps are not aware, Monsier Sen, that over the years, your country’s record, its performance, at the Institute has been abysmal. This year, for example, you began with two of you here, but one returned home within a fortnight.....Truly the less said about you, the better, even though I’ve much to say on the score... We’re untrainable...in short...”(400). Agastya feels that even the trainings abroad are nothing but simple, common sense blended with management jargon , some boxes, arrows, circles and charts, and he feels his trip is an exile missing his Madna.

Dr. Srinivas Chakki is almost the deuteragonist in the novel as he speaks out the mind of Chatterjee after the protagonist Agastya. Both these primary characters are not serious in expression but the seriousness of the issues they touch upon is very remarkable and can’t be ignored. Chakki

talks about hygienic conditions of Government Hospital at Madna “.... Faeced matter, mouldy bandages, cockroaches, enormous spiders and rats ...does anybody know what it takes to keep a hospital toilet clean?” and he also says that there are seventeen sweepers working in the hospital.(138). The town is affected by plague, the situation is alarming, but the condition of hospital is abysmally low. He describes the ward and toilets “The forceful stink of the room- disinfectants, medicines, urine, rotting matter – reminded him that he wanted to piss but he didn’t have the guts to confront the visualized filth of the toilet. Its yellow door, four beds down and opposite Dr. Chakki, lay permanently ajar, perhaps because nobody wished to touch it. With reason, since in the few minutes that he spent gazing at it, three pissers shuffled up to – and not daring to cross its threshold, relieved themselves against it “(138). Not only hygienic conditions, but the fitness of the people and even that of athletes is not up to mark. Dhruvo, the Under Secretary supports A.C. Raichur’s run for National Integration and comments “ the fitness level of one of our average national athletes equals that of the average , middle aged, depressed, divorced, Scandinavian housewife’.(146)

Agastya sees no difference between Welfare State and Police State. In fact, the police draw much respect in society, though it arises from their threatening skills and uniform. As Agastya is a dope smoker, he funnily replies to a question for his joining in Civil service and says, “.... Because within the civil service, one is likelier to know somebody who knows somebody who knows somebody and who knows a cop”. Interestingly, his friend and colleague- mandarin in his interview for selection of IAS , Dhruvo answers “ Within the Civil Service, one is likelier to have a peon, a personal assistant, and an Ambassador car as buffers between one’s good self and the rest of the government” (170). Agastya calls our administration ‘Ambassodarocracy’ as all the officials, ministers use the standard Ambassador cars. He tells about the superintendent of Police of Madna Pannalal Makkad, a senior IPS officer, who put up 35 years of service, wise and wicked officer about to retire. He is a widower, ill tempered, a boozer, there are rumors spread that he had burnt his wife as she questioned his habit of heavy boozing. When plague erupted at Madna, the Police and Para Military forces are deployed, Agastya says “ Nothing in our country moves or happens without them- naturally- we being a Police State as much as Welfare State”(53). The police are diffused to any kind of work, track down the municipal workers, scavengers and make them work , prevent suspect plague victim from escaping , guarding abandoned houses and funnily he says they found plague affected Dr. Chakki after two days lying at garbage dump with a dead rat in his right hand. Agastya had a confrontation with a cop on parking his cycle at wrong place. He says that the cop might not have liked his face. So he writes a letter to Prime Minister to allow Civil Servants to wear the Police Uniform of course with a lighter shade to make a difference that they( IAS) are above Police . “...Sir, may I officially be allowed to keep a gun to protect myself from the police? “ ...Sir, Give us Uniforms, exactly like the cops have, threatening to explode around the belly and bum like terrycot covers stretched beyond endurance over bags of cement and twin ghatams, the navel visible like a hairy peeping Tom’s eye at a key hole..”(169,170)Thus he takes a sledge hammer of satire to mock at the police, their uniform and physical unfitness. There is an episode of Sukumaran Govardhan , a forest goon, sandal wood smuggler. He has at one time two hundred cases filed against him and he has one hundred and eight houses across the country. It is clear that the police are not strictly searching for him and are not committed to arrest and punish him. This may be due to his nexus with the politicians.

Dinkar Sathe, owner of Madna International Hotel always tries to continue the relations with people in Government or its representatives. He sees Welfare State as the platform for manipulations, grab the wealth, encroach whatever possible and feel secured under the clout of political influence completely ignoring the law and its sanctity. “Thus in his eyes, Sukumar Govardhan , for example, the Lord of illegal traffic of the Madna jungle, could well be the minister for Forests and environment- though considerably more powerful. Because of his faith in the wand of power, its wielders.....who could be milked for how much and for what in return ...” (97,98)

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Chatterjee opined through Chakki's script that it would be better to juxtapose the retired or highly experienced bureaucrats with the existing politicians who make legislations. Because many of the law makers are illiterates like who paint and post the sign boards at the junctions and on the high ways. Do they know and follow that is exactly written there? "The senior most Civil Servants are", Chakki writes "After all, they too, at the end of their careers, have worked at all kinds of Government jobs for thirty five years. On the job Training, absolutely, and probably more effective than Plato's more formal, academic cultivation of body and mind"(429).

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At the end of the novel Miss. Lina tells Raichur about the ideal state "We have to think small. Big is clumsy and slow to move. Once it moves, Big is uncontrollable because of its size. Filthy, inefficient, wasteful and causes calamities.....the establishment taken by government has been unsystematically ruined. The state needs immediately to shed weight, you know, it can retain defence, foreign policy, finance, justice, and a couple of others but no more, I say."(436) Thus Chatterjee is more successful as a whistle blower in focusing light on how the evils of Corruption, Caste, Clout and Complacency nature have rotten the noble concept of Welfare State. It is really high time to save our nation from the cruel hands of the plunderer behemoths i.e. corrupted politicians and civil servants. It may be on cards that we get another sequel in which Chatterjee, being the part of the Steel Frame, would come out with realistic and approachable measures to better and keep the nobility of Welfare State in its word and deed.

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## 29. Battle against the Veil in Ismat Chughtai's Short Stories

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Chughtai has so far written over a hundred short stories. Her better-known collection of short stories are; 'Veil', 'The Quilt', 'Sacred Duty', 'Kallu', 'ChhotiApa', 'The Wedding Shroud', 'the Survivor' and 'Tiny's Granny'. All the stories are not uniformly good but some of them are certainly 'Classics' in their own right and can be compared with the best in world literature. Her name is usually associated with the effort of the Urdu story to come to grips with the problems of everyday life and to expose some of the hidden problems of life. Her realism is essentially a powerful tool to reveal the foibles of contemporary life rather than being escapist and unreal. The male characters figure in her short stories mainly to illustrate and illuminate aspects of women's lives. She touches on almost all aspects of a woman's life: her unwanted entry into this world, her frustrated aspirations, suppression of her innermost urges and so on in her short stories and she deals with the whole range of female sexuality from arousal of sexual urge at the infantile stage through adolescence to adult sexuality. This is rather unusual in the short stories of her time and context. Besides normal sexual attraction between men and women, She also deals in a limited way, with homosexuality and lesbianism, the inevitable products of a moralist, sexually repressive society. "The Veil" is a well known short story of Ismat Chughtai. In Chughtai stories the sociological dimension constitutes a more crucial aspect of fiction than the cultural details. The story is an example of how social and cultural conventions of the communities can affect the individual lives in the most dangerous way. "The Veil" is symbolic of religious and sexual oppression of women. Chughtai's genius is particularly suited to short fiction and apart from 'Quilt' which brought her overnight fame there are innumerable short stories which are centered around the theme of enclosure or covering. 'Veil' 'Quilt' and 'Wedding-Shroud' indicate the point. Since women's body is found threatening in orthodox Muslim community many of her short stories are also woven around women's bodies such as "Rock", "Home Maker" and "The Mole."

### Speaking about the system of Purdah M. Asaduddin remarks

Women are compelled to lead a limited and claustrophobic life, in strict Purdah, within the four walls of the house. Any attempt to lead a more 'realized' or independent life would be considered as rebellion and seriously discouraged. Women were supposed to have no sexual desire of their own except when required by men. The difference between the ages of the husband and the wife would be staggering, but none would think it incongruous.... What needs to be emphasized, however, is the fact that though, as a result of their contact with Western liberalism, such social iniquities were being discouraged in other communities, there was no organized effort in the Muslim community to rectify them. As was only inevitable, excessive restriction and suppression of natural urges, sexual incompatibility in marriages, segregation of sexes gave rise to another set of social malaise like illicit love. Incest, extra-marital relations, sexual exploitation of young widows, homosexual and lesbian tendencies and so on. The story titled "The Veil" is a short one narrated retrospectively with great irony about an eighty year old virgin covered in a veil which could be compared to " ... *stationary cloud of finely-ground silver.*" 'Tiny's Granny' demonstrates how Chughtai delineates the lives of marginalized people such as widows, prostitutes and beggars. Ismat Chughtai picks up seemingly trivial but immensely interesting and relevant details about people and their lives that are woven into her stories to create life-like real characters in credible settings. This ability is in evidence in story after story and allows her to explore the lives of the poor and the oppressed and not just the middle class. Granny starts working at odd jobs in houses in return for her two meals a day and cast-off clothes. While moving from place to place she also carries tales to make her job secure. But people soon find out and begin to call her a tale carrier. Granny would arrange her Burkha and be off with slippers clacking to hakeemji's house. She is famed throughout the Mohalla for her sleight of hand:

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*“Granny was not only a tale-bearer, thief and cheat. She was also a First-rate liar. And her biggest lie was her burkha, which she always wore.”* At one time it had had veil but when one by one the old men of the Mohalla died, or their eye sight failed, Granny said good bye to her veil. But people never see her without the cap of her Burkha. *“This burkha was not simply for keeping her head modestly covered. She put it to every possible and impossible use.”* Tiny abused sexually at the age of nine by deputy Sahib, mocked at and teased by everybody, becomes promiscuous and elopes in her teen age leaving granny to fend for herself. Without sentimentality, Chughtai explores Granny’s efforts to keep her body and soul together. The story records faithfully Granny’s journeys of life, through tricks and deceptions. She has been a maid, a cook, a professional scandal monger, a beggar, a thief and everything else. She plays each of these roles with gusto and consummate skill. *“Granny was exceedingly fond of her burkha, and in her spare moments would sit and lament with the keenest regret over its advancing old age.”* Granny has no permanent head quarters. Like a soldier, she is always staying in some one’s veranda, one day in someone else’s backyard the next day. With half her Burkha laid out under her and the other half wrapped around her, she would lie down and sleep. She worries about her Burkha and granddaughter Tiny. She would always have her safe under her sheltering wing and never let her out of sight.

Tiny does not grow from a child into a girl, but at one leap becomes a woman, when absurd sexually by a village elder. She soon has affairs with boys in the village and runs away with somebody one day. The story along with “Kallu Ki Ma” demonstrates the total facelessness and self-effacement of Indian women. When Granny gets further weakened and people forbid her to enter their homes, she begins to collect leftover food at functions and subsist on it after drying it. Monkeys begin chasing her and carry away the food. One day a monkey carries away her red pillow which provided warmth to her on lonely nights. The mischievous monkey tears away the pillow, spilling out knick- knacks granny stole over years from the houses of people. People gather around her, mock and abuse the old woman. The old woman sits on her haunches, mourns and rails all night. Next morning she is found dead in the same position. The deeply ironic and pathetic story dramatizes how the Burqa is really useless to the poor and helpless since it has not been of any use to poor granny and her granddaughter destroyed before she wears a burqa. The modicum of self-respect she retains by wielding a tough exterior is destroyed when the pillow to which she clings to is torn apart. The story dramatizes in a telling manner the notion of protection and security social customs give to girl children and women is quite hollow.

Another short story “The Eternal Vine” is concerned with marital incompatibility. It is also a perceptive analysis of the diseased mind of a husband who feels insecure and jealous at the ever increasing beauty and vitality of his young wife. The presence of a young narrator, a girl, is a consistent device with Chughtai. Such a narrative device allows her to critique the unjust social custom from the perspective of young growing up girls not yet molded in the social norms. Soon after narrator’s maternal uncle’s wife dies, efforts to find a new wife begin. His sisters begin the job enthusiastically. For his sisters their only brother is handsome and quite young, no more than forty years. When inundated with proposals, he becomes confused and hands the matter over to his sisters. Uncle Shujaat’s says: *“ ... the bride should not be young enough to pass as his daughter nor should she be bedraggled or senile.”* Uncle Shujaat’s sisters do not accept the proposal of Imtiaz’s daughter who is thirty years old. Five sisters in opposition to these five Pandus, Aunt Imtiaz holds the power of a hundred Kurus. Imtiaz’s most dangerous weapon is her loud cry in high pitched voice, thin and sharp like the point of a drill. Aunt Imtiaz decides to criticize the selection of Rukhsana, who is a poor girl. But the others form a formidable front that prevented her from being heard. *“If the girl’s a day older than sixteen, you can hit me a hundred times in the morning, a hundred times in the evening, and give me tobacco water to drink.”* Rukhsana Begum is slender and fragile and her complexion shimmers like crystal. She has an unforgettable face and slender body. Perhaps she is only sixteen but is a burden of a poverty stricken home. *“She was probably no more than sixteen, but she looked older, nineteen or twenty perhaps. The sisters informed uncle that she was twenty-five and*

*although at first he expressed some reservations, he soon acquiesced; youth was no crime.*” Since her family is poor, uncle Shujaat had to bear the expenses for both parties. After the wedding ceremony Rukhsana comes to his house. After he observes her closely, he breaks out into a cold sweat since she looks very young. Then Shaman Begum, his sisters, assures him. “A Second wife doesn’t live long, that’s why we’re already thinking about a third.” Living in comfortable home, with good diet and a dotting husband, the young girl fills out and grows more beautiful. The man had been cruel to his first wife, kept away from home, and got suspicious of her when she tried to earn his love by preparing special dishes. In all this he got plenty of support and encouragement from his sisters. He begins to adore Rukhsana and spends all his time at home which is disapproved by his sisters. Shujaat’s sisters say to Rukhsana Begum: “*My word, sister-in-law, how long can you tie him to your dupatta? He is a man, not a baby you can keep in your lap forever.*” She gets pregnant twice and gives birth to two children. She remains energetic and grows more beautiful day after day. *It’s true that when you become weary yourself, the energy of young people disturbs you; you feel like you’ve been kicked by a headstrong horse, and Aunt Rukhsana was not being fair at all. In keeping with the tenets of decency and good behavior, she should have stood by her husband in good times and bad. It wasn’t at all proper that while he was hunched over with fatigue, she should run vigorously after the chickens in the court-yard.*

Shujaat begins slackening both in appearance and looks. He starts getting irritated with his wife Rukhsana, who is growing more beautiful day by day. Initially his angry words and abuse is followed by regrets and apologies. Later he started spitting poison at her. “Why don’t you find someone young for yourself?” He hurled even worse taunts and accusations at her. She feels humiliated and withdraws into her room, eyes brimming with tears. Going in, he begs her forgiveness and starts apologizing to his wife. “I’m a low-down person, a bastard, take your sandal and hit me as much as you want, my life, my Rukhi, my queen, my princess.” Aunt Rukhsana forgives him right away. Indeed she continues to forgive him until the shadows under his eyes darken and for a long time afterwards. What is described most tragically is Rukhsana’s efforts to drastically reduce food and to use potions to make her hair grey. Her sisters-in-law compel her to discard her youthful dresses that show her beauty to advantage and to wear shabby and socially unacceptable dresses. As the story progresses the tension between the ideal and the real becomes increasingly poignant and effective. Asaduddin compares Shujaat to Totaram of Premchand’s *Nirmala* and Madhusudan of Tagore’s *Yoga Yog*. The theme of older men being married to women much younger than themselves and possessing great strength and vitality is often explored in Indian literatures in various languages. These jealous, mean and vulgar husbands of *Nirmala*, *Kumudini* and *Rukhsana* try to destroy all the vitality of women and they also get social support because they live in societies that do not recognize a woman’s right to rebel and get out of the stranglehold of an incompatible marriage. The story demonstrates the kind of psychological realism practiced by Chughtai in some of her stories. The story achieves tragic depth at the moment when Rukhsana is unable to restore health and vitality of her husband and tries to make herself look old, sick and ugly in order to be acceptable to her husband. The tragic irony undercuts every stroke of description in the story and makes the story really powerful.

In contrast to married women, wives and young girls within the families, “The Home Maker” ironically named deals with a street girl. Ismat Chughtai, in her story “The Homemaker,” addresses the man-woman relationship before and after marriage and the dominant nature of a husband in Indian society. In “The Homemaker” Lajo, with black eyes, pale complexion, bubbly nature and wearing lehnga all the time, is a street girl who does not know her father and mother. In contrast to her name, Lajo meaning coy, she has no shame in offering her body to men. She spends her days in bazaars, flirting with men and her nights by warming up their beds. Most of the men, who sleep with Lajo, fall for her but after fulfilling their desires they throw her away. On the other hand, Mirza, a respectable shopkeeper, is a single man who meets whores to quench his lustful thirst. Bakhshi,

Mirza's friend, one day brings Lajo to Mirza's house to work as a maid. Mirza, knowing that Lajo is a street girl and a whore, refuses to let Lajo work at his house. Lajo, who has never seen the warmth and comfort of a house falls for it at first sight, not for Mirza but for Mirza's house and stays there despite Mirza's refusal. Within a very short time, Lajo wins Mirza's heart by her charismatic charm, beauty, caring heart, bright and freewheeling personality.

One night when Lajo is sleeping, her bare legs, visible from her lehnga, provoke Mirza and he fails to control his lust and eventually finds himself in Lajo's bed. Sleeping with Lajo for a night, Mirza falls in love with her and marries her. Here, Chughtai narrates the significant changes in a couple's relationship after marriage and how the relationship takes an entirely different turn. Everything that seemed attractive and tempting in Lajo to Mirza before marriage loses its value and charm, just after their marriage. The lehnga, that brought Mirza to Lajo's bed, no longer seems attractive to Mirza. Mirza puts a ban on the lehnga and instructs her to wear tight-fitting churidar pyjamas. He no longer likes Lajo's brightness and freewheeling ways and restricts her freedom. The same Mirza, who closes his shop early in the evenings before his marriage to come and spend quality time with Lajo, stays out late with his friends and entirely ignores Lajo's existence after marriage. Thus Chughtai deals with the social and sexual oppression of women in households in a number of tragic, ironic, satirical, comic and even hilarious stories. She has keen power of observation. Through minutest details of every day experience and a fresh outlook, she recreates the atmosphere of claustrophobic homes, ordinary households teaming with women, mothers, aunts, children and a happy home reined by a street woman. The kind of experiences she creates through bold and deft strokes are not created by any other women writers of India in 1940's and 50's. She uses her pen as a mighty weapon to break all enclosures and create sunnier, open homes and societies for women.

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### 30. Delineation of Women in *God Of Small Things*

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“You can tell condition of a nation by looking at the status of its women “ - Nehru

The “God of Small Things” is a novel of Indian writer ‘Arundhati Roy’. The book is a description of how the small things in life affect people’s behavior and their lives. The book won the Booker Prize” in 1997. Her most original contribution in this novel is her portrayal of children, entering into their thinking in a way which does not sentimentalize them but reveals the fierce passion and terrors which course through them and almost destroy them.

Kerala is well known for its relative freedom for women. But the female characters in this novel are intolerably restricted though they are assertive and energetic. Here Roy shows us the male domination which we find a predominant in the Indian society. We can see the acts of female courage and assertiveness as well as instances of women oppression. We can see the dowry harassment of Pappachi and his ill temperament and his wife, Mammachi a long suffering woman. Due to their ill temperament their children becomes desperate to escape from their family and spoil their lives.

Pappachi would not help Mammachi make the pickles and jams because he thought it was beneath him. He was also super jealous of all the sudden attention and fame that Mammachi was getting. He beats her every night with a brass flower vase to keep her in her place. He would go out of his way to make Mammachi look bad. He would try to make it look like she neglected him, which helped sway everyone’s opinion of working wives. Pappachi’s moth becomes responsible for his bad temper for the rest of the life and affects all of his kids and grandkids. He couldn’t put up with the success of his wife. When he heard of her amazing talent in playing violin, he smashed the instrument. So we see the supremacy of men and their sadistic behavior when women surpass them in name and fame.

Ammu, the daughter of Pappachi also suffers from her misfortune due to her father’s temperament. He feels that it is unnecessary to spend money on girl’s education, so didn’t get education. She wants to be away from her family to avoid that ill temperament of her father. In this frustrated state of mind, when she meets Baba she feels that it is as good as things were going to get, so she accepted the proposal of Baba. When their twins were two years Old, Baba was drunk most of the time. His English boss, Mr. Hollick, told him his job was in trouble but that they could work something out of Baba went out of town and let Mr.Hollick sleep with Ammu . When Ammu didn’t like this idea, Babapunched her and then passed out from being tired and drunk .Ammu took the heaviest book she could find and beat the smack out of him ,This scenario repeated itself a few times, and finally Ammu took the kids and left.

Rahel, the twin daughter of Ammu used to be good at schooling but is ignored by the family after the death of her mother. After school Rahel went to study architecture in Delhi. There she met Larry Mc Caslin, a visiting student. They got married and moved to Boston. He was totally smitten with Rahel, but they had sex he could see in her eyes that she wasn’t thinking about him. They got divorced and that Rahel moved to New York and then Washington. So she is doubted by her husband and their marital life broke.

Another lady character in the novel is Baby Kochamma, the aunt of Rahel a very sadistic and villainistic. When she was eighteen she fell in love with Fr.Mulligan, a young Irish monk who came to Kerala to study Hindu scriptures so he could denounce them properly. She thought she could seduce Fr.Mulligan. After a few days she needs another strategy to woo him, so she decided to



convert to Roman Catholicism and took vows to become a nun. She realized pretty quickly that this strategy was a mistake. Then she really hated her conversion. Then she concentrated on Ornamental Gardening. Then onwards she makes it her mission in life to steal away happiness from Estha and Rahel. She tries to make life as hard as possible for Velutha because of the humiliation she suffered previously.

Still there are some more women characters like Elvis sophiemol ,kochumaria etc who deceived and being deceived . Today India offers lot of opportunities tt still India is a male dominated society where women are often seen subordinate and inferior to men and especially in marital relationship at this point arranged marriages are still in norm and for a young woman to agree to marry a man without her parent's advance permission would have been a shocking behavior. It is important for Indian women to protect their f is why love female virginity. However conventional society somehow seeks to destroy real love, which is why love in the novel is consistently connected to loss, death and sadness (Ammu Velutha and Chacko). So women ought to be respected, protected and kept happy by their husbands – their happiness being vital for prosperity, peace and happiness of whole family.

- Arundhati Roy, *The God of Small Things*, Penguin Publications, 1997

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### 31. Breaking the Boundaries: Men in Gloria Naylor's *The Women of Brewster Place* and *The Men of Brewster Place*

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Gloria Naylor has been a dominant voice in contemporary African American fiction. She along with Nobel laureate Toni Morrison and Alice Walker has come to represent a kind of 'holy trinity' of African American women's literature (9, Stave) replacing the earlier male trinity of James Baldwin, Ralph Ellison and Richard Wright. Till date she has authored five novels- The Women of Brewster Place (1982), Linden Hills (1985), Mama Day (1988), Bailey's Café (1992) and The Men of Brewster Place (1998).

Growing up in the tumultuous 1960s when feminist interest and activism were vibrant, Naylor's feminist ideology was crystallized due to the misogyny and male bias in the Civil Rights, Black Power Movements. Black female intellectuals emphasized that gender equality should be the foundation for the realization of an ideal black community. A self-professed feminist, Gloria Naylor explores in her fiction the peculiar predicament that African American men are under 'to be a man' in a dominant white society. Although African American men and women have shared the same socio, political, historical and cultural experiences, Black feminist scholars point out the systematic advantages Black men enjoy in relation to Black women. African American men, on the other hand, cite the prevalence of racism that undermines their masculinity. The consequence of which is domestic violence. Claudia Tate in Psychoanalysis and Black Novels observes "Racism sets into motion a sequence of events that erupts first as family violence before it permeates the society at large (113)." In addition to the violence, like the Black women have been confined to the limiting stereotypes, so too have the Black men. The distorting iconography has created myths about African American men such as the criminal, deserter, drug addict, gang member, stud. They are portrayed as aggressive and lawless creating the image of the violent Black men thus marginalizing the value and humanity of the Black men even as it ranks them socially and culturally inferior. Naylor in an interview with Connie Lauerman of *The Chicago Tribune* says "Americans fear Black men, individually and collectively". She continues:

It is really very tough to try to fight those kinds of images and still keep your home together. They have to face the stigma created by the (errant) one-third and also the fact that they live as archetypes in the mind of Americans -- something dark and shadowy and unknown. Bell hooks observes in "Reconstructing Black Masculinity", "In popular culture, representations of black masculinity equate it with brute phallogocentrism, woman-hating, a pugilistic 'rapist' sexuality, and a flagrant disregard for individual rights (102, Black Looks)." Social scientists view such depictions as desperate strategies of a group who are deprived of real power. For the disenfranchised men, masculinity becomes a cultural status that must be constantly proved and reaffirmed. A public display of socioeconomic status and sexuality thus are two of the most recurrent forms of proving and reaffirming one's masculinity. Male critics like Robert Staples, Ishmael Reed, Mel Watkins blame that there is a common tendency in African American women writers like Alice Walker, Gloria Naylor, Ntozake Shange, Terry McMillan, to be very fanatically feminist in their portrayal of African American males as impotent, worthless, dangerous, damaging, ignorant, visionless, amoral, and with a stark lack of concern for family. The figures of absentee fathers and absconding sons are needed to bring out the black women's strength in their works, they allege.

Richard Wright, Ralph Ellison, James Baldwin created a literature invested in the rights of "native sons", i.e. the disenfranchised black male characters who sought to be part of

America relying on tropes and privileges of masculine identity as defined by white men. The writings of these black men emphasize the role of racism in the development of the idea of masculinity. The pervasive racism denies African American men the power and privilege that dominant men enjoy. They argue that due to the black men's exclusion from satisfying paid work- the measure of success of being a man - to provide for the family, most black men do not benefit from the traditional concept of masculinity i.e., power, control, authority, privilege. Consequently, many black men are insecure in their identity as men and lack a positive self image. Lacking these, the African American men cling tenaciously to their ideology of male dominance and traditional gender expectations. They perceive that controlling black women is crucial to their masculinity. They justify domestic violence as a legitimate instrument to acquire greater male power. While White men assert their masculinity through success in the corporate world and by controlling others' lives, the black men flex their muscles to control the streets and interpersonal relationships. Such patriarchal ideology proves to be detrimental to black families and communities. Ironically, the home which is supposed to function as a safe haven from the indignities of life in a racist society becomes a site of violence and abuse for many black women and children. The universal definition of manhood is the men's ability to provide for their families but so long as black women have to perform the provider function, they tend to thwart male dominance to some degree. Further, the decreased involvement of fathers in their children's lives contributes to paternal absence.

Gloria Steinem in her article "Women's Liberation Aims to Free Men Too" uses the term "masculine mystique" to explain the idea that manhood somehow depends on the subjugation of other people(101,The Feminist Movement). African American women writers for they deal with the every day social problems in the lives of Black women as the subject of their fiction. Bernard Bell in The Contemporary African American Novel says several best-selling black feminist novels, the most frequent stories we hear in the United States about black men are bad news. The news is that we are all dogs, robbers, homophobes, drug addicts, dope dealers, abusers of women and children, repressed rapists, dead-beat dads, racial purists, or ethnic extremists who are destined for death-physical, moral or spiritual- at an early age. These are the contemporary negative stereotypes perpetuated in the dominant discourse (37). He posits that the black women writers uncritically perpetuate and reinforce the negative construction of black male sexuality and identity, which is inaccurate. Gloria Naylor responded to the criticism of reinforcing the negative stereotypes of men in her fiction. But that criticism is all about the kind of society we live in. The underlying presumption has always been, until lately, that anything male should be central, and if males are not central, then it's jarring. And if something jars us we tend to think, Well, what is wrong with it? As opposed to, What is wrong with the way we have been programmed to think? ( 86, *Conversations*)

Gloria Naylor in her fiction does not refer to violence of black men in a white society. She instead focuses on the violence of black men as endemic to their personalities. All her five novels are woman-centered yet she focuses on black men "as they stand as counterparts to black women, which makes them vital(164, I Know What the Red Clay Looks Like)". Naylor has created a hugely diverse cast of fictional male characters who figure prominently, if only as "conflict bearers". Experience provides writers a different angle to view the world and this is reflected in their work. There is a perceptible evolution in Gloria Naylor's oeuvre in her portrayal of both women and men as she says "This street gave birth to more than its girl children, ya know" (3,Men of Brewster Place). She said in an interview with Pearl Cleage, "my life sort of kept pace in a way with what was happening with the books" (66, Conversations). She admitted that "I'm a different woman from the woman who wrote *The Women of Brewster Place*"(159, Conversations). Though a confirmed and self-professed feminist, Naylor also felt that in order to show the characters as humanly and realistically as possible, there has to be complexity. She acknowledges the difficulty of being an African American man in a racist society. She says "I see now that it is in the socialization of men. To have these expectations floating in the universe, and then to be a black man, and not be able to reach those expectations-it resonates differently"(164-65, I Know What the Red Clay). As a black woman writer she felt "a

pull” to reveal “the goodness of these male characters”(23, Conversations) which explains the sympathetic portrayal of some black men in her fiction.

Naylor offers an assortment of male characters who reflect a vast complexity of existence but with one common theme “I am a Man”. The variety of problems and character types found in her stories is perhaps the most convincing evidence of Naylor’s commitment to presenting the full range of Black humanity. Naylor chose to present the men’s perspective for several reasons: to clarify the men in the lives of the women in Brewster Place; in her father’s memory; and the Million Man March in Washington, that commemorated Martin Luther King Jr.’s peaceful demonstration in 1963. She admits she now sees that it is harder for black men to survive in a patriarchal, racist society which expects much from them. Historically, black men have been rendered powerless. Since their socialization is different the expectations from them are even greater. Unfortunately the men fail to reach the desired expectations (164-5 I Know What the Red Clay Looks Like).

Gloria Naylor expressed to Charles Rowell that in her fiction she examines the dramatic aspect of African American man-woman relationships(159, Conversations). In her debut novel, The women of Brewster Place she presents all the Black men with almost no redeemable qualities. Almost all the African American male characters let down their women. She presents a scathing portrayal of urban black youth as men incapable of defending the nation in a war or as men who cannot advance the nation’s scientific development yet pretend to be heroes in a small area asserting their power over the most vulnerable and powerless in American society- the black woman. In a society that equates” manhood” with “success”, black men suffer grave historical injustice. To set this right, the black men sell their souls to achieve that elusive success- a heavy price in Naylor’s view.

In all the seven stories of WBP, it is the men in the lives of these women who drive them to come to the dead-end street of Brewster Place. The wino, Ben, represents an ineffective husband and an ineffectual father; Eugene deserts his wife and child as he is unable to be a provider; Butch Fuller is an irresponsible womanizer whom Mattie’s disciplinarian father, Sam does not trust. Mattie’s father cannot forgive his daughter’s one misdemeanor as she disobeyed him. Mattie’s son, like his father Butch Fuller, is selfish, dependent and irresponsible. C. C. Baker and his gang are a canker in the society for whom Gloria Naylor reserves the most scathing criticism. In the sequel, MBP, written fifteen years later, Naylor develops these characters who express their version of the events. Naylor writes about the failures of men of Brewster Place “it is a small place but it seems there is an endless supply of men’s dreams shattered who say ‘I coulda. I shoulda but I didn’t” (161, MBP).

The three most important men in Mattie’s life- her father, Sam Michael; her lover, Butch Fuller and her son, Basil are responsible for sending Mattie to live in Brewster Place. Sam has all the attributes of a successful patriarchal man in a white society. The silent old man “with his set and exacting ways”(19, WBP) provides for his family but demands absolute obedience from his wife and his daughter. He controls his daughter’s every move, decides with whom she can be friends with. Mattie’s out-of wedlock pregnancy, he feels is a questioning of his authority. He flagellates himself for having failed in his duty as a man and a father “he had laid the blame for this on his own shoulders”(21). He physically abuses Mattie to punish her for her disobedience especially because Mattie refuses to name the father of the child. He feels enraged that “she had chosen this man’s side against him” and attempts to stamp out her “brazen taunting”- her disobedience”(23) by mercilessly thrashing her, setting her to journey out of her home in rural Tennessee.

The handsome Butch Fuller, Mattie’s lover is alluring to her because she wants to flout her father’s restrictions and also because he is sensual, “Butch had a laugh like the edges of an April sunset”(9) and he smelled like a mixture of clean sweat, raw syrup, and topsoil”(14). Further, unlike her silent father, Butch’s quick wit and a practical approach to life make him irresistible. He candidly tells her that he doesn’t run after a lot of women, he “just don’t stay long enough to let the good times turn sour”(16). So Mattie has no illusions that her relationship with him is fleeting. Therefore she

concludes that the baby “didn’t really belong to him”(22). It was all hers. In Men of Brewster Place, a grown up Basil meets his father who tells him that he tried to get in touch with Mattie after he learnt of her pregnancy. It is more out of curiosity than concern as he was told by doctors that he was infertile, “something about the sperm count(48)”. He does not make any more efforts to trace Mattie because he felt “we was no more meant to be together than a rooster and a goldfish(48)” thus dismissing his relationship with Mattie as one more of his conquests. Unlike his father, a repentant Basil is determined to be “a solid family man”. The Basil in Men of Brewster Place is a reformed man from the spoilt, self centered, irresponsible mama’s boy of Women of Brewster Place.

Basil becomes an irresponsible man due to the excessive mothering by Mattie. She “had carefully pruned his spirit to rest only in the enclaves of her will”(43,WBP). It is out of her own selfish desire to be needed so that she can be the refuge he can turn to that makes Basil become completely dependent on her. He manipulates her weakness to his own advantage. Charles Wilson Jr. observes by the time Basil is thirty, he has no sense of responsibility to himself, his mother, or society (39, A Critical Companion). When Basil is arrested for manslaughter in a drunken brawl, Mattie puts up her only possession, her house as collateral to get her son out of jail. He escapes before the trial, leaving his mother penniless and homeless, forcing her to move to Brewster Place. Naylor considers Basil’s betrayal to be a serious offence- breaking the trust of the woman who dedicated her life for him- his mother, Mattie.

Three years later Basil comes in search of his mother. It is too late for she is dead. He says he worked “two full-time jobs and a part-time” to pay her back for the house she lost. He realizes he cannot “undo the past”. He resolves to be the ideal husband and role model father and “would act like the man I’d finally grown up to be”(46, MBP). He marries an irresponsible twenty year old mother of two sons, Keisha so that he could be the supportive father he never had. Basil says “It was very clear to both of us that I wasn’t marrying Keisha, I was marrying her boys(59)”. Naylor in an interview with Virginia Fowler said that Basil loved his mother and he didn’t hate women. Hence he is incapable of hurting women with malicious intent(135, Conversations). However, he physically assaults his wife when she gets her lovers home not because of her unfaithfulness to him rather her behavior would affect the moral values he was trying to instill in his sons. Keisha gets him arrested and Basil’s dream of being a family man is short-lived. It is then that Basil thinks had he concentrated on being a good husband as he did as a father, he could have saved the marriage (60, Men of Brewster Place). Through Basil, Naylor presents a concerned and caring African American father unlike the usual portrayal of deserting husbands and bad father figures. Basil’s story also highlights the social reality of the disproportionate number of African American men languishing in the jails sometimes even for minor offences.

While Basil attempts to be a man battling the external societal forces, Eugene Turner’s battles are internal as he struggles to reconcile with his homosexuality as well as his inability to be a provider for his childhood sweetheart and wife, Ciel and their daughter. Eugene leaves his wife because he is unable to be a man in his own eyes. In WBP, Naylor presents Eugene, a working class man struggling to hold onto a job, however low paying it is. He views his marriage as a trap, his wife and children a burden. Unable to reveal his inadequacies, he directs all his anger and frustration on his wife. To continue the marriage Eugene emotionally blackmails Ciel to undergo an abortion. Even after she goes through the traumatic procedure that fissures her psychologically, he packs his bags. It is then Ciel sees him for what he is “a tall, skinny black man with arrogance and selfishness”(100, WBP). After his older daughter’s accidental electrocution, he remains distant from his distraught wife. In MBP, Naylor presents him more sympathetically as a man who is confused by his homosexuality for that demeaned his notion of masculinity and manhood. He is plagued by the dilemma of “losing his gendered identity”(151,Wilson). Unable to articulate his self-hatred, agony and guilt, he goes to a sadomasochist to be whipped “searching for his type of pain to replace mine(94, MBP)” so as to pay “for his role in Ceil’s pain and Serena’s death”( 213,Whitt). Eugene

wishes to substitute the mental torture with physical flagellation. Eugene's tragedy is his inability to reconcile with his homosexuality and accept it as *his* definition of manhood(emphasis added).

One of Naylor's major concerns is the lack of positive black men role models and mentors for the black boys in America. She delineates, in WBP and MBP, through C.C. Baker the ill-effects of such a lack. Naylor depicts the impoverished neighborhood and the growth of the unemployed urban youth for whom the definition of masculinity is identical to the concept of violence and physical prowess. C.C.Baker equates manliness with money, power, prestige and the fear he can inspire in others. Trapped within the dead end of Brewster Place, C.C. and his gang consider it their domain where they hang out together. C.C. Baker and his friends are characterized by Naylor as extremely repulsive and a menace to society: Bound by the last building on Brewster and a brick wall, they reigned in that unlit alley like dwarfed warrior –kings....Baptized with the steam from a million non-reflective mirrors, these men wouldn't be called upon to... point a finger to move a nation , or stick a pole into the moon-and they knew it. They only had that three-hundred-foot alley to serve as a stateroom.... surrounded by the most dangerous species in existence-human males, with an erection to validate in a world that was only six-feet wide(169-170 WBP). Lorraine's rape by C.C. and his gang in WBP in order to sensitize people about the ghastly effect of suffering that combines pain, humiliation torture and trauma perpetrated on women. More importantly, Naylor says her aim was to point a finger toward the society and their definition of manhood" " how he was taught he could be a man by society"(134-35,*Conversations*).

In American society where the black men are paradoxically invisible, men like C.C. Baker yearn to be recognized and their existence validated. If they cannot be popular, they prefer to be notorious, for notoriety is at least a negative recognition. They feel "powerful" that they can instill fear in others. Such youth are easily lured into the world of crime through "good cars and good clothes( 122, MBP)". The cool pose, the swagger and the ability to stoop to any level – rape and kill to be "Real men" are adopted by these men. He therefore chooses to become a drug peddler and does not even hesitate to kill his stepbrother to take a share in the illegal business. by murdering his brother, he has "the courage to be a man"(129, MBP). He associates aggressiveness, violent and dominating behavior as a reflection of being a 'true' man. It is a clear indication of the devaluation of black men's lives where members of the community annihilate one another in order to assert one's powers. Grinding poverty, lack of education, and opportunities for self advancement compounded with lack of parental control lead many youngsters to a life of crime and an exponential growth of gangs. However, it is the individual's choice to either succumb to the lure of easy money or resist it. Naylor presents C.C. Baker as a case beyond redemption for he desires a life of violence, crime and money. In contrast to him, Naylor depicts Abshu who too had a similar socio- economic background but follows a different path.

Naylor refutes the arguments that the harsh life in the inner cities drives the youth to taking to crime. Abshu's mother gives him up into foster care rather than have him bear the brunt of his impoverished father's brutality. Starved of food and affection by his foster parents, Abshu however is grateful to them for the discipline that has been inculcated in him and the important life skills to appreciate life for whatever it gives. After a college education, the talented playwright that he is, aims to change the lives of the less fortunate through education and social activism. He mentors the young, gifted children at the community center to achieve their potential. As a law-abiding citizen, he uses social and political pressure to improve the lives of the residents of Brewster Place by involving women in a non-violent protest. His self-confidence gives him a healthy sense of manhood. His "sense of brotherhood and communion with others in the community"( 153,Wilson) establishes him as a leader.

The men of Brewster Place crave respect which is best illustrated by Ben who narrates his story admitting "Near to sixty-eight years old when I look back over my life, one of the things that bothers me the most is that I ain't never been in a situation where anybody ever called me sir"(11,

MBP). These men link respect in all its forms-self-respect, respect from others to their manhood. In MBP, Naylor took poetic license to resurrect Ben who is murdered by Lorraine after traumatic gang rape in WBP. Though separated by several decades Ben's story is a repetition of his own grandfather's which indicates that conditions for the poor blacks has not altered. Grandpa Jones as a young slave boy witnessed the rape and subsequent death of his kid sister. However he is prevented from expressing the injustice done which leaves him a bitter, silently seething man. Similarly, Ben's white landlord exploits Ben's labor and repeatedly molests his crippled daughter. Ben feels he is not a man enough to protect his daughter and fight the white man who openly laughs at him. Elvira, Ben's wife adds to the insult by symbolically emasculating him:

“if you was half a man, you coulda given me more babies and we woulda had some help workin' this land instead of a half-grown woman we gotta carry the load for. And if you was even a quarter of a man, we wouldn't be a bunch of miserable sharecroppers on someone else's land-but we is, Ben(26, MBP). Unable to fight his exploiter and also his wife, Ben escapes from his inadequacies by drowning in drink-“So I settled on killing myself-slowly with booze- and on God understanding that I'm fighting for my manhood(28, MBP)”.

He tries to salvage his self-respect by distancing himself from his memories, becoming an alcoholic, silent old man like his grandfather. Ben's daughter becomes a prostitute in the city and sends him money. Jill Matus opines that Ben is the father who has betrayed and lost his daughter (55). As a father figure he is not successful either in preventing Cora Lee from being exploited by the “shadows” or Lorraine who turns to him. After her brutal rape, Lorraine kills Ben. Like the exclusive female space of the kitchen that women use for bonding, the barbershop in African American fiction is an all male space where the men bond with each other as much as they learn from the others. It is here the black men seek out others to “continually verify their existence” (WBP 161). It is in this space that Greasy, the crack addict who lost his job, his wife and his sanity repeatedly says “I 'm a man and I'm trying” (165, MBP) finally slits his throat. His story puts in a nutshell the stories of the men on Brewster Place. However the common suffering and pain does not seem form a nurturing bonding like it does among women.

The African American women always felt that their menfolk were insensitive to their plight. In WBP Naylor through Etta says: “we get so caught up with what a man isn't. It's what he is that counts(178)”. By presenting both negative and positive male characters, Naylor indicates that she is not only a staunch feminist but a Womanist as well. Naylor seems to respond in her works to bell hooks call that changing representations of black men must be a collective task. Black people committed to renewed black liberation struggle , the de-colonization of black minds, are fully aware that we must oppose male domination and work to eradicate sexism...collectively we can break the life-threatening choke-hold patriarchal masculinity imposes on black men and create life sustaining visions of a reconstructed black masculinity.(113, *Black Looks*)

In Bernard Bell's words, Naylor brings out the “black neo masculinity as a standard for assessing the quality of contemporary life and literature is mutual respect, sympathy, authority, responsibility, and reciprocity between men and women, as well as the complementarity of their generative powers (38,*Contemporary African American Novel*)”.Thus Naylor opens the space for building bridges of understanding between women and men to bring about social change. In the Fowler interview, Naylor admitted that she had evolved as a person and as a writer however she regards herself to be a feminist. “I 'm still a feminist, but I'm more realistic one now- about the limitations. It's probably more akin to my whole philosophy that all human beings are equal... (126, *Conversations* ) In WBP, men are projected as the villains in the lives of their women however, in the last novel, MBP, the men are portrayed as sensitive, kindhearted human beings whose inability to effectively articulate their feelings causes the suffering for the women they love. Naylor's womanist stance is evidenced by MBP, a novel that is exclusively peopled by men who present their point of view. Like her women characters who cannot be typecast, in her representation of male characters,

she does not confine herself to exploring the psychic dimension of one man. Instead, she examines multiple dimensions of what constitutes a black man. The womanist ideology of understanding the black man's predicament in stressful circumstances spotlights Naylor's commitment to the survival whole of the African American community. Being a feminist, she however holds them accountable and responsible for the condition of all African American men, women and children. It is this commitment to individual and societal transformation in a sexist, racist, classist, heterosexist environment that these individuals strive. They not only 'make do' but 'do better' despite the multiple oppressions.

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### 32. Eco-symbolism in Margaret Atwood's *Surfacing*

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Man inherited the language of symbols since time immemorial. He used signs and symbols for expressing his ideas and feelings when there were no other ways and means for communicating. Symbols are powerful expressions of ideas and emotions. They also represent one's culture and national feelings. The symbolist movement began in France during the 19<sup>th</sup> century as a revolt against realism. Stephane Mallaseme was its high priest. Later, the influence of symbolism was strengthened by Pater and English aesthetes who had hailed themselves as the English speaking representatives of the French symbolic school. The main concern of symbolism is to glue the innermost feelings of man with the physical images or symbols. In the course of time, man is able to strongly relate himself with others using symbols. Symbols lead to a sense of reality for him in order to live consciously and in helping him to achieve his true vision. Every nation has its own flag, colour, and the art on it to represent its vision. Many other symbols are also attributed to the same nation in order to express its uniqueness and tradition. All these can be strongly understood only through symbols. Symbols when correctly designed have given mankind the right picture of one's own state and feelings. Moreover it has become the most powerful iconography in the art history.

Various writers throughout the centuries have touched upon the concept of symbolism, often altering it through art and literature. W.B.Yeats has been specially revered for his concepts on symbolism. He was totally influenced by the French movement of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Even today, W.B.Yeats is considered as one of the foremost poets in English literature in the realm of symbols. He says: "a symbol is the possible expression of some invisible essence, a transparent lamp about a spiritual flame ----." He further states that symbols give voice to dumb things and body to body-less things. W.B.Yeats uses many symbols in his poetry and essays which helps a reader to understand the personal symbolic elements in his works.

Eco-symbolism celebrates the gift of creativity in man by inviting him to convert his thoughts into actions, remaining profoundly connected tonature.It aims at creating a healthy dialogue between man and the natural world in order to help him to live more meaningfully, healthily and responsibly in the natural world. Eco-symbolism becomes an art in which visual artists are challenged to understand the universal dialect of symbolism. Moreover the power of symbols they use becomes the moral responsibility of their usage.

Eco-symbolism shows the rising awareness of environmental concerns. It powerfully brings in the art of integrity by addressing the universal human conditions to create respect for the natural world. Eco-symbolism makes possibilities for man to explore the richness of the environment in which he lives and moves. In a way, it also helps him in adding concreteness to his vision and mission. Eco-symbolism becomes a tool trying to satisfy the social consciousness and empathy for others. It also takes up the further lead to ethical responsibility and above all the moral dimensions which inspire positive feeling of harmony and peace. Margaret Eleanor Atwood is a Canadian poet, novelist, literary critic, essayist, and environmental activist. She is among the most-honoured authors of fiction in recent history. Atwood is known for both the quality and the quantity of her writing. She has won more than 55 awards in Canada and internationally. She has published many novels, shorts stories, poems, and works of literary criticism. Atwood has repeatedly reinvented herself over the course of her career. She has written science fiction, speculative fiction, historical fiction, and realistic fiction. Science is usually an important theme in her books, and Atwood agrees that having a father who was a scientist played an important role in her interest in exploring this field. Atwood has spoken and written prolifically on the art of writing and on being a writer. Atwood is also a feminist writer. Her themes are Civilization vs. Wilderness, Immortality, The nature of Nature, Identical crisis, feminism, ecofeminism, environmental issues etc.The novels of Atwood are eco-symbolic as they provoke the mind of the reader to visualise reality from a deeper level.

In *Surfacing*, Atwood uses various eco-symbols such as animals, objects, colours, and places to show the inherent connection of man with nature. These eco-symbols bring out the deeper meaning

hidden between the lines, enabling the reader to introspect and bring about possible changes. The novel *Surfacing* has a very simple story line if one views it superficially. The novel opens with the unnamed protagonist who comes back from Toronto to northern Quebec where she grew up as a child in search of her father who is reported to have mysteriously vanished. The protagonist works as a commercial artist and is back to the place after nine long years. She has totally kept herself aloof from her parents except that once she visited her mother when she was hospitalised. The very reason for her long silence and her hidden life was that she was cheated and exploited by her lover, making her pregnant and refusing to marry her. He had insisted with her to undergo an abortion which was against her wish, but she had to get her pregnancy terminated. The protagonist had to cut herself off from her parents because her reality would shock them. She told her parents that she was divorced and the child was left with her lover. On hearing the disastrous incident of her father who was a botanist and was missing near the lake, she goes on her way to discover the circumstances of her father's death. As she begins her journey she struggles to trace her identity and origin and her psychological journey leads her directly to the natural world. She comes along with her three companions, namely David, Anna and Joe, to the island. David and Anna are married couples and are her causal friends but Joe is her lover. The three friends of the narrator were busy in looking at the sight scene and shooting. The heroin is very serious in search of her father. Several questions flash through her mind with regard to his death, while offering her several possibilities. She gets trapped in the web of confusion and is unable to solve the mystery of her father's disappearance. This confusion leads her to a psychological journey in bringing back the traumatic memories of the aborted foetus which were lying dormant in her sub-conscious. Her guilty conscious haunts her memory. As the protagonist begins her journey, she encounters many symbols which reflect the author's major concerns in the novel. The images such as lake, road, and island, can be seen from an eco-symbolic view point, connecting it to the inner and the outer world of the protagonist. Looking from an eco-symbolic view point, the lake becomes a symbol of anti-nature. Firstly, in making her realise that she has been a killer as she recollects her memories of the aborted foetus which time and again surface to her conscious mind. She suffers from a guilt complex, even though aborting was not her choice. She also understands that she has been treated as a puppet, 'the second sex'. Secondly, having a keen look at the lake once again, the heroin is shocked at the mutilation that is visible there. She could see the ruin caused to the lake and the island by the Americans, as they took pleasure in destroying the nature: "Anything that suffers and dies instead of us is Christ; if they didn't kill birds and fish they would have killed us. The animals die that we may live; they are substitute people, hunters in the fall killing the deer that is Christ also. And we eat them, out of cans or otherwise; we are eaters of death, dead Christ-flesh resurrecting inside us, granting us life". Once again, the heroin is stuck by guilt in seeing the northern Quebec which was entirely different that which she once knew. She feels deeply sorry and longs for the Canadian past. Here, lake becomes an eco-symbol because it leads her to open up her guilty conscience and to understand that she herself has been anti-nature. Coming to the image of the lake which represents water is totally eco-symbolic as the title of the novel suggests. Water imagery gets established right from the title, bringing out the hidden meaning of water as life and death. The white birches near the lake "are dying" but at the end of the chapter, lake becomes the giver of life as the context shows "blue and cool as redemption" showing that water has a power to generate energy and strength. Later, towards the end of part I, the protagonist plunges herself into the lake. She desires to purify her guilty conscience and tries to submerge under the water. Water becomes the powerful element of life. Here the narrative begins and ends with the lake. The word Lake has been used nearly 100 times in various contexts. There are also other references to water, such as river, sea, water, stream, etc. Water symbolises death but it also symbolises transformation through purification. Images of diving and drowning are constantly repeated in *Surfacing*. These images are strongly associated with water where the protagonist calls drowning of her brother and diving, as she surfaces with the newly formed self. The protagonist ultimately surfaces from the depths. Here, the radical change in the life of the heroin is to be noted. Water has washed her clean making her a renewed person. The image of the road also has a symbolic element in *Surfacing*. The protagonist begins her journey on the road which did not have identical roots of the past: "I can't

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believe I'm on this road again, twisting along past the lake where the white birches are dying, the disease is spreading from the south, and I notice they now have sea-planes for hire." The old road which the protagonist desires, leads to "totalitarian innocence" while the new road leads to "Americanism". The old road is juxtaposed against the image of the new road which has the eco-symbolic element. Here the new road attracts and captures the attention of the tourists and hence they do terrible harm to the environment. Their travelling on the smooth path not only gives them comfort but in fact provokes them to destroy the nature. When the protagonist returns home after nine long years, she tries to look for the old familiar road. She is told by a woman at the corner store that the old road has been closed for many years and is no more used. On hearing this, the protagonist is terribly shocked and she undergoes a severe breakdown as she is unable to reconcile herself to the change.

From an eco-symbolic point of view, the new road leads to commercialism whereas the old road leads to an organic way of living with natural and interpersonal proximity. For the protagonist, the island symbolises alienation. The island is set apart from the city where the transportation becomes a difficult thing. One cannot imagine a bus or a train on the island. Here the protagonist herself is an island. Despite having the company of three companions, she shuts herself off completely from others. Though she knew David and Anna's car was the only way for her to reach her homeland, she takes things for granted and feels terribly restless in their company. Through certain incidents in the novel it is also understood that the heroin is waiting for the opportunity to be alone on the island. The protagonist goes on leading an isolated life in spite of knowing that the island was not a safe place for her. She was even sometimes terrified by David and Joe as they were men and there would be chances for sexual advances. Even though she is fond of Joe she tries to be careful with him. She also desires not to be bounded in the fetters of marriage even if she becomes pregnant through Joe.

Towards the end, the island becomes an eco-symbol for her to realise that she has to come out of her caged feelings. She gains inner strength and feels courageous to stand strong without going into the cage. She decides to be a mother and participates in the natural process of procreation. She pulls Joe out of the cabin and quenches her sexual thirst with him. Now, she feels satisfied and has conceived a baby. The underlining message on the island is all about the beauty of life. The protagonist realises that she cannot conceive without the help of a man and thus she remains grateful to Joe. It can be noted that the protagonist has attained realization in discovering the truth. She feels enthusiastic and renewed with her new freedom. She seems to leave the island and live a normal life in the company of others specially Joe, in talking and socializing and by a new beginning. The present paper is an attempt to explore the visual concepts of eco-symbolism which make *Surfacing* a painter's novel.

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### 33. The Sisyphean Quest in Bi-mythical Significance of Jayanta Mahapatra's Poetry

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“For in the Beginning of literature there is myth, as there is also in the end of it.” Jorge Luis Borges

Most great works of the contemporary literature are those which have an underlying framework of myth. Be a writer an atheist or a theist or an agnostic, his work has a more or less preoccupation of myth or an archetypal pattern in the theme. Myths represent the human quest for meaning of various philosophical aspects from birth to death. It also refers to “a homogeneous people about their origin, history, and fears and the existence of natural phenomena.” (Meyers and Simms 237)

Myth, religion and culture play a very significant role in shaping the writer's past with many considerations and re-considerations over the time. While the present is important for the reality for a common man; the past is more important for a writer for his aesthetic, spiritual, and philosophical experience which in most cases is encountered with the local myths.

Myths explain how the culture and ways of thinking of peoples are shaped. They allow us to know about ourselves as we strive to find ways to express the truths of the human condition. Some are explanatory offering answers to the questions like, how did human beings come to exist? What happens after death? Etc. When the questions were not answered, many rational and spiritual thinkers “resorted to the language of myth to treat such issues.” (Parker and Stanton<sup>10</sup>) Speaking about what do myths represent Carl C.Jung says:

*“Myths are essentially culturally elaborated representations of the contents of the Deepest recesses of the human psyche: the world of the archetypes. Myths represent the unconscious of the unconscious archetypal, instinctual structures of the mind. They represent these structures not in historical and cultural vacuum but rather as they are culturally elaborated and expressed in terms of the world view of a particular age and culture. Just as human instincts are the same universally, so the collective unconscious is the same for all human beings.”* (Walker 97)

Myth in Indian English literature has also been used effectively by many eminent writers today. In the post colonial era myth in Indian literature is used to express the complexity of the contemporary human predicament. The feminist, Dalit and post-colonial discourses are remarkable in retelling the myths. For example Ekalavya of Mahabharata was suppressed by his teacher Drona because he was a tribal; and Ravana appears superior in his virtues than Lord Rama because Rama had suspected Sita's fidelity.

JayantaMahapatra explored the darkest domains of human soul in his poetry with the native myth. The topography of Orissa is a mosaic of ancient stony architecture which pervades everywhere in Orissa. JayantaMahapatra makes a creative pilgrimage into the mythical heritage of man and searches the collective unconscious for the meaning of human existence. He analyses the plight of the modern man who is torn between the conflicting values, in the light of the myths. He tries to deconstruct the age old serious consideration of the myth. Mahapatra grieves the sheer innocence of the modern man's consideration of myths throughout his life.

The study of myths (local, Hindu and Christian) and history (regional and national) shaped Mahapatra as a man, poet and ultimately transformed his faith. Myths set him into a serious contemplation of truth. As Mahapatra was born into an orthodox Odissan Brahmin family, it is appropriate to interpret the myth from the religious point of view.

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Mahapatra uses myth tradition and culture of Odissa to explore the secrets of life in a new way and to redefine the life of his region. JaydipsinhDodia writes: “Places like Puri, Konark, Cuttack, Bhubaneswar form .....the quadrangle in the landscape of his poetry. Legends, history and myths associated with these places immensely interest JayantaMahapatra and from the nerve center of his poetry.” (Dodiya 175) In the course of writing poetry he becomes part of the Odiyan tradition. Myth, tradition and culture are the connecting links for him to suffuse himself into its culture. With regard to this he says: “*seem to be pulled by the tradition. Tradition might represent many things such as history and myth, the suffering of others. I intend to imagine; but which evidently is real to me. Tradition could not simply be the movement which has been happening all along; it could be related to the grief of others, the struggle to find out life in another way. And poetry for me does try to redefine tradition. I realize this would seem a little unclear but in a way tradition pursues me as I pursue it myself.*” (Paranjape 19)

Mahapatra basically comes from a region which is religious. Rituals, Processions and celebration of the local festivals are common and one naturally becomes part of it and thus accumulates the collective conscious. In the poem “Myth” he writes, “the myth shifts / swiftly from hand to hand, eye to eye.” (MahapatraRR 15) These things according to him come on their own and make one part of it. About his belief in myth he says:

*“Myth is there, history is there, and myth, history and rituals do become the stuff of poetry. Because that’s the way of life in Orissa and poetry is the way of life for me.”* (Paranjape 19)

Mahapatra claims that he is part of the tradition and culture of Orissa, its festivals, practices and the tradition like his fellow folk. Festival for Mahapatra doesn’t mean a joyous ritual but “the still sad music of humanity.” He identifies himself with the landscape around. Poetry comes to him with the continuous encounter with his land. The meaning of every ritual speaks to him about the mythical past and he gradually becomes part of it. He searches his identity in every part of myth, culture, tradition, legend and history. The poem, “A Country festival” gives a clear picture of his involvement with the land. It opens with the picture of twilight and foretells the end of something. Its pain may be of perpetual poverty, disease and violence. The portrayal of the landscape is juxtaposed with the ubiquitous image of lions, which are the symbols of pride but ironically they are only a fragment of myth and history today muted pride amidst the “abandoned bones along the river banks.” Consider the image in the first stanza:

Now the evening shadows creep, the scorching, the slow sleep, the squalor squealing in despair, and the inaction dancing in a circle like naked children round their sheer fingers, while the darkness dims the air, old allegories lie oddly in the hunched postures of abandoned bones along the river banks. (Mahapatra 4)

He writes how his land had been resorting to the futureless futile practices. Most of the rituals and and tradition symbolize death and hopelessness. His people depend upon these practices that the native myth dictates which are seen in the endless rituals performed by the priests. Mahapatra searches a meaning and objective in these but they are “low, restless and black.” Sadly tone he writes:

*“Long evenings over the burning grounds, Those places erected through the years, place of sacrifice, ...the vague weightiness of chanting hangs low, sad and restless and black.”* (Mahapatra, Waiting 4)

Years of these rituals didn’t bring any change or hope in his land of poverty for generations. The poem ends with the image of the silent suffering of the hopeless women of his land. The land is a great place of pilgrimage. The temple of Lord Jaganath attracts scores of pilgrims every year. The

idol of the Jagannath is made of wood and is replaced every year with new idol. The phrase “wooded image” in the last stanza connotes this. The sad note symbolized with the dejected women in the similes like “unexpected lakes deep within the wooded hills”, and “wild water snakes let loose from the yearly floods indicate that lord Jagannath has miserably failed to rescue the land from the squalor. The myth and the practice of the tradition related to this are futile. The poem concludes:

conches are possessed by wandering spirits;  
and the women not answering to their names anymore,  
and usually lying like unexpected lakes  
deep within the wooded hills,  
break their calm surfaces  
like wild water-snakes  
let loose from the yearly floods.(Mahapatra *Waiting* 5)

*Relationship* is the defining work of JayantaMahapatra. It is a pilgrimage into the myth and history of Orissa. It is a serious involvement with the self and the society. It is a sublime interpretation of native myths. It is the first Indian English Poem to win the central sahitya Academy award in 1980. It opens with an epigraph derived from Walt Whitman’s *Leaves of Grass*. The work is really “large....(and)...contains multitudes” of his land. It deals with culture and traditions of Orissa, its architectural grandeur and mythological treasure. His poetic imagination is evoked by the native earth, rocks, stones, soil, racial and cultural consciousness of its people, their gods and goddesses like the ritualistic practice of replacing Lord Jagannatha along with Balabadhra and Subadhra at the festival of *Navakalaveera* (new body) which is celebrated once in 12 years. The new idols are carved with the neem wood from the deep jungles. The poet makes long imaginative pilgrimage into myth, tradition and history.

The poem opens with his sincere wish to travel way back into the myth and history of the ruined glory of the land. The mythical history of the land had been forbidden and neglected for generations and now the poet wants to journey because it is only myth that gives solace from the restless vulture-like passage of time. He wishes:

Once again one must sit back and bury the face  
In this earth of the forbidden myth,  
the phallus of the enormous stone. (Mahapatra 9)

He meditates upon the “phallus of the enormous stone” – the myth of creation. He wants to flit into the forbidden myth like a butterfly. It is the only source of solace. Stone is a motif and as a symbol it connotes both the Hindu and the Christian religions. In Hindu tradition stone symbolizes a sacred idol of a God (Shiva in this context) and it also connotes Christ in Christian tradition. But the phallus is particularly the sacred symbol of Shiva which indicates the creation myth in Hindu mythology. JayantaMahapatra is a Christian but he has a strong Hindu background. So he meditates upon the existing fragments of history present before him in the form of stones, rituals and their performers who are priests and prophets:

the mystery of secret rights that make up my destiny;  
and to clasp the slow slopes of stone again  
that ascend to the realm of the dead,  
slopes that stroke the mind  
with their quite faces of sorrow, (Mahapatra *Relationship* 9)

He believes that the stone has the power to carry him to infinite distances and can open many hidden secrets. It has a strong impact on him. It is the apt conveyance for him to journey back into his history and the history of his land. At times he becomes indecisive about the stone when he sees the squalor around him. The elemental vastness around doesn’t give him enough confidence about his objective. He remarks:

I continue walking back and forth  
Not knowing whether the earth  
Would let me finally find its mouth. (Mahapatra *Relationship* 10)

Mahapatra makes a lonely pursuit into the different forms of water – sea, river or even rain water – which symbolize hope to find his origins and meaning of existence. Even the stone survives by water beneath it which is the spiritual reality. He feels that slopes of the stony architecture is the avenue to the find his identity among the dead of his land. But due to split faith and the endless hopelessness around, he falls into uncertainty. He expresses his grief:

: We have come as dreams disguised that pinned us down,  
Artisans of stone,  
Messengers of the spirit,  
Twelve hundred artless brown flowers in passion  
To the night in humble brotherhood,  
aerial roots of a centuries-old banyan tree;  
not taking our lives seriously  
for our live are only the seeds of dreams. (Mahapatra *Relationship* 9)

The Sun temple of Konarka was built by 1200 artisans in the eleventh century A.D. The artisans were the “torchbearers of tradition, lovers of legends and seekers of souls in stones” (Prasad 172) He compares them to “brown flowers of passion” and the aerial roots of an ancient banyan tree which stands in a sad memory of the land of massacres in the Kalinga war in 261 B.C which were perpetrated on the inhabitants of the land by emperor Ashoka. But Ashoka embraced the ways of peace only after the bloodshed, only after a great land had lost its glory to the violence of a “revered” emperor.

Mahapatra identifies himself with the artisans who are the pride of his land. They all died before their dreams were fulfilled and everything today is only a heap of debris. Mahapatra is constantly aware of the truth that “we are such a stuff as dreams are made on, and our little life is rounded with a sleep.” All the artisans made heroic efforts in mythical proportions to ensafe the history and myth. Even the son of the architect, according to the legend, put his efforts to erect the slab of the great temple to save the name of his father thus preserving the glory of the land. Today the glory of this land and the myth behind this great architecture has lost its significance. We are away from it and are drowned in our “watery skulls” of hopelessness:

forgetting the tactics and strategy  
that led the founding of the infinite distance  
inside our watery skulls. (Mahapatra *Relationship* 10)

The image “watery skulls” also evokes the grief of King David in the Old Testament where he says, “all the night make I my bed to swim; I water my couch with my tears.” (King James Version) He proceeds to find his roots “walking back and forth” though he doesn’t know “whether the earth would let me (him) find finally its mouth.” Konarka serves as a background in his journey from past through the present towards the future but his search had remained fruitless. He feels he is defeated into loneliness. People do not observe and understand life’s mysteries.

Mahapatra is now pressed between the two forces of time – the past and the present. While lost in the world of the past in search of his roots, he is suddenly dragged into the present state and is haunted by the suffering in the world around him. He is confused and lost in the hotchpotch of memories and is lost in oblivion. He feels that the present must be shaped by the past. He believes that one must re-meditate and reconsider myths and their significance in the contemporary times. “In the seamless unification of the past and present towards which he so intensely strives, is the belief

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that only this merging will give meaning to the present and that it will sow the seeds of new myths, embodied in the boy-hero of the Konark temple. He visualizes these new myths as springing out of the imagination and creativity of the poet-figure.” (Sarangi 66)

Mahapatra, being a Christian and admirer of Gandhi and Buddha has inculcated the virtues of peace and non-violence. He strongly opposes the bloodshed of the kings like Ashoka who “carved peaceful edicts” after the bloody massacres. Mahapatra passionately complains about this violence. He asks in emotional tone:

It is hard to tell now.....  
how the age-old proud stones  
lost their strength and fell  
and how the waters of the Daya  
stank with the bodies of my ancestors;  
my eyes close now. (Mahapatra *Relationship* 14)

The poet stands between two Gods – the mute idol before him and the God in heaven. Father motif in Mahapatra’s poetry implies both physical father and the heavenly father. Amidst the tedious pursuit for truth and identity in the remains of the past, he suddenly resorts to God for solace. He complains that he (God) knows everything beforehand and yet he is silent. This refers to Psalm 139 of the Old Testament. David sings,

Thou knowest my down sitting and mine uprising,  
thou understandest my thought afar off.  
Thou compassest my path and my lying down,  
and art acquainted *with* all my ways.  
For *there is* not a word in my tongue, *but*, lo,  
O LORD, thou knowest it altogether. (King James Version)

So he now longs for a spiritual sleep – a saint-like long meditation to understand the transcendental significance of the ruins of stone – and the secret truth hidden in it. Sleep also has a connotation of Biblical and Wordsworthian view of life which evokes Wordsworth’s in the “Immortality Ode”:

Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting:  
The Soul that rises with us, our life’s Star,  
Hath had elsewhere its setting,  
And cometh from afar:  
Not in entire forgetfulness,  
And not in utter nakedness,  
But trailing clouds of glory do we come (Ulmer 112)

Unable to continue in this nightmarish world of complexities, he seeks refuge in the ‘sleep-habit (dream of escapism) of the golden deer. Deer signifies the spirit of joy and elation which is expressed in its action of prancing and celebrating the life. Thus he comes to terms with the past with the myth of sleep in the following lines:

So I shall seek the sleep-habit  
of the golden deer, tempter of tastes,  
in order that I might see outlined  
against the vast forest of the heart  
the miracle of living, so that others may pity me,  
so that my dream would not end:



the fabulous marriage procession of power, like siva's,  
and the different dimensions of lies and betrayals  
in order to survive,  
the strange country  
in which you weave your flaming play. (Mahapatra *Relationship* 20)

Sleep, according to him is a kind of necessary blindness that is valuable for overcoming the illusions of life (Maya) and realizing the spiritual truth. There is a different kind of action in the divine pursuit for truth in sleep. The state of sleep and dream now makes Mahapatra a visionary. He feels that he has overcome all the pulls of the mediocre life and goes beyond it. In this state of great enlightenment he decides to continue in the state of sleep itself to achieve that 'visionary gleam' of Wordsworth in the *Immortality Ode*.

He continues to exist in a "hiding place" till he achieves his complete enlightenment. Here again his vision clashes with the Christian myth. The phrase, "the hiding place without beginning or end" refers to the words spoken by David in his praise to God in Psalms (King James Version) and God, who says that he is the Alfa and the Omega. (King James Version) "The largest circle" refers to the earth. In the last stanza of Section V He writes:

This sleep is a song  
that is heard from all sides continually  
a coarse cage .....

the hiding-place without beginning or end,  
and the largest circle that transcends  
.....  
blind eye that creates the special vision  
of our poignant significance. (Mahapatra *Relationship* 21)

Mahapatra is a Christian and from the inculcation of his Christian ideology he brings in both the ideologies of the two religions – Hinduism and Christianity. Hinduism says that idolatry is the right way of worshipping God. And Christianity says that "You shall not make idols", which is one of the Ten Commandments. Every temple being guarded by a couple of lions. These lions on both sides of the entrance of the temple is a common sight in Orissa. He ironically asks these idols what they are waiting for. And the answer is obvious in the question itself evoking Estragon's words "Nothing happens. Nobody comes, nobody goes. It's awful". He puts this absurdity of myth in the opening lines of the Section VIII:

It is my own life  
that has concerned me beneath the stones  
of this temple in ruins, in the blaze of sun.  
Sun-lions, standing against the steps,  
whose return to life are you waiting for?  
Whose roar to pulse through the veins  
of this first night of sleep? (Mahapatra *Relationship* 25)

He gets tired of pursuing the secrets behind myth. Today only bones lie scattered everywhere symbolizing death of the myth. He writes that the Sun is wounded. This has again a Hindu-Christian implication. Sun according to the Hindu religion is the Sun God idolized in Sun temple Konarka who is wounded by the negligence of his devotees (people of the land). The Christian meaning of Sun indicates Christ who is the Son of God and the one among the Trinity – Father, Son and the Holy Spirit. Consider the opening lines in section IX:

This must be the myth of every happiness,  
the high wind that flings the flowers into disarray,

the adamant bones which keep rolling in the dust  
of the dark butterflies,  
the cry of the wounded sun silenced among  
the ruins of Konarka. (Mahapatra *Relationship* 29)

Myth and its pursuers have become dwindled today. The spirit of faith and spiritual ideals are lost. Mahapatra writes about the myth of the 'Biblical Rapture.' Rapture means the second coming of the Jesus Christ when all the people who have the salvation and who accept Christ will be taken into his kingdom. This also evokes the lines in W.B. Yeats' "Second Coming", "The best lack all conviction, while the worst / Are full of passionate intensity." And those who deny will be 'Left Behind' in the world of Satan and will be persecuted for long. About the resurrection it is written:

Most assuredly I say to you, the hour is coming, and now is,  
when the dead will hear and will live. For as the father has life  
in Himself, so He has granted the Son of Man. Do not marvel  
at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves  
will hear His voice and come forth – those who have done good,  
to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the  
resurrection of condemnation. (New King James Version)

Mahapatra's journey into the myth and legend hidden in the architectural structures of the temples of Orissa is often entangled with both Hindu and Christian images. He submits himself to the stone in which he sees the divine. He looks for solace and comfort to free himself from the burden of his and his ancestors' guilt. Both his beginning and the end are encompassed in the sculptures and architecture. Mahapatra explains this ceaseless encounter with the stone, his great experience and his final achievement in the last Section:

In your dance is my elusive birth, my sleep  
that swallows the green hills of the land  
and the crows that quicken the sunlight in the veins,  
and the stone that watches my sadness fly in and out  
of my deaths, a spiritless soul of memory. (Mahapatra *Relationship* 38)

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## 34. Specificity of Gender Issues in the Contemporary Society and Vijay Tendulkar's plays: A Comparative study

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Before proceeding, it is important to reflect on research as a gendered practice. Science is a social enterprise, not created in a vacuum but influenced by societal opinions and politics. Gender roles have contributed to different research foci, methods, and epistemologies (Schlesinger, 1999). The fact that these changes have occurred emphasizes the socially constructed nature of research. In light of the gendered nature of the scientific process, it behooves us to consider not only the ways those conceptualizations of gender influence design but also the ways that our research processes and research institutions are imbued with gender bias like sex, gender is a multidimensional construct that refers to the different roles, responsibilities, limitations, and experiences provided to individuals. Gender builds on biological sex to give meaning to sex differences, categorizing individuals with labels such as woman, man, transsexual, and hijra. These categories are socially constructed, as humans both create and assign individuals to them. Thus, like sex, ideas about gender are also culturally and temporally specific and subject to change. Gender is often an amorphous concept. Gender roles can be described as social norms, or rules and standards that dictate different interests, responsibilities, opportunities, limitations, and behaviors for men and women (Johnson et al., 2007; Mahalik et al., 2003). Gender roles shape and constrain individuals' experiences; men, women, and other genders are treated differently and have diverse life trajectory Masculinity is a socially constructed component of gender that is typically associated with men and male characteristics, though this strict association has been problematized. Instead of associating masculinity with particular bodies, it is instead popularly theorized to be a range of behaviors, practices, and characteristics that can be taken up by anyone. For example, Halberstam (1998) has made the case for female masculinity. Masculinity is therefore not a singular concept; multiple and conflicting masculinities have been identified that have varying degrees of power and that are born from different social contexts (Connell, 2005).

The plight of Hindu Woman is peculiar. Sudhir Kakar a psychoanalyst points out “the mother whose partner in ritual trichotomy is crucial for understanding the culture’s public and official attitude towards females” (7/5/1985). A Hindu wife is honored as a mother to bear progeny for her husband and as a partner to him in performing religious rites. So Manu himself says, “Where women are honored there the Gods are pleased “but in our patriarchal society no such honor is given. Women are suppressed and exploited. That is why Kakar observes, she cannot thus even think of sex, as she feels completely exhausted by the end of the day. Moreover Jandhyala Kameswari points out “with women’s sexuality so closely bound with marriage and her role as wife and mother, there was no possibly of considering her sexual needs and desires” (25/11/1989). The essence of hindu culture tacitly conveys no sex in marriage please, we are Indian. So this pleasure was to be sought by men from courtesans well versed in the arts, women by definition did not fit into the society accepted norms of the respectable family women and with woman’s sexuality so closely bound with marriage and her role as a wife and mother. There was no possibility of considering her sexual needs and desires. Thus women are sexually oppressed. It is reflected in the concept of chastity, a patriarchal value. It is one of the most powerful yet invisible cultural fetters that have enslaved women for ages. There has been enough literature, both oral and written. glorifying the enslaving value and deifying the women characters who observed it faithfully. The Ramayana in which Sita under goes the fire ordeal to prove her chastity to Rama has been the cultural guide to Indian for more two thousand years. Jandhyala therefore observes “for emerging middle class culture, women’s sexuality subsumed within her reproductive role. Any other expression which transgressed this norm was perceived vile and wanton. That is why Miss Leela Benare in “Silence! The court Is In Session” is mercilessly attacked verbally in the name of mock – trial as she has committed fornication the sexual oppression of women by men, it is desired that women have a choice control over their bodies and lives.

Leela Benare, the central character who always wants her life to be free from care. Her joyful nature and innocent beauty that are not distorted by culture attract philanderers and this lands her in danger several times. In her teens, she is seduced and sexually exploited by her maternal uncle. In her strict house, in the prime of her unfolding youth, he was the one who has come close to her. She develops love, affection and attraction towards him. Benare is hardly fourteen then and does not know what is sin. Her mother opposes their marriage and her dream boy runs away. Without him life appears blank to her. So, she attempts suicide to embrace death. But neither her body nor her feelings die.

When she grows up with full maturity of mind, she falls in love with Prof. Damle. The consequence of the repeated mistake is pregnancy, “unmarried motherhood”. Marriage is ritual. It is a social contract, convenient arrangement in short. It forms the basis of the emotional society. Prof. Damle wants to have an extra marital sex. But he does not want to continue his relationship with her. The accusation brought against her at the beginning is infanticide. Because contemporary Indian society with its roots grounded firmly in reactionary ideas, cannot allow the birth of a child out of wedlock. What she has to say for herself is swallowed up by the silence imposed upon her by the authorities. In fact, during the court proceedings on several occasions, her objections and protestations are drowned by the judge’s cry of Silence! And the banging of the gavel. She is easily isolated and made the victim of the cruel game. Miss Benare’s private life is exposed publicly and dissected revealing her illicit love affair with Prof. Damle a married man with a family which has resulted in her pregnancy. But significantly he was absent at the trial, denoting his total withdrawal of responsibility, either social or moral. Even the friends of her also refused to marry her as she is bearing another man’s child. So she exposes the hypocrisy of people and laughs at their marital relationship. Men are permitted to have extra marital affairs so they will never be questioned nor ever they put to trial for their immoral activities. She refuses to be suffocated by social norms; she wants to let in the free air. Benare is a very good teacher with principles she wants the people to be brisk. She never takes the chance for disapproval. She likes her students very much, as they are so much better than adults. She was unable to bear the humiliations. She cannot digest the truth of being dismissed from her teaching profession. She loves her job. As a teacher she wants to be in the hearts of her innocent students who are free from all sorts of evil ideas and hypocrisy. But being a man, Prof. Damle is neither humiliated nor laughed at. This great scholarly professor has never been questioned about his immoral activities and nor he ever faced such a situation as Leela Benare has. Nobody says that he is unfit to be a professor. Here gender biased attitude can be seen.

Only women are victimized. Men, who are running after erotic pleasures, are blackening social and moral values. They are neither punished nor warned. But the educated Benare’s life is exposed. There are many men like Damle who is responsible for the destruction of the country and its culture and then why women alone should be punished.

The integration of the play within the play creates an additional dimension, where the demarcating line between reality and illusion is often blurred. Tendulkar concentrates on the relationship of the individual and the society. As every individual is the part and parcel of the society none can escape the plight of humiliation, where such situations arise. There is also the green cloth parrot and the lullaby that Benare sings. Both assume symbolic significance at the resolution of the play.

Tendulkar’s *Silence! The Court Is In Session* challenges the gender biased justice which favors men. In *Silence! The Court Is In Session* Leela Benare is humiliated and exposed for her unmarried motherhood; whereas Prof. Damle’s reputation is never questioned about. Even in Karnad’s *Nagamandala* Appanna is never questioned about his going to concubine by locking his wife. Leela Benare defends herself against the onslaught of the upholders of social norms in a long soliloquy, she says:

This body is a traitor! (She is writhing with pain). I despise this body - and I love it! I hate it - but- it's all you have, in the end, isn't it? It will be there. It will be yours. Where will it go without

you? And where will you go if you reject it? Don't be ungrateful. It was your body that once burnt and gave you a moment so beautiful, so blissful, so near to heaven! Have you forgotten? It took you high, high, high above yourself in to a place like paradise. Will you deny it? And now it carries within it the witness of that time — a tender little bud — of what will be a lisping, laughing, dancing little life —my son —my whole existence! I want my body now for him—for him alone .He must have a mother ... a father to call his own —a house —to be looked after —he must have a good name! (118)

What she has to say for herself is swallowed up by the silence imposed upon her by the authorities. In fact, during the court proceedings on several occasions, her objections and protestations are drowned by the judges cry banging of the gavel. Being different from the others, she is easily isolated and made the Victim of the cruel game, cunningly planned by her co-actors, during the course of the so-called 'game', which is meaningfully set in the form of a mock- trial. Miss Benares's private life is exposed and publicly dissected , revealing her illicit love affair with a Professor 'Damle' a married man with a family which has resulted in her pregnancy, Prof. Damle is significantly absent at the trial, denoting his total withdrawal of responsibility, either social or moral , for the whole situation in to which he has landed Miss Benare. During the trial he is summoned nearly as a witness while Benare remains the prime accused as the unwed mother of his illegitimate child. She requests Balu Rokde and Ponks he to marry her and save her from ignominy, but they are neither compassionate nor courageous. So they refused to marry her as she is bearing another man's child. Benare ridicules their diffidence. She is frank and open. She exposes the hypocrisy of people and laughs at their marital relationship. Men are permitted to have extra marital affairs so they will never be questioned, nor ever they be put to trial for their immoral activities. They cannot tolerate even the meager freedom that women are able to get through the leakage points of patriarchal culture. They feel envious of that small liberty.

They enjoy inflicting restrictions on women. Women's sexuality is limited to their motherhood within their marriage as Jandhyala Kameswari points out. Leela Benare strongly protests against this inhuman oppressions and demands freedom and right over her life to live her own way. She refuses to be suffocated by social norms. "Please open the window. It's become too hot for me."(57) She wants to let in the free air, the air freshness, Benare is a very good teacher with principles she want the people to be brisk. She has not heard a single reproach in her duties. She never gives the chance for disapproval. She likes her students very much, as they are so much better than adults. There is no nonsense stuff in their heads. "They do not scratch you till you bleed" (57) when she comes to know that she will be ousted from her job under the code of conduct, she says: "Who are these people to say what I can do or can't? My life is my own. I haven't sold it to any one for a job. My life is my own." (58)

In the mock-trial, Benare was unable to bear the humiliations. She cannot digest the truth of being dismissed from her teaching profession. She loves her job. As a teacher, she wants to be in the hearts of her innocent and ignorant students who are free from all sorts of evil ideas and hypocrisy. But being a man, Prof. Damle is neither humiliated nor laughed at. This great scholarly professor has never been questioned about his immoral activities and nor he ever faced such a situation as Leela Benare has. Nobody says that he is unfit to be a professor. Here gender biased attitude can be seen. In Naga-Mandala, Rani is compelled to take the snake ordeal to prove her chastity. Only women are victimized. Men, who are running after erotic pleasures, are blackening social and moral values. They are neither punished nor warned. But the educated Benares's personal life is exposed. There are many men like Appanna and Damle who is responsible for the destruction of the country and its culture and then why women alone should be punished. "Women bear the grave responsibility of building up the high values of society.

'Na stri swatantrya marhat? That is the rule laid down for us by the society. Freedom is restricted in women where as for men no such restrictions. At the age of thirty two, it is natural for Leela

Benare to possess a natural lust for life. She craves for love and affection for which she is denied. Prof. Damle cannot accept his illegally begotten child. Like Dushyanta, Damle does not like to accept his responsibility for his child that Leela Benare is carrying in her womb like Shakuntala. Our society, neither the intellectual society nor the menial society can accept a woman's mother hood without wed lock, it has always been considered a very great sin by our religion and our tradition But no religion and no tradition against the man who goes in an un lawful way .Even Mrs. Kashikar joins men in attacking her without any compassion. Like most of the women she supports patriarchal values though they harm women. That is why the cynics of feminism declare that women are the enemies of women. But this is only because women are urged for their survival to absorb, observe and propagate patriarchal culture as apdy argued by Srilata Badiwala in her brilliant article, "Why do women oppress women's?"Benare comments the hypocrites like Damle and others around her.

"These are the mortal remains of some cultured men of the twentieth century; see their faces how ferociously they look! Their lips are full of lovely worn-out phrases! And their bellies are full of unsatisfied desks."

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### **35. D.Venkatramaiah Kathalu: Problems while Translating his short stories into English**

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#### **Introduction**

The translation of a work of art from one language to another is not a new phenomenon in any literary field. The activity of translation is as old as original authorship. Many classics were translated from Greek and Latin into English. Even the English Bible is an attractive work of Translation. It is an extension of creative exercise in the same sense as critical act characterized by almost the same process. Translator is a creative reader-critic and not a failed writer or a disappointed author. He reads, interprets, criticizes and creates, for translation is a way of reading, interpreting, criticizing and in the same process creating a new text for those who have no access to literature in an alien language system. Translation is not only desirable but indispensable too in our obtaining circumstances. Life is too short to learn even the major languages of the world and enjoy their literatures. Hence, translation is the only potent vehicle of reaching out to those who do not have direct access to literature and knowledge in an alien language system. The ancient Indian literary heritage which expressed itself in Sanskrit, Prakrit and Apbhramsha etc. can be preserved and even rescued only if it is translated into modern Indian languages.

#### **Practical Problems**

The translator's first task is to understand the text, often to analyze, or at least make some generalizations about his text before he selects an appropriate method, so it is the business of translation theory to suggest some criteria and priorities for this analysis. First, the intention of a text:

The Translator, who has to be faithfully to the author and not to his own view of multinational companies, has to bear the intention of the original in mind through out his work. Second, the intention of the translator : Is he trying to ensure that the translation has the same emotional and persuasive charge as the original, and affects the reader in the same way as the original? Thirdly, the reader and the setting of the text, : The translator asks himself : Who is the reader? What education, class, age, sex ? Informed or ignorant, lay man or expert ? Where would the text be found, viz. What is the Target Language equivalent of the Source Language periodical, newspaper, text book etc.? All these help the translator to decide on the degree of formality, emotiveness and simplicity, which he must pursue when he works on the text. Fourthly, the quality of the writing and the authority of the text.

If the text is well written (i.e., the manner is as important as the matter, and all the words a vital component of the ideas), and/or if the Source Language writer is an acknowledged authority on his subject, the translator has to regard every nuance of the author's meaning (Particularly, if it is subtle and difficult) as having precedence over the response of the reader-assuming that the reader is not required to act or react promptly. The translation theorist is concerned from the beginning to the end with meaning. He is, however, not concerned with the theoretical problems and solutions of semantics, linguistics, logic and philosophy, but only with their applications in as far as they can help the translator solve his problem. First, the translator must assess whether the whole or a part of the text is 'straight' (means what it says), ironical (slightly or entirely opposite in meaning), or nonsensical. Secondly, the theorist has to decide which of the countless varieties of general meaning he has to take account of . Normally, the translator should write within his own idiolect or his

conception of the Source Language text author's, always provided the text appears to be written naturally. The translator must not use a word or phrase that sounds intuitively unnatural or artificial to him.

D.Venkatramaiah, a prolific writer, is one of the eminent writers in Telugu, who unmasked exploitation, atrocities on women and on the down-trodden through his pen pictures. One does not hesitate to say on a perusal of his short stories, that the writer embodies his social consciousness in his works. His picturisation of various situations, characters and their predicament and culture is photographic. His works reflect the real life situations of the people who are mal handled by the society. Thus, he exposed the exploitation of the under dog and the rotten political set up in the present day society and mirrored such other evils corroding into the vitals of the human society. Thus, he presented a true picture of the society. What Hermony Lee said of, Philip Roth in America (1984, Hermony Lee) can be said of the writer : "There is ferocious concentration and mental capacity : every thing is grist for his mill, no vagueness is tolerated, differences of opinion are pounced on greedy, and nothing that might be useful is let slip ....". The influence of Gurajada Appa Rao, Rachakonda Viswanadha Sastri and such other writers is visible in his short stories. Yet, he stamped his individuality and originality in his short stories.

The short story "Aakali"(Hunger) presented a very sad and miserable picture of a beggar and his helpless predicament. Though he went round from door to door, he could not get more than a fistful of stale rice. The beggar Narigadu, being thoroughly disheartened, reached the dilapidated thatched shed in the midst of the village where there was a broken statue of Mahatma Gandhi. Mahatma Gandhi stood for peace and non-violence. The murder committed by Raghavaiah, the village Munisif shows the wickedness and the cruelty that have universal significance. After all, the beggar was a poor creature. Though he was the direct witness to the incident, he did not dare to open his lips. This event is nothing but a replica of a phenomenon going on in the society at present. The picturisation is graphic and the language suits the situation.

The short story "The Rape" portrays a three-dimensional picture of the three unfortunate women namely Ramulamma, the wife of a rickshaw puller, Savithri, the wife of a middle class employee and Aruna, a call girl. All the male characters in the short story namely Ramigadu, the Rickshaw Puller, Babu Rao, a middle class employee and Partha Saradhi, a rich man – are highly self-centred and they do not think of the problems at the domestic front. They always think of themselves.

The short story "Man Eaters" represents the unfold suffering of a woman who are crushed under the legs of some brutal forces. All the male characters are highly sex hungered and do not have humane cultures and humanistic tint in them. No doubt, the short story is a masterpiece that exposed the brutality of male beings on a universal scale.

The short story "Velugunu Mingina Cheekati" (Darkness That Swallowed Night) holds a mirror to the contemporary society which was enervated by village politics. The author here portrays a village in which rioting were taking place very frequently for some reason or other destroying peaceful co-existence. The people in the village are fear stricken. There are two parties in a village headed by Rama Chandraiah, the Munisif and Ranga Rao, the President.

The short story "Tears" presents the pathetic predicament of an unmarried girl Syamala. Syamala has to shoulder the responsibility of three unmarried sisters and one unemployed brother. A co-employee of Syamala was trying to take the advantage of the predicament of Syamala. In fact, her co-employ who is selfish, greedy and money minded was taken aback. He did not have the idea of marrying her, but to derive sensual pleasure from her. He did not sympathise with her.

The short story "Oka Maranam-Oka Chavu" (Death is viewed in two ways) shows a clear cut line between the haves and have nots. The writer said that one is Maranam and the other is Chavu.

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The short story “Rice”(Biyyamu) portrays the profile of a servant of a landlord in a village. Though serving his land lord continuously and faithfully, he was unable to provide a handful of rice to fill the belly of his hunger stricken child and his starving wife. When he asked for rice, the landlord warned him and remarked that they would not die even if they did not have food for half a day. The landlord is merciless and unsympathetic. He does not know the suffering of the poor. The servant returned home empty handed.

The short story “Light” presents the revolting nature of a suppressed woman who was constantly harassed by her husband Ranga Rao. They have a son who is three years old. The boy resembled his mother Savithri. But, Ranga Rao always suspected the character of his wife and attributed illicit relation to his wife and a young lecturer who happened to be her co-student. She came away from dark and miserable life and saw the light of the day. She became a model to the suffering women setting an example of revolt.

The short story “Chali” (Cold) presented a vivid picture of a couple Kamala Devi and Raja Rao who lived in a different worlds.

In the short story “Aavu Gandrinchunu”, the writer unmasked the main character Rama Murthy, the Municipal Chairman. Rama Murthy pretended to be a savior of the world. But, ultimately, he was beaten for his misdeeds. The author revealed a list of his misdeeds. Giving some hints of his atrocities on women, the weaker sections of the society, especially, the hut dwellers who were vacated from their places to provide a play ground to the school.

Sri D.Venkatramaiah handled his themes, plots and characters very skillfully, cleverly and dexterously. He covered a large section of the society that was suffering from poverty, illiteracy and other maladies prevalent in the society such as caste, social status etc. He railed at the misdeeds of the moneyed class, the politically influenced, the socially advantageous and the mighty who suppressed the down-trodden keeping in view the social milieu of the so called under dog as Mulka Raj Anand did. No doubt, he is the champion of the under dog.

### **Problems I have faced**

The language and his style of Sri D.Venkatramaiah’s short stories are readable and easily understandable. The style is very forceful, effective and according to the situations and characters. In spite of all these traits, I faced a few problems while translating the titles into English. For example. “Aavu Gandrinchunu” (The Cow Roars). Here, the word “Gandrinchunu” (Roaring) is applicable to a tiger. The main character, Rama Murthy, the Municipal Chairman, is a typical politician who appeared to be a gentleman but in reality he like a tiger that waits and kills animals and human beings. He appeared to be a cow like but in reality he is like a tiger. So, the title holds good. The title can not be easily translatable. Another title “Oka Maranam – Oka Chavu” (Death is viewed in two ways) draws a distinction between the rich and the poor. Oka Maranam represents the death of a grandmother of a Minister. Oka Chavu represents the death of the wife of a poor fellow who did not have a pie in his hand to perform the funeral of his wife.

### **Conclusion:**

The language used by illiterate characters is also not easily translatable. To get over these problems, I have used transliteration where necessary. Where pun is by the writer, I have given two interpretations to make the situation understandable. On the whole, we can say that we can translate stories into English with so much of ease and comfort and drive the point home.

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### 36. Search for Meaning of Life: A Postmodern Reading of Walker Percy's *The Moviegoer*

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The term Postmodernism was used in the 1930's but it is Jean Francois Lyotard first gave importance through his work *The Postmodern Condition: A report on knowledge* (1979). Postmodernism is a way of representation in art, where as Post modernity is a condition of mind it is a concept of describing our social, economic, political and cultural conditions. This postmodernism first appeared in architecture. It was started by an American architecture Charles Jencks. Modernism is the movement which dominated the arts and culture of the first half of the twentieth century. It unsettled and demolished the pre-twentieth century. It was a kind of earthquake which occurred in Vienna during 1890-1910 as its effects were felt in France, Germany, Italy and finally in England, in art movements like Cubism, Dadaism, Surrealism and Futurism. It rejected traditional realism in the novel, in the form of plots and third person narratives to accept experimental forms, such as stream of consciousness. Period of high modernism occurred from 1910 to 1930 and represented by T. S. Eliot, Joyce, Ezra Pound Virginia Woolf and Wallace Stevens, Kafka, Proust and among others.

Postmodernism is said to be both historically and conceptually different from modernism or theories rooted in modernity. It is a rupture with the past, an essential step taken from 'modernity'. Theories vigorously established in modernity were said to be included in Durkheim's sociology, Marxism, functionalism, feminism and other 'grand narratives'. Narratives are 'stories' which provides people with values. In addition to that, narratives will give explanations, distinguish causes and chains of events. When we read something we can anticipate how the events will unfold within that narrative. Grand narratives are 'big theories' which strive to speak out the movements in history, as well as giving us advice on how people lead their lives, what to think and how to think it.

Walker Percy is one of the most highly regarded authors that the American South brought into the literature. A central concern of the critical discussion surrounding his oeuvre has been his indebtedness to the literary and cultural traditions of his region. Percy's life-punctuated with psychological, physical and spiritual dilemma was the largest piece in his fictions. At the time of his death Percy had become a luminary not only among the Southern novelists but the mainstream of America also. Percy's first novel, *The Moviegoer*, which was published in 1961, won the National Book Award in 1962. While Percy has repeatedly distanced himself from attempts to categorize him as a "Southern" writer in the tradition of Faulkner critics continue to demonstrate the presence of significant elements of the Southern cultural tradition in his writing

Through *The Moviegoer* Percy introduces his theme search for meaning of life, which he proceeds with in his later novels. Modern man, who is in the state of alienation, tries to get rid of his despair through entertainments like films and fornication. The more he tries to free himself from the clutches of despair through these acts, the more frustrated he becomes. Ideologies like stoicism and religions like Christianity have lost their hold on modern man. He is in the rat race to make him financially fit. According to Percy, the sole way to ward off alienation is to be in rapport with others and to share love through marriage.

The idea of search first occurs to Binx Bolling in the moviegoer when he got consciousness after being shot in Korea and notices a dung beetle scratching around under the leaves; it is the experience of seeing things new. It happens again he examines his pile of pocket items on his bureau and sees them for the first time. "They might have belonged to someone else" (Percy, *Moviegoer*, 11). It is this flip of recognition which sets him on the search. Because he is anyone, he is not himself. He further defines it this way the search is what anyone would undertake if he were not sunk in the everydayness of his own life. This morning, for example, I felt if I had come to myself on a strange

island. And what does such a castaway do? Why, he pokes around the neighborhood and he does not miss a trick (Percy, *Moviegoer*, 13). His mind leaps onward, “To become aware of the possibility of the search is to be onto something. Not to be onto something is to be in despair” (Percy, *Moviegoer*, 13). Now, he has not seen the neutral zone in which he has been operating but has witnessed what can come of despair. Percy quotes Kierkegaard in the prologue to *The Moviegoer* “the specific character of despair is precisely unaware of being despair.” This unconscious despair is at the heart of the malaise and its realization to the perceptions which lead to the search.

‘When Binx put on the question, what do you seek god? You ask with a smile,’ Binx attitude is serious, not smart (Percy, *Moviegoer*, 13). He continues to examine, citing the opinion polls of mass man, according to which 98% of the population are believers. “Have 98% of the Americans already found what I seek or, are they so sunk in everydayness that not even the possibility of a search has occurred to them?” (Percy, *Moviegoer*, 14). Without verbalizing it, what Percy’s character seems to be saying is that perhaps the 98% have accepted, not discovered God and the meaning of existence that is matter for intense investigation the purpose of a lifetime, not secured once and the forgotten. It can be lost, such as Binx’s case, or rediscovered and intensified an active pursuit of many dimensions.

Binx who is moviegoer because the movies he had seen all are onto the search and they constitute a part of his wandering, part of his investigation, even if, according to Binx, movies may set their hero or heroine on a search, but at the end they leave them sunk in the same everydayness. Binx used to observe the movies how these will inspire and provide new perspective. He seems to be watching movies again and again, for remembering and finding clues of his past experiences. The movies become part of his search, just as everyone he sees or meets become part of it. He has intense awareness of his life, he shares everything with Kate, whom he hopes to snatch from the pit of her despair. His search is at first vertical viewing life from the perspective of universe, a scientific investigation emanating from his reading. He realizes that he can discover the universe, but ‘I myself was left over.’ He progresses to what he calls his horizontal search, which causes him to wander seriously and sit and read as a diversion. He constantly looks for clues not only in movies but in his past from his half brothers and sisters. What makes Binx unlike so many other existentialist heroes or anti heroes is that his search is not merely a self centered investigation. He has great compassion for each person he touches. He seems to understand even those with whom he does not agree, and his ironic observations are warmed with compassion. “And there I have lived ever since, solitary and in wonder, wondering day and night, never a movement without wonder. Now and then my friends stop by, all gotten up as young eccentrics with their beards and bicycles, and down they go into the quarter to hear some music and find some whores and still I wish them well. As for me, I stay home with Mrs. Schexnaydre and turn TV, not that I like TV so much, but it does not distract me from the wonder. That is why I cannot go to trouble they go to. It is distracting, and not for five minutes will I be distracted from the wonder” (Percy, *Moviegoer*, 42)

Binx comes to himself by becoming conscious of how he is both alienated from and involved in the world around him. When he perceives the contents of his pocket as foreign, he discovers himself as other, detached from his surroundings, standing over and above t\his belongings. Percy’s stockbroker is amazed to behold the opposite of the greedy self dispossession. Binx sees not absorption but differentiation. Lost in his everyday world so that there was virtually no difference between himself and his wallet full of credit cards, identity cards and library cards, he now views the wallet as wallet, keys become not the means for taking a seductive spin to the Gulf Coast but car keys is restored to being a slide rule at last

Once Binx recognizes the space between himself and the discrete boundaries of his too common property, the everyday once again becomes available and valuable to him. His few sense of detachment is thus balanced by a renew awareness of his bonds with cosmos, a nexus made concrete

by the mysterious pile of object that are at once familiar but at the same time full of clues. If he examines his belongings with impartial gaze of a detective inspecting a dead man's possessions, he also scrutinizes them with the fascination of one searching for a solution. These signs of his existence now on Wednesday morning and here in New Orleans tease him with meaning and implicate him in the very world from which he is set apart.

Binx has awakened on Wednesday morning to a new era. Binx's apocalypse at the beginning of the novel is actually his second coming. He claims that his search first began not on Wednesday morning but years before. He felt the kind of revelation that comes not by personal force but by having the world forced into his face with the surprise of its gratuitous existence. 'Perhaps there was a time when everydayness was not too strong and one could break its grip by brute strength,' he speculates. "Now nothing breaks it but disaster (Percy, *Moviegoer*, 145). In becoming aware of the insect, Binx discovered his own consciousness after the war, however, he lost the urgency to explore his life under the threat of death until the sleeper finally rose from his living death on Wednesday morning.

Binx sees how the cast of characters in *The Moviegoer* suffers from the same loss of self and the world that has emptied his own life, New Orleans seems more a cemetery than a city, "For some time now the impression has been growing upon me that everyone is dead," Binx strangely says. "It happens when I speak to people, in the middle of a sentence it will come over me: yes, beyond a doubt this is dead" (Percy, *Moviegoer*, 99). Percy fills the novel with a large number of such living dead so that the world seems need general resurrection. On his search Binx continuously meets these bit players just long enough to record the image of their anxiety, for he is as much movie camera as moviegoer. But if he seems to be the last person after an apocalyptic plague, he judges the lifeless souls around him with considerable tolerance. His sympathy is appropriate because he is guilty of everything that he condemns in the other dramatis personae.

Binx's father serves as a sign of how dangerous the quest may be. "Any doing of my father, even his signature, is in the nature of a clue in my search," he explains (Percy, *Moviegoer*, 71). On Friday, Binx never gets to see his father's signature on the deed to the swampland that has become his patrimony, although he takes Sharon along on the pretext of having her copy the title. Instead, Dr. Bolling's whole life, not just his signature, becomes a sign of how the search can find a false end in virtual suicide. Binx has almost inherited his irony, anxiety and despair from his brooding father, but Dr. Bolling turned this perpetual discontent into the cause of his own judgment. Binx recognition of God's trickery finally turns him toward God. If the only sign is the lack of interest in signs, Binx transforms human carelessness about God into a testimony of the divine presence, the mind can only be indifferent to God because God already exists. When we surrender to god the purpose of the life will be meaningful and when we completely believe in god a man would become a perfect man.

Postmodernism is a broad term which will deal with many aspects in literature, postmodernism is a reflection or reaction to the modernism, it shows the things missed by the modernists, postmodernists tries to explore them in written literature, out of which search for meaning is a wide term or theme we come across in many times. Here in the novel *The Moviegoer* the journey of protagonist's (Binx) search pay the way to get the meaning in his life. Binx is a lazy man who fond of seducing his personal secretaries and spending much time to enjoy himself by watching movies. Once he realized himself and starts his search for existence, at the movement he believes in god he gets the meaningful life.

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### 37. Role of Myths in the Work of Namita Gokhale

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#### Introduction

Indian writers and their play rights makes an extensive use of traditions, myths and legends. Namita Gokhale plays vividly demonstrate this trends with her mythological works. She is the famous writers who wish to retell the roots of Indian myth, tradition and culture and create a rich and vibrant picture of Indian society for the contemporary society. There are also helpful to recollect the importance of values, traditions and human strengths. India is a society where it exhibits a kind of unique in its form and essence of representing the peoples with their experiences and beliefs. Myths are representing the values and principles of life, rules and regulations of society. Namita Gokhale has time to represent our tradition, taking inspiration from mythology.

Namita Gokhale's inspiration from the rich tradition of India's past and weaves it through the web of his imagination and understanding into the mythical works of her own. Her first mythological work Puffin Mahabharata is a story of retelling the great epic Mahabharata. The mythical story is a tale of responsibilities, sacrifice and self-realization. It is simplified the epic into 176 small tales with rich illustrations with animation by artist. The total story was narrated by Suta, a storyteller, who was inspired by the valor and sacrifice of Vaisampayana and a disciple of Vyasa. It is the story of Pandavas and Kauravas, the hundred and five brothers and cousins who grew up playing up the same games and learning from the same teachers. Yet they were so different in the way of understanding and presenting is totally rich, which is created especially for children aged between five to twelve years at the extensive store. The narration starts with the origin of Suta's Mahabharata and goes on to narrate the tales of princess Ganga and king Santanu of Hastinapura, the tale of Satyawati, Amba, the birth of Kauravas and Pandavas, Karna, the arrival of Lord Krishna and the battle of Kurukshetra in small 500 word sketches. The author struggles a long time of six years to retell the story with illustrations and credited with important experiences. It had totally different in the library full of different versions of Mahabharata from the past.

Another important mythological work is 'In Search of Sita: Revisiting Mythology' is the anthology of essays. It depicts the diversity of Indian many Sita's from its protean, culturally authentic and specially inspiring for a gender approach to mythological understanding. She speaks not for women but also for the people, one who insist on the power. It is also wish to center the Sita's voice and her authority. As a daughter of Earth ,She is touched by anguish of morality and also both conformist and mystic real. This is the story of great women character as a symbol of strength for Indian womanhood. She is worshipped for her strength and matchless sacrifice at any time.

Third mythological work is 'Shakuntala', it is an attempt of reciting Kalidasa's Shakuntala. It portrays the aspects of Hindu mythology and gives the beliefs in rebirth. The notions of rebirth and birth- cycle are described through the life of Shakuntala. It is also exhibit equality in the position of women with men. It's main attention given on the freedom of women and also it is a quest of woman in the Hindu scriptures. She use language in very conversational, lively, every day vocabulary and profusely mix together with Sanskrit words. In this story Shakuntala discard her husband and later her Greek lover and is too slothful to stake her honour or claim justice. It is also a misleading, masquerading and utterly pathetic attempt at recalling the Sanskrit epic. The writer's use of legends, history, philosophy, religion or feminist thought are either contrived or misinformed. A tale of a provincial woman's quest for adventure, travel, sexual fulfillment and bitterness at shackles of domesticity and denial of access to education carries within it an immense potential for social comment with interplay of history, legend and contemporary life. But Gokhale stop her art by meandering into surreal dreams, long rhetorical verses and pedantic style, dotted with Sanskrit words

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and their literal equivalents in English. Through this she tries to blend different mythologies and try to project the positive and negative shades of human life with the attempt of feministic views.

In *The Book of Shiva*, Namita Gokhale explains how the month of saw an pertains to Shiva and seven things about Lord Shiva which is unknown to the world. The first of the series concentrate on the origins of Shiva and rest of the story gives an account of traditional essence with Trisul and Damru. It is very popular because of its complexity in its creation of the character. She begins with a quick introduction and the moves on to and various aspects of Shiva in individual chapters with variety of manifestations. She clearly creates a very important conversation between Parvati and Shiva with feministic views. She also recreates a conversation between Gods upon the role of sati, and its warped ages and the role of woman in the society. It is a classic brief study of Shiva which provides extremely happy to the readers.

### **Conclusion**

India's too most enduring epics, the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, inform both the classical traditions. Mythology remains a constant on Indian best seller list. The continuous examination and reinterpretation of enduring epics, which tend to categorize myth as a static area of study. The interaction between ancient stories and contemporary writings has defer an out pouring of writings. It is a unique privilege to be in the high of the storm of this literary reexplosion of one of the most ancient continuous cultures in the world. Namita Gokhale creates a unique texture with her passion and illuminating today's literary life. She excels in the writings of mythological works through the evolutionary presentation.

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### **38. Philosophical Perceptions of Humour in Selected Novels of R.K.Narayan**

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Humour means something funny and enjoyable. It is the tendency of particular cognitive experiences to provide laughter and amusement. Wit and humor denotes species of the comic. Wit is the mental faculty of intelligence or inventiveness. R. K. Narayan uses his wit to produce humour in his novels. The term “humour” or humor derives from the humoral medicine of the ancient Greeks, which stated that, a mix of fluids known as “humor’s Greek. “Chymos”, literally means juice or sap, metaphorically flavor and control human health and emotion. Good humour is a cheerful, friendly; attitude wit and wisdom are inextricably connected.

Philosophers agree that the wisest man is one who is most carefree who can take whatever comes his way with understanding and good humour and even more ordinary mortals known that laughter is the best medicine. The ability to laugh freely and frequently at humorous and pleasurable events is healthy and desirable, since, “Humour is not a gift of the mind it is a gift of the heart” (Gore, 1991). Philosophy of humor by Joshua Shaw (2010) says that humour is an understudied topic in philosophy. However there has been a flurry of interest in the subject over the past few decades. The article outlines the major theories of humor. It argues for the need for more publications on humor by philosophers more specifically. It suggests that humour may not be a well understood phenomenon by questioning a widespread consensus in recent publications namely that humour can be detached from laughter. It is argued that this consensus relies on a cognitive account of emotion.

According to John Morreall (2009) develops an inclusive theory that integrates psychological, aesthetic and ethical issues relating to humour offers an enlightening and accessible foray into the serious business of humour. It reveals how the standard theories of humour fail to explain its true nature and actually support traditional prejudices against humour as being antisocial, irrational and foolish. Humor benefits overlap significantly with those philosophies includes a fore word by Robert Mankoff, Cartoon editor of “The New Yorker”

Aaron Smut’s analysis the encyclopedia of philosophy that humour theories can be classified into three groups’ incongruity, superiority and relief theories. Incongruity theory is the leading approach and includes historical figures such as Immanuel Kant, Soren Kierkegaard and perhaps has its origin in comments made by Aristotle in the rhetoric. Primarily focusing on the object of humour, as a response to any incongruity, a term used to include ambiguity, logical impossibility and irrelevance in appropriateness. Thomas Hobbes, a superiority theorists said that humor arises from a “sudden glory” felt when we recognize our supremacy over others. Plato and Aristotle are generally considered superiority theorists, who emphasize the aggressive feelings that fuel humour. The relief theory is typically associated with Sigmund Freud and Herbert Spencer, who saw humour as fundamentally a way to release or save energy generated by repression.

Humour plays an important role in the lives and life views of characters in R.K. Narayan’s works, which are a microcosm of the life around us. We may be able to perceive some of them on our own but not as humorously as Narayan. His works provide strong insights and keen observations of characters and situations with philosophical perceptions of humour. Almost every major figure in the history of philosophy has proposed a theory, but after 2500 years of discussion there has been little consensus about what constitutes humor. Despite the number of thinkers who have participated in the debate, the topic of humor is currently understudied in the discipline of philosophy. There are only a few philosophers currently focused on humor-related research, which is most likely due to two factors: the problems in the field have proved incredibly difficult, inviting repeated failures, and the subject is erroneously dismissed as an insignificant concern. Nevertheless, scope and significance of the study of humor is reflected in the interdisciplinary nature of the field, which draws insights from

philosophy, psychology, sociology, anthropology, film, and literature. It is rare to find a philosophical topic that bears such direct relevance to our daily lives, our social interactions, and our nature as humans.

**Theory of perception:** Immanuel Kant, the 18<sup>th</sup> century German Philosopher whose most prominent work 'The critique of Pure Reason' 1781, is an investigation into the structure of reason. Kant argues that experience, values and the meaning of life will be purely subjective with first being subsumed under pure reason, while using reason without applying it to experience will only lead to theoretical illusion. Kant also defines his theory of perception in his Critique, maintaining that our understanding of the external world had its foundations not merely in experience, but in priori concepts as well.

Kant asserts that experience is based both upon the perception of external objects and prior knowledge. The external world, he writes, provides those things which we sense. It is our mind, though, that processes this information about the world and gives it order, allowing us to comprehend it. Our mind supplies the conditions of space and time to experienced objects. According to the 'transcendental unity of a perception' the concepts of the mind (understanding) and the perceptions or intuitions that garner information from are linked together.

Several centuries later the English Philosopher, Thomas Hobbes gave more clearly the idea that humor is an expression of superiority. In his 1651 Leviathan, he defined humor as the sudden glory arising from the sudden conception of some eminency in ourselves, by comparison with the infirmity of others. In the 17<sup>th</sup> Century, Blaise Pascal, a French scientist and philosopher, proposed, "Nothing produces laughter more than a surprising disproportion between that which one expects and that which one sees. "In 1750 the Scottish philosopher, Frances Hutcheson further developed what has come to be known as the incongruity theory. In his reflections upon laughter Hutcheson pointed out that people do not go to asylums to laugh at the "inferior" beings, nor do they laugh at animals except when they resemble human beings. Even when someone slips on a banana peel because they feel superior as there is incongruity between expectations and reality.

Philosophical perceptions of humour in R.K. Narayan's novels can be appreciated for his concepts involve in depth research with many angularities of literary perceptions. The highest level of research has exhibited the range of literary ideas which had gone up to the extent of scientific verification of ideas in the right kind of grits and guts coupled with intellectual powers. The novels written by R.K. Narayan chosen to elaborate on philosophical perceptions of humour are "Mr. Sampath-The Printer of Malgudi", "The Financial Expert", "The Man Eater of Malgudi" and "The Painter of Signs". Different situations, narratives, thought and dialogues have been taken into consideration to perceive humour philosophically in his works.

In the novel 'Mr. Sampath-The Printer of Malgudi' (1949) Narayan narrates an incident throwing light on the superstitious beliefs prevalent in India. "In this country sir, one does not know when a religious susceptibility is likely to be hurt, a mere sneeze will take you to the stake something, better be on the safe side" said the Priest, when they were about to start shooting of the film (p132). An auspicious moment is chosen to start the shooting of film on the sets. Everything including the camera was garlanded. De Mello the cameraman cries out, saying that it may get damaged. The priest believes in superstition and says that even a sneeze at the auspicious moment would upset the whole thing. To ward off evil spirit, prayer ceremony is very important in India. R.K. Narayan's description of the situation with sentimental beliefs of common man evokes humour. In the novel "Mr. Sampath" (1949) Narayan explains about the life of the printer. "It (The Banner) is only concerned with the war that is always going on between man's inside and outside.... It struck him as an odd mixture of the sublime and the ridiculous. (6) Srinivas writes articles for the weekly

edition called 'The Banner'. There is always a struggle going on in the mind of a person about life. Mind and heart clash and make a person more confused and indecisive.

In the critical essay by S.C. Harrex, 1969, p 69-82 'The Printer of Malgudi' was published as 'Mr. Sampath' in 1949. It is not the most accomplished of R.K. Narayan's novels and its action, though very funny at times is a representation of life which is both amusing and true. However, considered from the point of view of Narayan's development as a comic artist, 'The Printer of Malgudi' is an interesting transitional work and it complements the enlarged consciousness of life. In devising a parabolic setting for the comedy of in the novel, Narayan extended his imaginative horizons. The plot is a deliberate parody pastiche of conventional situations in popular romantic fiction. On this basis Narayan entertainingly exploits the more external and dramatic qualities of comedy, especially farce, burlesque, satire and caricature. The description of Ravi's fatal disruption of the film is straight out humorous.

Narayan uses some of the more popular devices of comic style. Appropriately, the account reads like a film script conception of the kind of a fast moving abortive situation dearly beloved in the film industry. Although this scene was not in the script it would fit nicely into a slap stick comedy. Hence the cliché's piercing cry like an animal's "whizzing past like a bullet", ran helter-skelter, sudden incongruity and deflated malignity and general confusion. If the comedy of 'The Printer of Malgudi' operated only on this obvious level however, the novel would be less interesting than it is and not nearly so relevant to an appreciation of Narayan's comic art. 'The Printer of Malgudi' is a fable as well as a farce, that it is conceived like life, against a legendary back ground. Editor Srinivas' humane and comic endeavors are seen in the Buddha episode, with its moral of compassion based on the universality of human suffering. "The fable of the extremes meeting in the cobra and the frog provides an analogy, humorously discrepant, of some of the relationships in the novel. Narayan relates comedy at the deepest levels, to life. Adept at humorously revealing the general in the particular, Narayan achieves his parabolic comedy in characteristic Indian terms. Another Narayan's quality which complements his comic imagination is the capacity to experience, great wonder and the multitudinousness and vastness of the whole picture of life". At the same time it is a capacity which he is capable of treating ironically.

Narayan has created in this figure a type which is unique in the world of literature. Margayya's life seems to be shaped around a settled routine, which is disrupted in the middle part of the novel and then reinstated as a kind of reaffirmation of an older social order at the end. However his entrepreneurialism makes him an untypical Narayan protagonist in some ways and his character both embodies and challenges traditional values. The first part of the novel shows him preoccupied with his image, a motif that suggests low self-esteem and there are repeated references to spectacles and other signifiers of sight, which foreground his sense that identity is constructed by perception, both self perception and the views of others.

"..... It was due to bargains like yours that no industry ever found it possible to raise its head in our country". (Narayan, 1949, 5-65) The house owner belonged to an older generation and because of poverty, he had to bargain while buying things. Srinivas reacts to this and says that it is because of bargaining no cloth industry has come up. "The traffic was held up for half an hour when Babu's procession passed. Babu sat with the top of his head shaved, with diamonds sparkling on his ear lobes and rose garland round his neck in a taxi." Babu's first day to school is described by Narayan humorously. Parents feel very proud to send their ward to school. Similarly Margayya took Babu in a procession to school, thinking that one day he would become a great person.

"You will be called a useless donkey by the whole world" Margayya said." (Narayan, 1949, p 112) Margayya gets very upset when his son could not pass the tenth exam; he calls him a useless donkey as all his dreams are shattered. Technique of using animal imaginary makes us laugh.

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“It began to look like a shot down crow with broken wings”. (Narayan describes about his attachment towards an umbrella). ( 66,145) Margayya was an umbrella devotee and was very possessive about it. He would not lend it to anybody. His old umbrella was damaged. The author compares it to a shot down crow with broken wings. The technique of comparison of an umbrella with dead crow is very amusing. R.K. Narayan, as a humorist in Sociological perspective further says in the novel ‘The Vendor of sweets’ (1967) about Jagan a sweet vendor. Mali was insisting to have a phone at home but Jagan says that Malgudi being a small town everyone is within shouting distance and there is no need to waste money on telephone.

In R.K. Narayan’s novel “The Financial Expert” (1958, 18) The secretary gives a warning to Margayya an accountant by saying “When every earth worm pretends that it is a cobra and tries to sway it’s hood..... I’ll nip off your head as well as your tail”. The secretary threatens Margayya to vacate the place or he would be punished. He compares him to an earthworm pretending to be a cobra. The technique of comparison in his narrations is humorous. “The only noise in the world now seemed to be the crunching of coconut between Margayya’s jaws. It is like the sound of wooden wheels running over a sandy bed”. These lines describes about Margayya’s visit to the temple. Inside the temple it was very peaceful, even a slight noise would give a echo. When Margayya started munching coconut its noise was like a cart running on a sandy bed. The technique used by Narayan is hilarious. “He warned us, if you fall off into the gutter you will find yourself in the Sarayu river” (Narayan 1958, p27, 31). Raju’s teacher warned the children that if they fell into the gutter they would be found in the Sarayu river. The imagination of the situation tickles the funny bone of the reader.

Margayya’s financial dealings seem to be much motivated by an attempt to promote himself into a new, money-based aristocracy as by a desire to acquire wealth for his own sake. In the book ‘R.K. Narayan’ – Thieme, John (2010,79) says that Margayya comes from a less respectable Malgudi background and lives in Vinayak Madali Street on the edge of the town situated between Kabir Street and Market road. It is like the shade under the banyan tree which is claimed sanctified, but viewed from another perspective it is a location which receives attention from municipal authorities during elections. Margayya’s attitude towards money involves a shifting perspective that enables the novel to present its debate on finance and business ethics. Aspects of Indian modernity and tradition rolled in the character of Margayya are one of Narayan’s most psychologically complex characters. The publishing project suggests the possibility of rapprochement between Goddess Laxmi and Saraswathi which brings out comedy.

Margayya’s attempts to secure exam success for his son are also comic, but are more exclusively directed towards Saraswathi, even if vicariously through Balu a school boy who makes a reluctant scholar like Swami seem positively studious. Balu’s education which becomes Margayya’s overriding obsession is given comic treatment by R.K. Narayan. Balu tears up the note book in which his school marks are recorded and throws it in the gutter.

A scene from the novel “The Man Eater of Malgudi” (1968, 52) has been taken into account to bring out humour in day to day activities. When Nataraj the printer of Malgudi was returning to Malgudi by bus, he could see activities of his co-passengers, somebody was yawning noisy irritating others, few people were asking for how long is the bus going to stop at the circle and few others were pestering the bus driver to reach Malgudi before it gets dark. Nataraj ‘The Printer’ asks Vasu, a taxidermist about the permit to kill animals in the forest to which he replies that the tiger did not mind the informality and laughed it off. “Every rakshasa gets swollen with his own ego” (1968,94-120) Shastri, Nataraj’s assistant gives all the definitions of a rakshasa to Nataraj and says that every rakshasa gets proud of his ego and unconquerable feeling, but sooner or later it has to get destroyed .

Nataraj told his wife not to send the little fellow to his office as he would be shot by Vasu (The Man Eater). She gets very nervous and quickly bolts the back door and behaves as if a monster is rushing to swallow up the family. 'He had one virtue, he never hit anyone with his hand, whatever the provocation, that fist was meant to batter thick panels of teak and iron, he had to conserve all that might for his own destruction (1968,240). Vasu was known as the man eater of Malgudi for his bad deeds but he had one virtue that is, he never hit anybody with his own hand when irritated. He would rather use his fist to smash thick panels of teak and iron. Sastri ironically says that he had to conserve all the energy for his own destruction. When the mosquitoes were squatting on his brow, he used his hand to kill them and thus his life came to an end by killing himself by the force of his hand. The comic character illustrated in the novel "Show the Technique of Close Observation of Nature" reveals the maturity and vision of Narayan. He is a keen observer and critic who threw over his character with different kinds of humour. Uncertainty is the technique used to make the story amusing and interesting with the times of the events that place out of unexpected. The emotion of anger to produce drollery is a great achievement of Narayan. He has innate quality of producing laughter in the simple succession of events or some unlooked for accident, without any absurdity of character of situation.

The situation narrated in the novel "The Painter of Signs" (1977, 25) tickles the funny bone when Raman, the painter paints a new name plate of a lawyer and kept it for drying. There was a strong wind because of which sand settles on it, when the paint was still wet. The lawyer yells at Raman saying whether he should start his career with dirt on his name. "Past is gone, Present is going, and tomorrow is day after tomorrow's yesterday so why worry about anything. God is in all this." Tidbits of humour are seen in the philosophy of life. Humour lessens our difficulties.

Raman the painter paints the name board of a lawyer with erect letters but the lawyer objects and orders him to write in slanting letters, to which he says that it is suitable for oil merchant and soap sellers. The lawyer believed more in astrologer than the painter (5). For a gullible man, words spoken by an astrologer are golden and he follows blindly. The auspicious moment stressed by astrologer is given more importance. Irony in the situation is humorous.

In the novel 'The Painter of signs' (1977) Narayan tells us about a painter. Raman was a voracious reader of books. He goes into philosophy of reading habits of men. Different characters of book worms put a smile on the reader. "It's not like these days when people are afraid of children. The house was full in those days" said Aunt. (17-19)

Raman's aunt hints at the olden days where the house was full with many children and they would obey elders. Now- a- days a child frightens the parents and blackmails them. Reversal in the role of parents and children chuckles the reader. Message on population control tickles the funny bone of the reader. Raman feels that bonus should be given to the bachelors for they are contributing towards population control by not marrying. (Narayan, 1977, 30) Daisy wanted to control the population by adopting various methods. Raman thought that Daisy is only worried about birth control and not death, or she would pester Yama, God of death to take away more people every day. The thought amuses the reader in this concept.

The philosophical perception of humour is clearly depicted in the above narrations of different novels written by R.K. Narayan. The follies and absurdities that characters play in R.K. Narayan's novels afford amusement which end in laughter. His novels reflect the absurdities and incongruities of the modern Indian society in a fictional form which is truly ironic in nature. Comedy has been used from its inception as an art form to reveal to the masses the evil inherent in their society. The basic aim is to utilize comedy as a genre to wipe out the corruption. He preferred dealing with the ordinary folks in a society to reveal his readers the dichotomy inherent in the Indian culture. But there is subtle difference between Western comedy and Narayan's comedy because his works are deeply embedded in Indian philosophy. An attempt has been made to discuss the perceptions of humour in the

situations, descriptions, narrations and dialogues resulting in philosophical evolution in various novels written by R.K Narayan leading to the improvement of thought on human life.

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### 39. The Great Indian Novel: An Artifact of Cultural Significance

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*The Great Indian Novel* by Shashi Tharoor, a postcolonial novel raises some pertinent questions regarding the country's status during the Indian independence struggle, in the backdrop of the legendary text, *The Mahabharata*. The author's selection of the great epic to re-frame the history of India is a fact that reiterates the class and caste conflict. The novel accounts for the oppressed Indians in the hands of the British, and records the annexation of the princely state of Hastinapur to the British Raj. The British trying to introduce the new language, industries and other such social, economic and political reforms for the benefit of the Indians to enable them towards self-governance was a strategic policy of the British to leave their impression forever over the places they colonized. Tharoor's *The Great Indian Novel* enquires about the historical picture presented about India, due credits to the colonial rule. As a champion of peace and humanitarian values, Tharoor could easily interrogate the inequalities observed during *the Mahabharata* time as well as the oppression of the Indians by the British. A cultural study of *The Great Indian Novel* is to interpret the signs of culture as part of a power struggle. If we consider the *Mahabharata* as a cultural artifact, it generates various meanings to the Indian society. "*The Mahabharata has not only influenced the literature, art, sculpture and painting of India but it has also moulded the very character of the Indian people. Characters from the Great Epic... are still household words (which) stand for domestic or public virtues or vices...in India a philosophical or even political can hardly be found that has no reference to the thought of the Mahabharata.*" (C.R.Deshpande, Transmission of the Mahabharata Tradition) Thus, the great epic reinforces certain ideologies and principles and it has become a part of a discourse, India. *The Great Indian Novel*, a political allegorical account based on *the Mahabharata*, satirizes the events, the characters of the great epic as to put forward the Indian independence struggle, questioning the common Indian's reverential attitude towards the legendary characters. It could be Bhishma or Gandhi, Tharoor leaves no stone unturned to throw light on the weaknesses of the two heroic personalities, thus shifting the readers' mind towards adopting a new, logical thinking. The character of Gandhi is questioned on the issues of principles and partition of the nation.

Ved Vyas, the narrator as he narrates his story, it slowly takes the form of the *song of Modern India*. The postcolonial work thus presents Vyasa as not only the narrator of the story, but also as a retired politician. As the Vyasa of the *Mahabharata*, the narrator here also is responsible for the creation and fortitude of the other characters also. He obeys his mother Sathyavathi's instructions and as a result we see the birth of Dhritarashtra, Pandu and Vidur. The age old practice of Niyoga is carried out with the support of the queen and the practice is held in great regard by all. Tharoor through his mock-epic questions the legitimacy of Ved Vyas in being used for Niyoga to continue the Kshatriya clan. As Satyavati bears him through her union with Parashar before her marriage to Shantanu, the authenticity of Ved Vyas being brought in for Niyoga, upon the refusal of Bhishma was criticized. When class system and caste system were practiced, it is quite surprising that adjustments and exceptions were allowed according to the convenience. Therefore, Satyavati is considered as *the embodiment of the driving force of womanhood, with motherly ambition blinding her vision at every turn*, by Dhanalakshmi Ayyer, author of *Satyavati: Blind Ambition*. The very process of identification, through which we project ourselves into our cultural identities, has become more open-ended, variable and problematic. This produces the post modern subject conceptualized as having no fixed, essential, or permanent identity. Identity becomes a 'moveable feast' formed and transformed continuously in relation to the ways we are represented or added in the cultural systems which surround us. --- (Hall, 1987)

*The Great Indian Novel*, therefore portrays the changing value system on par with the changing times and attitudes of people. For example, Ekalavya who is much-admired as an

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exemplary archetypal disciple character from the *Mahabharata* is given a new dimension in this novel. The character questions the teacher-student relationship, and the attitude of the teacher. Contrary to the *Mahabharata* incident, where approaching the most scholarly teacher for education receives the crippled gift of not able to utilize the learned art is satirized with the new Ekalavya turning down the request of guru, Jayaprakash Drona. By the time of independence, there has come a major change in the status and attitude of the women of India. Shashi Tharoor's analogy of equaling Priya Duryodhani with one hundred sons of King Dhritarashtra of the *Mahabharata* is exceptional. Ms. Indira Gandhi, the analogous counterpart to Priya Duryodhani of the novel won international acclaim as the extraordinarily skilled political *statesman* of India. Her role critiques and contests the existing ideologies about Indian womanhood, and thrives to transform the same towards a modern role of the Indian woman in shaping the Indian nationality and modernity. Cultural Studies tries to establish newer ways of thinking by disfiguring the habitual and customary ways of ideologies. The novel brings forth the picture of modern India, contesting against the ideologies and principles of ancient India, during the times of the *Mahabharata*.

The novel reiterates and reemphasizes the influence of the great epic and it is still a tool in the hands of the contemporary writers to portray the historical and contemporary incidents encompassed in a tone of enquiry and investigation. According to Cultural Studies, every artifact tries to convey something through its discourse and every artifact, what it represents is conveyed through its culture. *The Great Indian Novel*, can be considered as a cultural critique about the power struggle among parties and people, the legendary characters also portrayed as ordinary human beings with their own strengths and weaknesses. It is amazing how well (the author) succeeds...When a book threatens to penetrate one's veneer of complacency and idea-rigidity, it is proper to gently genuflect to it...This novel is an astonishing achievement, deserving unreserved kudos. --- P.Lal, *The Telegraph, Calcutta*

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#### **40. Literature by South Asian Diaspora: With special reference to Rohinton Mistry's Works**

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The word Diaspora gained popularity in the modern world. The word is used more badly for any movement of population sharing common culture and ethnic identity. The common reasons behind the migration of the people were religious prosecution, aiming for the growth of economical position or for better future. South Asian Diaspora writings received an unprecedented attention and acclaim in the modern days. The salient characteristic of South Asian Diaspora is to interrogate colonial history. The themes of diaspora writers were agony of partition, nostalgia, alienation and displacement. The Indian Diasporic writers had been divided into two distinct groups- The first group comprised of those who spent part of their life and carried the baggage of their native land off shore. In the words of Khanna Narula: “ The Indian Diasporic writers are split into a complex space between two worlds and two cultures; they can neither forget the world or culture they have come out of and which would be different if they returned to it now; nor can they fully assimilate into and be acclaimed by the world or culture they have adopted because they cannot subvert their own identities totally. (2005: 35)”. The other group comprised of those who had been bred since childhood outside India. They had a view of their country only from the outside as an exotic place of their origin and thus found themselves rootless.

Rohinton Mistry belongs to the former group of diasporic writers. As an Indian who now lives and writes from Canada, he is a writer of Indian Diaspora. Priyambda Singh explained the major reasons of Mistry's expatriation based on Mistry's confession in the Literary Journal Rung that his departure from India was partly encouraged by the expectation of his peers, especially of his generations. After finishing college in Bombay or elsewhere in India, one had to go to abroad for higher studies. If possible one had to find a job after finishing a Masters or PhD in the states or in England, find a job and settle in the country. That's how success is defined by Indians that is one of the reasons for Mistry's migration to Canada, which is in some ways decided for him (1993: 2). It is obvious that the diasporic writer dealt with their homeland, a place from where the displacement occurs and recounts narratives of painful journey which was undertaken on account of economic, social and political compulsions.

No doubt that we may find the quest for a buried cultural identity and naturally an authentic space for existence of their cultural mores in diasporic writings. Writers like Neil Bissoondath, Uma Parameswaram, Himani Benerjee, Rohinton Mistry, Farukh Dhondy, Bapsi Sidhwa etc. through their writings projected the dilemmas and struggles of South Asian Diaspora. These writers came out of closed mutuality and address the world that lies outside their respective communities and geographical boundaries. They felt alienation from their roots and explored the feeling of displacement in their works. They neither discarded the native tradition nor assimilated in the new adopted land. Though these writers assumed that they assimilated in their adopted land their roots continued to exist in their homeland. I would like to focus on the themes of South Asian Diaspora Parsi writer, particularly Rohinton Mistry's works in this paper. Parsis are miniscule community, who enjoyed privileges during British rule in India. Most of the parsis preferred to immigrate by carrying ethnicity to the land they move to. The passion for Westernization and expatriation of this community led to suffer cultural loss, political marginalization and alienation. Rohinton Mistry's ancestors settled in India as they were forced into exile by the Muslims who conquered Iran in 936 AD.

Mistry is a diaspora even in India. Even as a writer of diaspora, he has carved a niche for himself. About his diaspora status, Nilufer Bharucha commented in her book *Writers of the Indian Diaspora: Rohinton Mistry* that : “As an Indian who now lives in and writes from Canada, Rohinton Mistry is a writer of the Indian Diaspora. However Mistry is also a Parsi Zoroastrian and as a person whose ancestors were forced into exile by the Islamic conquest of Iran, he was in Diaspora even in India. Like other Parsi writers, his writings are informed by this experience of double displacement.” (22: 2003).

It is obvious that Mistry preserved the memory of his early days in India alive. In an interview with Veena Gokhale, he said that, he kept the memory of India alive and vivid enough to work in the minute details that his novels contained in abundance: “In general, I don’t think there is much one can do to keep memory alive, memory lives and dies on its own. Memory is a strange thing: when assumed to be dead, it can surprise one by returning to life. I am speaking of course, not of memory that is concerned with things like street, names, film songs, etc. These things can be found in Maps and books. I refer to those moments which at the time of actual occurrence may have seemed banal, but which given the gift of remembrance become moments of revelation. My novels as not ‘researched’ in the formal sense of the word. Newspapers, Magazines, chat with visitors from India, chats with people on my infrequent visits to India- these are the things I rely on. Having said that I will add that, all these would be worthless without the two main ingredients: memory and imagination.” ( Mistry: 1996)

It is obvious that Rohinton Mistry’s works are squarely diasporic discourses in which he tried to deconstruct and repose his Indian past. Mistry’s meticulous description makes the reader feel as if they are walking into the streets of Bombay. He set all his writings in Bombay. He is more concerned with the tribulations and the idiosyncrasies of Bombay Parsis. In an interview with Hancock, Geoff, Mistry elucidates his philosophy of composition:

“One must write for the sake of writing to create good literature. The other things follow in a very natural way. I grew up in Bombay. Now I am here. I’m a writer. I am determined to write good literature. That is my primary concern. But to write well, I must write about what I know best. In a way I automatically speak for my tribe. (Mistry: 1989).” Mistry studied the historical boundary of India and has fictionalized it in his novels. His novels were closely linked with social and political background as he discussed various political events in his works. Though he left India thirty years ago and settled in Canada, his knowledge of Indian politics was not at all far removed from reality. He brilliantly captured the crowded throbbing life of India. For instance corruption, politically motivated schemes, political decisions, layman’s sufferings, caste –problem, dominance of zamindars over the downtrodden masses occupied considerable space in his novels.

The Parsis are ethno- religious community in India. Mistry is concerned with the preservation of the ethnic identity of his community. According to Blumer the ethnic identity is a collectivity with in a larger society having real or putative common ancestry, memories of a shared past, and cultural focus on one or more symbolic elements which define the group’s identity, such as kinship, religion, language, shared territory, nationality or physical appearance(Bulmer)

Mistry tried to record for posterity the story of Parsi race and their ancient Zoroastrian faith. In an interview with Ali Lakhani at Vancouver International Writers’ Festival, Mistry said about the disappearance of the parsis on the face of the earth that his writing will... “Preserve a record of how they lived, to some extent (Mistry). This community may disappear from earth in future but the writings of Parsi writers like Rohinton Mistry will certainly retain their ethnic identity in ages to come. He gave elaborate description of Parsi rites, rituals and religious practices in all his works. In this regard, V.L.V.N. NarendraKumar wrote that: “The parsis are attempting to assert their ethnic

identity in diverse ways. Parsi novel in English reflects this assertion of parsi identity (2002:11).” Language, culture and history are three major constituents of diasporic memory. Language is the symbol of empowerment and thus the writing serves as subtle tools for self discovery. We may find tinges of vernacular in the Parsi writings. Rohinton Mistry’s language is typically the language of a parsi gentleman. He experimented with linguistic hybridity and celebrated the unique Parsi idioms in his writings. He blended English words with Gujarati, Hindi, Marathi at times in order to achieve the hybridity . The language used in his works is a fine specimen of Indian English. Some of the words which are frequently used in quotidian life recur in the novel. Some examples are bhैया, yaar, humko kuch nahin maloom, masala, bismillaha, goswalla, chalo, morcha, chooli, parinambay-sharam etc. Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin dwell upon how post coloniality poses a challenge to the norms of language. “In the context of English language they say: “the most interesting feature of its use in postcolonial literature may be the way in which it also constructs difference, separation and absence from the metropolitan norm” (quoted. in Morey 40).” Mistry’s works helped him in earning a distinct place in the annals of the post- independence Indian English novel. His eminence as a novelist lies in his endeavors to narrate about his community, his country and crises of humanity in fictional terms. Being a Parsi he is aware of his community and wants to maintain their cultural identity in the face of ethnic and religio-cultural attacks in the post- independent India and hence he meticulously presented it.

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#### 41. Postmodern Feminist Perspective: Quest for Identity in Select Novels of Margaret Atwood and Shashi Deshpande

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The present paper proposes to examine the woman's discourse with reference to postmodern feminist perspective in the novels of two different novelists, Margaret Atwood, a Canadian novelist and an Indian novelist, Shashi Deshpande, who belong to different countries, different social backgrounds and different cultures. Besides, Shashi Deshpande, made her novels, including *That Long Silence*, woman oriented, opting and allowing the domineering role to her female protagonists. Consequently, she raises her strong voice of protest against the male dominated Indian society and against man made rules and conventions. On the other hand, Margaret Atwood, herself a celebrated novelist, too seems to subscribe to this view when she comments that with their skills in communication women are extremely good at finding things out and so providing themselves with material. So, both novelists significantly contributed to the vitality, variety, humanity and artistic integrity that embellish the contemporary fictional canvas in Canada and India. Most importantly they seem to justify the observation that women are natural story tellers.

In keeping with the trend set up in this field by the pioneers, Margaret Atwood and Shashi Deshpande weave their narratives around female protagonists and delineate their struggle as neutral observers. These novelists write in a context of increased activity and new possibility. Even though preoccupied with the personal life of their protagonists, these writers also address social and intellectual issues. As postmodern feminist novels, Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid Tale* and Shashi Deshpande's *That Long Silence* are concerned openly with dismantling patriarchal systems that repress women. Subsequently, the moment in these novels belong to post feminist phase and proclaim their womanhood in a bold manner. Hence, the new women of these writings strive to come out of the identity crises they have been facing and are on the way to finding space of their own in the manmade world. Therefore, herein lays the close connection between feminism and postmodernism. More over, Atwood in *The Handmaid Tale* tells the tale with a sense of commitment to expose how dignity and autonomy of women who are negated by anarchic and oppressive societies like the republic of Gilead. Furthermore she also suggests the ways and means to overcome the barriers to woman's individuality and independence. She articulates silence by carefully selecting symbolic and meaningful names of places, characters and coins new words to signify the ceremonies. In the same way, Shashi Deshpande employs the 'language of the interior' to define the inner perception of Jaya who is subtly drawn from inside. She finds her inner routine so disrupted that for the first time in her life she tries to probe into herself to get answers for her existence. Furthermore In *That Long Silence* Shashi Deshpande delineates the delicate swings of mood, the moments of joy and despair of the protagonist Jaya, a housewife and a failed writer. The reminiscences of Jaya evoke a deeper and more tragic sense of vanished time in a calm voice, so the writer distances herself from any intrusion into the psyche of Jaya.

Through the sensitive portrayal of the psychic conflicts of Jaya, Shashi Deshpande seems to underline the importance of subverting the established values and replacing them with those values which promote happiness. She neither seeks refuge in an illusionary world nor does she become totally insane as she has ventilated herself through the process of pinning down her emotions and feelings. Eventually the consciousness of Jaya is revealed through an exposition of her mind in the process of thinking, feeling and reacting to the incentive of the moment and situation. Into Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale* narrates the tale of quasi military Republic (Gilead) that chiefly concentrates on human reproduction. She presents a modern form of woman hunting that aims at subjugating woman's power that is her fertility. Atwood a sensitive and consciously self aware writer explores and expresses the subjugating of women in a patriarchal society. She believes that the silencing of women victimization is not only through patriarchal attitudes but also through woman's

consciousness. People who are after power cannot tolerate imagination, power to converse and hope. In order to combat it, one should recognize the source of suppression, express anger and find ways for change.

Both protagonists in the above said novels have rebellious tendency. They rise in protest against the patriarchal system and begin their quest for freedom. Offred and Jaya are denied the right to speak, communicate and express. They are even denied of their original names. Moreover they are assigned certain functions and are expected to perform different roles. The intention of this comparative study is to examine the protagonists need for articulation of their suppressed silence. At the beginning we find Jaya, accept to succumb and surrender to Mohan without revolting. Silently she bends herself to his will. Enwrapped by silence in her room, her mind shuttles between the past and the present and thus covers the whole span of her life. Jaya is fighting her own battle. On the one hand, she has to tackle the immediate problems of a likely indictment of her husband on charges of corruption, on the other she wants to examine their relationship. Even her career as a writer is in danger since he insists on her. Now in his hour of need her help is taken for granted. Her teenage children, Rahul (son), who is too sensitive and has already turned cynical, and her daughter Rati, a spoilt girl, totally materialistic both also give her a sense of failure.

Conversely, the rulers of Gilead use religion to ensure the subjugation of women. It also pictures the complex nature of women in subordinating other women and advocating self effacement. When Gilead first came into being, the very first step of the rulers had been to freeze women's credit cards and bank accounts and take away their jobs and property rights. This results in the destruction of their financial independence and individuality. In this process of silent revolution without blowing trumpets or without offending any of the characters, Offred and Jaya induces themselves with a feeling of warmth towards modernity.

On the contrary, In Gilead a deliberate and systematic attempt is made to obliterate all sense of individuality and identity in women by taking away the names from them. The state cancels the original names of the Handmaids in order to erase their former identity and labels them according to the names of their commanders. It is metaphoric of the silencing of women. Offred's name is composed of the preposition 'Of' indicating possession and 'Fred' signifying that she is the Handmaid of Fred.

Though, Offred is a complex blend of the 'silent woman', 'the speaking person' and the 'teller of tales'. Within her there is the unconquerable desire and struggle for self denial and self realization. It is not that she protests against the Gilead culture as such rather it is against its receptiveness. Offred revolts against the traditional conservative attitude of the Gilead's towards women who are not allowed to be self reliant. Thus, it is the ability to adapt her to changing situations that makes Offred as strong as a woman.

As well as Jaya also undergoes a similar plight where she loses her identity and has to forge a new identity and name suiting her husband's desire. Jaya has to fight out fragmentation of her individuality and find a meaning if she can. Jaya means victory but her husband calls her Suhasini meaning a self smiling, placid motherly women, a woman who lovingly nurtured her family and a woman who coped. Therefore, both lose their identity and individualism with the loss of their original name. Name is the only component that makes a person unique. With the loss of their names they have lost their identity itself. Therefore, Offred and Jaya are subjugated by patriarchal power structures. They have lost their names, they are reduced to mere functional elements and freedom is curtailed. They are reduced to the status of slave. As a result they are alienated. According to Offred language is officially forbidden because the ruling class recognizes the power of words as weapons that can free the people from bondage. As a result, freedom is curtailed as well as freedom of speech is a capital offence. However, Jaya finds herself at odds with society and undergoes various degrees of psychological transformation. Her urges are silently manifested in moments of crisis and in chaotic sequence of events and non events that made up her life. Jaya's inner turmoil's are so tense and acute

that she is not able to express her troubles. Hitherto she is a woman who faces the sufferings and opposition in the true spirit of ideal womanhood noted for obedience and loyalty. So far, Offred is initially silenced by Gileadean culture she eventually works her way to freedom through language. Despite the call of authority to forget, to be silent, Offred's response is defiant. Her scripting of the self through memory and language proclaims her triumph and the defeat of patriarchal schemes. Similarly Jaya too is not a mute sufferer. Hers is a silent revolt. Later Jaya has raised her voice against the straitjacket role models of wife and mother and rebels against the suppression of the patriarchal setup. Both Offred and Jaya through all barriers they break creating a new discourse against the chaos of thoughts. Consequently, Offred feels her body no longer suited for pleasure. She fills her mind with pensive memories of her husband and daughter and strongly desires to escape from her present environment. Subsequently, As Offred is aware that the fulfilment of the survival wish is possible only through a communication with the outer world that is denied to her. Though engulfed by restrictions Offred communicates with the unknown describer and demolishes the barriers of death. To Offred this step itself is a triumph in itself.

In disparity Jaya's case though life is full of choice but for a married woman the choices are limited. To Jaya all her experience in marriage turns out to be traumatic. Unlike other married women tagged to tradition, Jaya articulates in her own way. She unburden her most personal and private thoughts in her writings. So, at the end of the novel Jaya gives us the new image of the Indian woman who now tries to stand on her own legs and seeks to break the silence by refusing to dance to the tune of her husband. With Jaya's assertion of life that 'Long Silence' is threatened to be broken. Wholly both protagonists gain confidence and break all the barriers by using language as a powerful and perhaps the only weapon. Finally, towards the end of the novel *That Long Silence* Jaya decides to erase the silence between her and Mohan by speaking and listening. This is how she asserts. It is no longer a mute voice, but a voice with hope and promise. The novel end with a note of optimism where Jaya says, "we don't change overnight. It's possible that we may not change even over long periods of time. But we can always hope. Without that life would be impossible"

Likewise in *The Handmaid's Tale* Offred's escape along with the underground mayday resistance group to the underground female road to tell her tale is aided by Nick. He is the commander's Chauffer who is the liberating agent of Offred. Nick calls her by her real name and says: "It's May day. Go with them". The sign of her identity (calling by her real name) is symbolic of breaking the tyranny of silence. She breaks completely the slavery, taking risk as she says that she is "tired of this melodrama. I'm tired of keeping silent." Eventually through their works Atwood and Shashi Deshpande has explored various themes related to woman like denial of self expression, alienation, deep inequality, sexual and emotional violence and suppression of personality. But what is pivotal to all their writings are the modern woman's struggle to find a balance between the traditional beliefs and individual needs. Although their language is said to be transparent and not drawing attention to itself but with a rare subtlety it creates a background of traditional atmosphere and the woman's uneasiness in it. Thus, at the end having found her 'voice' which they considers most important for an artist, Finally Atwood and Deshpande tells realistic tales of woman's struggles to keep her roots and at the same time attain individuality.

Ultimately these two novelists represent different cultures but what brings them together is how they present their characters in a similar predicament. It is fascinating to see how these women give the limited capabilities to their heroines to either surrender or to overcome a firm situation. But their breakdowns, in most cases do not dissuade them to go ahead to meet life's challenges. A study of this paper enables the reader to have a better perceptive of the similarities in their writing. There are certain themes that persist in the fiction of these novelists. Their protagonists are always explorers through tradition and myth in search of a new identity and in search of a voice, a tongue, a language, and an art, with which to assert that identity.

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## 42. Reconstruction of Emotional Role without Deconstructing Gender Identity with Reference to Shashi Deshpande & Volga

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The new woman in Indian literature is emerging slowly, she is fighting her way through the harsh ideas of patriarchal society, breaking the established rules and what the new woman requires is to achieve the astonishing power of her real self. Women in India are caught between tradition, values and modernity. Shashi Deshpande and Volga who haven't followed either the women writers or the men writers of their age. Shashi Deshpande's real involvement lies in the portrayal of predicaments and harms, trials and pains of the middle-class Indian women – who are educated and have chosen a profession for themselves. Deshpande knows this fragment of the Indian society very well. Once she remarked: “ *I realize that I write what I write because I have to, because it is within me. It's one point of view, a world from within the woman, and that I think is my contribution to Indian writing.* ” Deshpande dwells on anxiety and annoyance, quarrel and incompatibility, sense of remorse and loss of face, seclusion and alienation of a sensitive woman pitted against an ill-mated marriage and hostile circumstances around her. As G.S. Amur remarks: “ *Woman's struggle, in the context of contemporary Indian society, to find and preserve her identity as wife, mother and, most important of all, as human being is Shashi Deshpande's major concern as a creative writer, and this appears in all her important stories.* ”

Volga, is a well known Telugu writer, a Sahitya Akademi award-winner from Guntur, a big town of Andhra Pradesh influenced much by Chalam and Kodavatiganti Kutumbarao who are the forerunners of feminism in telugu literature. She has created a distinctive style of her own and reflects well –expressed feminist positions in her stories, novels and poetry. Writer, feminist, idealist, – Volga has inspired hundreds of women over a glittering career spanning nearly three decades. In an interview to G. Thilakavathi, writer and Indian Police Service officer, Volga says “I started this after I lost faith in Marxist philosophy and revolutionary politics. I wanted to make women understand their rights. I thought I must create awareness among women. There were not many people then even to write about feminism. So I wrote a lot. I spoke about women's lives, their tears, their unequal status, crimes against women and so on in the various places I travelled to. I worked really hard. I toured Andhra Pradesh. I tried hard to propagate the idea of female equality. I was involved in this work intensely during 1981-85. In 1985, I resigned my college lecturer job and shifted to Hyderabad.” As Kalpana Rentala points out, “ *Volga is the writer who answered through her stories the criticism that feminist literature concentrates only on the problems of upper and middle class women. With the themes related to the lower class women, her stories in their own language show that all women irrespective of colour, caste and creed are being shattered under the iron bars of male tyranny.* ”

Shashi Deshpande's and Volga's women protagonists have refused to become prisoners of conventional traditions and idealized identities. They present modern, educated, career oriented middle class women and rebel against their men in search for freedom and identity. Their primary focus of attention is woman, her travails and how she is caught between family and professional roles. Their stories generally centre on family relationships - the relationship between husband and wife, mother & daughter. There are many women who are caught up in the conventional mode of patriarchy and are in dilemmas about their future but their education, self- confidence and economic independence help them to come out of the emotional trap. The protagonist Deepa in 'Travel Plans' chalks out her future all alone from the treachery of her husband, representing how the woman take the infidelity of her husband with strong composure. She is sad at the situation, struggles but realizes to solve the problem. She doesn't cry or make a big issue of injustice meted out to her, separation

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from husband is not the end of life. She has a life of her own and has ability to design it, she doesn't want to keep her future either in the hands of their parents or in laws and goes ahead of her own thinking. Deepa, the protagonist of 'Travel Agency' is married to Shriram who works at states. She is left over in India to look after her in-laws. She takes up the responsibility with emotional binding. She even works after the marriage once she comes to know by her cousin that her husband is already married or he has a relationship with a woman, she is upset with the situation and seeks clarification from Shriram, he confesses his marriage with foreigner and asks Deepa to forgive him. She goes to her home but realizes that 'the gap is filled' in her maternal house mother, brother and sister-in-law are busy in their works and realizes that no one is there to hear her. She returns her in-laws home and she is informed by her father-in-law that her mother-in-law lost her eyes due high blood pressure. She feels sorry but her mother-in-law tells her that she has come almost to the end and Deepa can join her husband in U.S. She plans that night what she has to do after the death of her mother-in-law. Her future plan-"the charting of a route through an unknown continent." (50) She puts her wedding photograph face down on the table it shows that she want to free herself from the marriage bonds. She also mutters the names "Tabriz and Asuncion, Samarkand and Santa Rosalia as a prayer" (50) she want to establish a new travel agency before marriage ,after marriage she want to relax like other married woman in U.S. because of the treachery of her husband she reconsiders her plan of establishing a Travel Agency: “ *It's waiting for me, I know, something I've always wanted to do for myself, something I will have to do now - the charting of a route through an unknown continent. It's no longer an enjoyable thought, yet it has to be done. One step at a time, I tell myself, .... (50)*” She is one of Deshpande's women in transition, a normal girl in the beginning emerges out as a strong personality towards the end. On the whole Deshpande wants to show how women suffer due to the behaviour of men and gives life to so many women by developing the character of Deepa in such a way that Deepa is decided to cut off her relationship with her husband and proves that marriage is not only life of a woman.

Sita the protagonist of Volga's short story 'Agony' is enthusiastic woman right from the childhood, she has been asked by her parents not to be so lively. She cannot accept any one trying to suppress her. After completing her education she is employed in the same college as typist. After her marriage her husband tries to suppress her enthusiasm in every possible way. They give birth to two children. He feels jealous of her and asks her not to work, if at all she declares that she would work he demands salary of work which she rejects. It gives rise to quarrel and he asks to get out of his house. She comes out and goes to her parents house, they scold her and compel her to go back to her husband, she comes out and stays in her friend's house for that night and takes a house, starts living happily from the next day onwards with her two children. To give her problem her husband takes the children. She is very much worried as the children need her love and care. She is given advice by a lawyer to go for a compromise but she is not ready to submit to her husband, even at the cost of shedding her blood she is ready to fight for her children.

Through the story Volga tries to portrayal woman has to undergo struggle right from her childhood by parents. Sita is curious at each and every minute of her life and who is happy at being born a woman. “*Bubbling with enthusiasm, running, jumping and laughing all the time.*” (355) “*I never regretted that I was born a woman... I rejoiced at being born a woman. At every stage in my life I was happy that I was a girl.*” (355) She feels happy for being a woman and doesn't accept anyone who try to suppress. Her enthusiasm doesnot reduce even after giving birth to two children and this is the cause of problems in her married life. “*I used to be full of vitality despite work at home, tending to children and doing office work. That enthusiasm was not to my husbands liking. He had many suspicions.*” (369) She cannot tolerate her husband's authority . She spends her salary for the family only but when he orders to quit her job, she refuses to spend the money of her salary for the family. “*Till then I used to save a hundred rupees and spend the rest of my salary on the house hold. .... I questioned him how my salary was acceptable to him my job was not.*” (371) Her children are her weakness and they are taken away by her husband, she feels a shrink but it is only a

temporary , she resolves her courage and fight for her children. She doesn't cry at this situation but show courage even in worst situations. *“This weeping would not do. This weeping would drain my heart. This grieving would ruin my body.”* (377)

Volga portrays an average Indian men who don't like women to be independent, intelligent and self-respecting, free and happy women. Volga has more understanding about the realities of life. Through her stories she has proved women of all ages irrespective of their caste and creed are looked down by the patriarchal society. All her works urge for self esteem, a thirst for individuality.

## Conclusion

A close study of these authors Shashi Deshpande and Volga shows that they are unique in their ways. They speak in different voices but the motives, attitudes are the same. They believe that customs, traditions existing in patriarchal society should be changed in India because the situation of women all over is the same. Both the writers depict with artistic finesse and originality about the contemporary women's position and the realistic solution they put ahead and their message for women and the whole humanity. They have full-fledged with experiences in life and readings. The transparency of their language and their impulsiveness make their novels highly readable. Both the protagonists tried their level to reconstruct their personalities with their self confidence and self esteem. Though they struggled hard they have never shown back to the situations. They have faced the reality of life with utmost courage and have proved that marriage is not only the life to woman.

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### 43. Agony of Commitment in Andre Brink's *A Dry White Season*

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## Introduction

Andre Brink always presents a series of events and his main concern is to turn imaginatively all the events into a plot which will reveal the truth behind mere facts, a representation against apartheid. He portrays himself as a rather disillusioned with “the habit of half a lifetime devoted to writing romantic fiction. Tender loving tales of rape and murder” (9). He suffers from dry patches in his writing career and they have been paralyzing him for months together and says ‘I’ve known dry patches in the past, and I have always been able to write myself out of them again’ (11). He has chauvinist soul and succumbed to Ben who caught him in a vulnerable movement. In fact *A Dry White Season* is censored and banned in South African apartheid government. J. M. Coetzee has commented on Brink’s battle with censor and noted: “The type of all acts of censorship is the ban on lese-majeste. Lese-majeste, like blasphemy, is a symbolic (verbal) sacrilege, a touching of the sacred object, an infringement of ultimate authority” (70). He further describes the process of writing about racial violence in apartheid South Africa as a struggle between looking on in horrified fascination and denial, turning one’s eyes away and Coetzee suggests that in an inhuman society, there can be no humanity in representation; the attempt bear witness to human suffering yields, instead, to a specific voyeurism, to the “lyrical inflation’ of violence itself. Andre Brink is a radical critic of South African regime and its apartheid policy. But he was awarded Martin Luther King Memorial Prize for *A Dry White Season*. The involvement of Brink in this novel presented in the novel’s frame (“Foreword” and “Epilogue” lends conviction and authority to the unnamed novelist as a “Brinkian witness” (Jolly, 1996:21). André Brink’s narrative touches the sore spot of the utter destruction of the ordinary life of individuals in the grip of power, and of the dissolution of their family bonds – be they representatives of a black oppressed majority, or of a white indignant minority desperately trying to ‘put things right’. Pursued by the South African security police, Du Toit frantically tells the narrator that if they destroy his notes “there would have been no sense in it at all” (13). By writing Du Toit's story, the narrator makes sense of, and gives sense to, his friend's activities. The narrator is thus a figure throughout the novel, implicated in literally, “folded into”—its meaning: “What was unfinished to [Du Toit] is complete to me; what was life to him is a story to me; first-hand becomes second-hand. I must attempt to reconstruct intricate events looming behind cryptic notes; what is illegible or missing I must imagine. What he suggests I must expand. . . . This is the burden I must take up, the risk I must run, the challenge I must accept “(33).

Representation of condemnation and objectification of characters in *A Dry White Season* can be found in Fanon. His work demonstrates the objectification and condemnation to immobility and silence of the men and women who are the objects of that history (120). Andre Brink, himself an Afrikaner, has offered a sustained insight into the Afrikaner establishment's creations of myths to justify the objectification and thus dehumanization of the Black. Ben Du Toit, Jonathan Ngubene, his father, Gordon Ngubene, English news reporter, Melanie, her father Phil Bruwer, a taxi driver, Stanley Makhaya, and witnesses were condemned to immobility and lived in agony of commitment.

The Afrikaner protagonist, Ben du Toit unintentionally becomes involved in the case of two black persons who died in detention in South Africa. He does not accept the official explanation and starts investigating the case himself. After intimidation, threats, police action, etc., he dies as the result of an accident. These events are narrated in the novel by a friend of Du Toit's, whose direct quotations from Du Toit's diary serve to lend authenticity to the third person narrative. Narrator, a hack writer, is let loose upon an assortment of notes, diaries, press cuttings, et cetera, and the tension between the attempt to “do justice” to the documents and his professional inclination to sensationalize his material coincides with the tussle between different perceptions of history, even though the novel as a whole, geared toward representation as-protest, does not radically question the status of history. References to real incidents such as the death of the Black Consciousness activist Steve Biko, make

this text perhaps the Brink novel most directly concerned with the South African political situation. Brink interprets the 1976 Soweto riots (37) as a mere foreshadowing of this, and in *Rumours of Rain* and *A Dry White Season*, both of which have the riots as a backdrop, he weaves an alternative legend of the Afrikaner messiah, in which the savior, far from being an ideologue or agent of apartheid, is instead an adversary of that ideology (Isidore-81).

Ben is concerned with the death of Jonathan Ngubene, who died in youth riots in Soweto and Gordon Ngubene, who died in detention. His benevolence can be seen through his offer to support Jonathan's education. He is depressed by the death news of Jonathan. Brink's inclination is to interpret the agonies of social commitment as a veritable path, not necessarily to political change, but to wisdom and clarity of vision. Ben's struggle, carried out in an abiding consciousness of the inevitability of failure, of his haunting mortality, and of his life as a lease whose duration is determined by his overwhelmingly powerful adversaries, serves to lead him to deeper appreciation of grace. Several times more, Ben again likens himself to a leper, mortified at the thought that rather than ameliorating the human condition, all that he contributes is suffering and death. The political scheme of Brink's novels does not quite absorb and appropriate his religious insights. Ben meets the narrator and shares that Special Branch police have taken everything from him and says: "They want to wipe out every sign of me, as if I'd never been here. And I won't let them." (13) The narrator could find something paranoiac in Ben's attitude as he walks along with him. Ben is reserved without being secretive; rather quiet, at peace with the world and himself, innocent and hard worker. Ben's wife, Susan expresses her anguish with the narrator: "After twelve years I still don't know him,..never does he know me... The worst of all, I suppose is that I don't even know myself yet. I've lost touch with him." (25) Ben is annoyed and depressed during the interactions with the lawyers and Special Branch police. He is very clear about his involvement in investigating the two cases: "But time to time one needs the assurance---and that's what I've come for --that in your search for criminals you do not also, unwittingly, cause innocent people to suffer." (60) Minor ripples of Ben's preoccupation with Gordon are beginning to affect the members of his family. He is criticized by his wife, Susan as the champion of the political detainees. He is warned by his school principal: "Provide you keep the school out of it, said Cloete sullenly. We teachers must stay out of politics." (71) Isidore says that Climactic moment in Ben du Toit's Oedipus-like the search for truth is his discovery that Afrikaner humanism rooted in the distillation of racial exclusiveness is sheer misanthropy:

"'Humanity.' Normally one uses it as a synonym for compassion; charity; decency; integrity. 'He is such a human person. Must one now go in search of an entirely different set of synonyms: cruelty; exploitation; unscrupulousness; or whatever?'" (161). Isidore says that Brink links torture with the will to power and to dominate. In his portrayal of Captain Stolz, prime agent of apartheid, Brink points to the kinship between torture and sadism: "he'd stood there leaning against the door throwing and catching the orange, squeezing it with casual, sensual satisfaction every time it came down in his hand" (134). For the first time in his life visits the black township of Soweto and Sofasonke City. It is like a wilderness in which he feels an imposter and he is alone in an incomprehensible expanse. He is agonized, humiliated, insulted by his own community, school, church and family just because of a photograph Emily with Ben taken by press. He gets numerous telephone calls just to tease him all the day and night. He is warned by Dr. Herzog asking for court proceedings: "Mr. Du Toit, aren't you treading on rather dangerous ground now." (148) His house is raided by Special branch Police even his personal bedroom. In his send visit to black township, he is horrified, tensed and isolated as Stanley has left him for a while: "Exposed to pure anguish, he sat motionless, feeling the tiny cold pricks of perspiration on his face where the air touched him"

There is an awareness of being watched, of acting against invisible obstacles opposing him every inch of the way. There must have been series of 'firsts': the first time his telephone was tapped; the first time his mail was tampered with; the first time an unknown car followed him to town; first time a stranger was posted opposite his house to check on whoever arrived or left; the first time the

phone rang in the middle of the night, with nothing on the other side but heavy breathing and a mirthless chuckle; the first time a friend informed Ben: “You know, I had a visitor last night who kept on asking questions about you-----”(215) And all the time, day by day, there is the awareness of being surveyed as Ben is collecting the evidences of Gordon’s death. His mail box is poured with envelopes slit open and with disgust he says: “It’s like living in an aquarium, [...] your every move scrutinized by eyes watching you through glass and water, surveying even the motion of your gills as you breathe. “(222) He felt dry season in his life. He didn’t react so positively. He had most of the notes from those months talk about depression, worry, doubt and uncertainty. Had tension at home, with Susan, quarrels on telephone, with Suzette, his daughter and tiffs with his colleagues. Ben found most unsettling was to be confronted, in his class-room, by large printed slogans on the blackboard, inanities which sent sniggers through the class. Ben could feel a throbbing in his temple. “When I came into my classroom, I find insults scrawled all over the board. There was a hammer-and-sickle painted on my front door. I’ve had my car tyres cut to bits. Night after night we’re pestered by anonymous phone calls.”(228) Even his son John is not left from insult and beating. Johan is insulted by his friends and been taunting him for weeks, calling his father a nigger lover. Ben is warned by Colonel Viljoen with sarcasm. Three shots were fired on his house from the street into Ben’s living room. Press rejects his evidences to publish. Ben says: “More and more I realize that my real problem is benevolence, Christianity, understanding, decency. Not open hostility: one can work out a strategy to counter that. But this thick, heavy porridge of good intentions on the part of people obstructing you ‘for your own good’, trying to ‘protect you against yourself.’” (234)

Two of his co-elders visited him to give a clue to resign from the church council. In the same afternoon he found a parcel with bomb in his mailbox. He realizes his enemy but he cannot name him. He cannot challenge for a duel. What is setup against him is not a man, not even a group of people, but a thing, a something, a vague amorphous something, an ubiquitous power. He goes on saying: “...a power that follows me wherever I go, day and night, frustrating me, intimidating me playing with me according to rules devised and whimsically changed by itself.” (237)He feels numb, tired and wants some rest to regain his perspective and to find time for his family to himself again. Ben hopes that the selfless involvement in other people’s experiences would create contact but agonizes about Stanley: "Where does he really come from? Where is he off tonight? All I know about him is what he allows me to know. Nothing more, nothing less. A whole secret world surrounding him, of which I know next to nothing" (201). He is depressed but his constant involvement in new problems helps to keep Ben going. He is reproached by his father-in-law and whole family: “And all of them antagonistic towards me for “betraying” the family in some mysterious manner, turning me into the scapegoat for all their own resentments.” (255)

Susan is depressed by his behaviour feels that her dignity is broken and decided to leave him. She is sick and Ben is called by doctor for many discussions of her condition. But he feels that there is a gnawing awareness of that invisible and shapeless power pursuing him. For the first time in his life he is not able to sleep in the night, staring into the dark, wondering, wondering and doubts about the next strike by police. He feels rock-bottom of loneliness as every one left him. Captain Stolz visits his home again and tries to pursue him to give up the investigation and information collection: “Because I don’t like to see an ordinary decent man like to being victimized in such a sordid way.” (281) Then Ben feels sorry for him and says to himself that Stolz is a prisoner like him and the only difference is that Stolz doesn’t know it. His life is continuously under threats like a crude bomb was thrown into his study room and shots of fire through the windscreen of his car. The pale autumn is growing more pale and wintry. The leaves falling, the trees barer, and drier. All sap invisible and unbelievable. All softness, all tenderness, burnt away. Dry, dry, and colorless. An inhospitable autumn represents his last days. But “It was getting boring. He couldn’t go on with it. But he was overrun by their collective agony. *The Baas must help me. There is no one else.* Sometimes he lost his temper....Leave me alone. I can’t do it any longer.” (286)

Stanley says meets hem and says that his own people will spit on him if they know that he is with a white man and they are in black mood even his family. Due to her help and Ben relationship with Melanie, her passport is confiscated and now she stays in Britain. She pities him: "You know, what amazes me is to wonder what sort of world this is, what sort of society, in which it is possible for the state to persecute and try to break a man with a thing like this." (291) He lives in anguish and total solitude. There has been so much destruction and devastation in his life. He lost everything but he feels that his consciousness is still with him. He says: "I'm prepared. Whether I'm right or wrong I don't know. But I'm prepared." (298) His son Johan tried to help him but Ben considers his eagerness to help is an embarrassment. He tries to contact Stanley but in vain. He desires to listen to a human voice. He tries everyone. He tries Susan but her filial concern is only his comfort at the moment, yet he feels uncomfortable in her presence. He is weary and goes to Soweto to meet Stanley. He drives by losing all sense of directions. He is answered a woman by his knocking and beseeches him to leave the place immediately as there will be trouble. He is lost and dejected remains outside for some time. Young black boys approach him from front and back to attack him to take vengeance. He tries to escape from them but he is grabbed twice beaten up: "A wave of bodies tumbling over me. I tried to scuttle away on all fours, but as I was pushing myself up against the car I was grabbed again. A kick in the stomach. I doubled forward. Knee in the kidneys. For a moment I was dizzy with pain. But I knew if I stayed there it would be the end." (302) He tells them that he is Stanley's friend and he is on their side. But they didn't listen to him. He feels as he is so close to death. Thus he has a narrow escape. He wants to help the blacks sincerely. But he wants to do it on his terms. He is white and they are black. He thinks it is still possible to reach beyond their whiteness and blackness. The small, final, terrifying truth of his broken world is *He is white*. He says: "Even if I fight the system that has reduced us to this I remain white, and favoured by the very circumstances I abhor. Even if I'm hated, and ostracized and persecuted, and in the end destroyed, nothing can be make black." (304) His every gesture and act he commits in his efforts to help the blacks makes it more difficult for them to define their real needs and discover for themselves their integrity and affirm their own dignity. He laments that not even the complete discovery of the circumstances of Gordon's death would reveal anything to him about Gordon's life. Isidore notes that Brink's analysis of apartheid as an inhibition to human communion for even a white liberal in *A Dry White Season* draws on the historical Black Consciousness Movement's rejection of white support. Spurned by his white tribe as a traitor, Ben seeks community among blacks with whose aspirations he identifies. However, he is almost killed by rebellious angry black youths for whom his color is the text of his political allegiance. Even Gordon's son despises him as a white man. The black's inclination is to affirm his sovereignty by the identification of his mission and to affirm his dignity by being the agent of his own redemption: "Every gesture I make, every act I commit in my efforts to help them makes it more difficult for them to define their real needs and discover for themselves their integrity and affirm their own dignity" (304). Ben evaluates his relationship with Gordon: "How dare I presume to say: He is my friend, or even more cautiously, / think I know him? At the very most we are like two strangers meeting in the white wintry veld and sitting down together for a while to smoke a pipe before proceeding on their separate ways. No more" (305). It is to be expected, therefore, that human contact, courted, exalted, idealized, can be experienced only fleetingly: "Alone. Alone to the very end. I. Stanley. Melanie. Every one of us. But to have been granted the grace of meeting and touching so fleetingly; is that not the most awesome and wonderful thing one can hope for in this world?" And it is only when one ventures much more deeply into suffering, it seems to me, that one may learn to accept it as indispensable for the attainment of a truly serene silence. I have not reached it yet. But I think I am very close now. And that hope sustains me." (305)

## Conclusion

Ben does not deliberately choose to support the blacks, but he cannot bear the injustice that he sees being carried out by the Special Branch. The fact that he does not actually choose the side of the whites and leave things for what they are, estranges him from his wife and Suzette. His daughter Linda remains very much a figure in the background, even though she is "Daddy's girl". Johan remains his father's loyal supporter. During the fight Ben is no longer accepted by his own family, his own community, school and not yet accepted by the other (in this case, black) community. The main person is completely agonized and is killed at the end.

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Nadine Gordimer, a white South African woman writer's literary zeal is culminated with Nobel Prize for literature in 1991 with her extensive work which enlightens the world about apartheid South Africa. Her works deal with racial and moral tensions of her country. She has fervently campaigned against racial segregation in South Africa. *The Lying Days* is her first novel written in 1953. It is the Bildungsroman novel of Nadine Gordimer. The form of bildungsroman archives a young man's adventures on the road to manhood. Instead, it asserts the significance of a young woman's voice and the story of her personal, sexual, and social development which collides with the political world and typically turns inward. It narrates the first person narrator, Helen Shaw's partial growth and acquisition of race consciousness from adolescence to young adulthood. The novel has autobiographical element especially with the landscape and town used in the novel depict the place where Gordimer is born and brought up. Even one can observe Gordimer's views in the ordinary life of the young protagonist, Helen Shaw who protests the racist attitude in the society. Different phases in her life on The Mine, at The Sea, and in The City chart a growing consciousness in her about the political happenings in the country.

The novel portrays the historic conditions in the country, the Nationalist Party getting into power. Apartheid, discrimination between the whites and the blacks is clearly portrayed. It also describes Helen's psychological combat to the political as well as social situations in the society. Observing the alienated and suppressed natives, finally she worries about the position of the whites in South Africa. This first novel is significant because it establishes the concerns that Gordimer pursues throughout her writing career, exploring, shifting, and refining her views over time. First, it engages quite deliberately with its historical time, documenting the pre- and post- 1948 ascension to power of the National Party's apartheid government. Second, through Helen's interaction with her society, the novel establishes one of Gordimer's abiding themes – the inextricability of the political and personal worlds—and initiates the increasingly sophisticated historical consciousness of her work. Third, seeking to find a place for whites in South Africa. The novel explores the conventional theme of the ambiguity of the European in Africa through the colonial life-style of the white mining community. Fourth, the novel experiments with form and narrative strategy by subtly subverting the traditional form of bildungsroman. *Nadine Gordimer Revisited*, 12

The story starts with Helen's narration about her unpleasant childhood in Atherton where white mining community lives. In the beginning itself she has shown conflict with parents by refusing to accompany them to weekend party. She contradicts to follow the overprotective and controlling mother who always makes her blind towards the natives' life style. Her mother, Mrs. Shaw takes much care of her by sewing dance dress and providing everything. The servant Anna and the gardener Paul take care of her needs. Being entangled in this world, she cannot understand the living conditions of the blacks. But when she escapes into the obscure black world on Saturday afternoon, after her parents leave for tennis court, she cannot digest the things that she has observed in the poor lives of the natives. She is scared and escaped into the tennis court and joins her parents. Though she observes the unhygienic and chaotic life style of the natives, she flees back to the colonial tennis courts where the whites leisurely and joyfully spend their weekends. Since childhood Helen has understood the racist attitudes of the middle class white people. When she goes to Atherton town with her parents for shopping, the wretched native boys repeatedly ask for the job of taking care of the car which is parked at shops. But her father always gets angry with them and never bears their presence there. He chides them to go away from the car with a heinous look. When a crowd of Mine boys gather at Mr. Ockert's house to do hunger strike as they don't like the food given at compound her father ridiculously comments that even if these boys' diet is changed from boiled rag to chicken suddenly, they will be up in arms asking for the rag back again. Thus little Helen studies the



humiliation that the natives experience in their lives at a very tender age. The life at Mine enlightens Helen about the cruel discrimination towards the natives. When an accident occurs in the underground, if a white man is killed, the tragedy is officially recorded with the details of the person, occupation and the family. If no white man is affected it is just headed as “*Fatal Fall of Hanging*”. There was a fall of hanging at the East Shaft of Basilton Levels. East Rand, at 2P.M. yesterday. Two natives are killed and three others escaped with injuries.”*TLD*, 23.

In her adolescent age, which is the beginning of war, Helen is always hazy in her ideas and indefinite as she is brought up like a cocoon by her mother. She feels that her life is her mother’s. She spends time in reading books which are brought by her mother from the library. Those books depict the gentle life style of English families with some examples of the proletarian novel and these novels describe life of the poor in England. She is unhappy as she scarcely understands how real life is in the books that she reads. “I don’t believe a girl should grow up not knowing what life is like”-*TLD*, 32 She has always developed social consciousness in her. Besides reading different kinds of books along with her mother, she has performed a dance to raise money for a special comforts fund which is inaugurated by the Mine for ex-employees at the age of sixteen. Helen gets some more clarity about the social conditions among which she is living, when she gets an opportunity to visit Alice Koch, her mother’s old friend. She lives on a little farm on the South Coast of Natal. Then she is seventeen and working in her father’s office temporarily for a year as she has completed school education. She is very much surprised and confused about Ludi’s opinion of life at the Mine. He feels “that life on the Mine is the narrowest, most mechanical, unrewarding existence.” Is his view it is a kind of nightmarish life which she never agrees. She feels that he hates working underground and likes only to live at the sea. Helen’s life style is well described in Ludi’s words. He ridiculously talks about such kind of life. “You drink in the pubs together and you play tennis on Saturdays together and you go to dances organized by the ladies. You live by courtesy of the Mine, for the Mine, in the Mine.” *TLD* 49 Helen can not believe when Ludi expresses his willingness to get on in the army and his plan to come back once the war is ended. “All I want is the war to end so that I can get back here.” *TLD*, 50 Helen is shocked to know that Ludi is ready to do any kind of job to lead life. But she is very happy with Alice and her son Ludi and develops self-absorbed infatuation with him. After returning home she frequently writes to Ludi, believing that she is living like Ludi’s way of life. In this infatuation she creates her own world other than home and Mine. She spends lot of time in reading. Especially, she reads Auden and TS Eliot for getting words to write letters to Ludi. But the reading of various books like Pepy’s Diary, Tobias Smollett, books of writers like Hemingway, John Donne, D.H. Lawrence, Chekhov make her know about her life and the life on a gold mine in South Africa. Now, she does not think of Ludi. His image is rubbed off entirely. But her body and knowledge are real now. Thus she grasps that people live in dreams in their young age. Helen grows completely conscious about the blacks’ life style when she joins a University in Johannesburg. The discussions and decisions in her mother’s tea parties, her parents with their bent heads stir her to go to university unexpectedly to get admission. In her daily commuting from Mine to Johannesburg she studies many passengers. She has faced many challenges after joining university. When she befriends Aron Joel, her mother starts harassing her by degrading him as a son of Jewish shop keeper. When her parents are away, without caring their suggestion not to go anywhere, Helen goes out with her Jewish friend, Joel and then to his home and have dinner there itself which is disgusting to her mother because she always gives importance to the people of equal rank. And mother does not support her idea of staying in Johannesburg as she does not like Mine. She does not like the way her mother speaks about natives. She expects her parents let her think on her own way by having a little more understanding. Thus she finds gulf between the life of parents and the life style she wants to have. “A focus of Helen Shaw’s development is her tussel to free herself from the effects of her mother’s ethnocentric and racist attitudes” *Nadine Gordimer*, 36.

Helen’s African classmate Mary Seswayo is always shyful and both afraid of each other. She observes the lion-mask of white mastery on Helen’s face and Helen of the mouse –mask of black

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submission. After six months of study in university, both become good friends. While studying in the Johannesburg University, Helen has talked to many people who have revolutionary ideas to serve the suppressed. She also comes to know of the troubles in the life style of the natives. She understands that the Bantu race has become submissive to the whites in South Africa. She has interacted with the people on Atherton Mine, Later she has talked to their black servant Anna, who lives in backyard. Helen has observed lot of confusion taking place in the society because of social and colour barriers. Whenever she attends parties, she is sarcastically asked about her native friend Mary Seswayo making her feel uncomfortable. Her white friends think that befriending Mary is a useless charity to Helen but at the same time scare about Mary thinking that that she may be politically conscious. She is seeking education. So she can be one of the potential leaders whom already some people are looking for. Thus though the whites suppress the natives, they always worry about their existence. Through Mary's character, Gordimer clearly depicts the plight of the natives. The natives are prohibited in white areas; they cannot use entrances and benches. Even they cannot be offered lift by the whites. While Helen enjoys her freedom in the society by meetings and talking to Mary, Mary lives very carefully following restrictions just like all the urban Africans. Once when Helen goes out with Mary to buy text books, first time in her life she comes to know that Mary, being black is not allowed even to use lavatory. There is no public cloak room for native people in any shopping complex in Johannesburg.

Helen remembers that even at home, as in most households, the Africans' eating utensils are kept separately from the common family pool. Even if any stranger who visits her house takes that utensil, immediately the mother warns not to take that cup as it is used by the natives. But in Mary's friendship she contrasts and wonders about such kind of discrimination. Once when she is going out with Charles, she observes Mary walking on road with a large brown paper parcel drops her at Mariastad. She has thought of her acquaintance with the natives' life style in the Atherton. And generally people never go to a native location. But as a child with mother and later with Joel she has visited the native location in the Mine. She is melted with the conditions of the natives where they are living. Like her growing consciousness towards the life conditions of the natives, her position at home is also gradually changing. Initially there are clashes of opinion, the quick flare of defiance and disapproval in the shade of closeness between parents and children has changed as cold, silent and unexpressed beneath the difference of age. Now they are living in the intimacy of estrangement. And her friendship with Charles Bessemer is a happy thing to her parents as he is a doctor. But she always has a thought of leaving home and going to Johannesburg. The comfort and safeness of home have become irksome to her. She has felt muffled of from real life. But her mother does not accept with her sending out. So her restlessness is always oppressed. Even she has shown aversion to join her parents in a tour to England and Europe. She has expressed her interest to go alone or with a friend. "The simultaneous experience of a longing for warmth and closeness And a wild kicking irritation to be free bewildered me and made me moody. I seemed to have nowhere to lay my bundle of contradictions, and so I stood a kind of touchy guard over them. To my mother and Father I seemed more and more withdrawn and self willed. They pressed To themselves the sharp belief that I no longer need them; my mother Retaliated with the pretense that she no longer needed me, my father as if conceding me a right to it." *TLD* 183

Helen is shocked to know Mary's study conditions and wants to help her by providing shelter at her home Mary at her house in the play room, a place which is neither in the house nor outside of the house. She doubts about her mother's acceptance for it, as she knows well about her mother's objectionable attitude towards the natives. When she very humbly requests her mother, she does not accept for the stay of a native at home. Moreover she tells her to have her when she has her own home. She also sarcastically talks about her friendship with Joel, a Jew and not making friendship with the people who are decently brought up by people of their own standing. But simply Helen says that she will make friendship with whom she chooses. She is not interested in their standards. Even father also tries to convince her to think of her responsible position in job as well as society. He

expresses fear saying that if he accepts a native girl to stay at home he may be named as a communist. Both of her parents' reaction disgusts and frustrates her and shares the same with Joel and tells her interest in staying in Johannesburg.

The last section, *The City* has lot of political awareness just like the setting in the pre and post-1948 period. That is the period when National Party's Apartheid government has come into rule. It highlights the well-intentioned views of white liberals who feel alienated since apartheid intensifies in the South African society. It tells about Helen's attempts to become more politically aware and responsible in the apartheid society. She tries to break away from the racial and sexual stereotypes of her conventional life in Atherton and shifts to Johannesburg. Now there is lot of change in her. She starts wearing bolder clothes to look more confident. She starts sitting and moving with an ease and in an assuring way. Her outspoken attitude has made her critical about everything. There she has become a good friend to the Marcus couple, John and Jenny. They have together lived happily. There she comes into acquaintance of Paul with whom she is enticed a lot. He is an anthropologist who works as a welfare officer for Native Affairs Department. Being a government representative, he offers help to the natives and on the other hand collaborates with the radical black nationalists. Helen leaves university and works as a typist for sometime. Later she stops that job and lives in Paul's flat by observing the people's life. Gordimer conveys people's worrying about mounting number of weary battles which are caused because of apartheid when The Nationalist government wins in the elections. "Apartheid in public transport and buildings, the ban on mixed marriages, the suppression of communism bill, the language ordinance separating Afrikaans and English-speaking children in schools, the removal of colored voters from the common electoral roll and the setting aside of the Supreme court judgment that made this act illegal—passionately debated in Parliament with the United Labor Party forming the Opposition, inevitably lost to the Government before the first protest was spoken." *TLD*, 258

Helen's friends and the people around her are well conscious about the political conditions prevailing in the South African society. They regret about the Fascist Nationalists coming to power which makes them gloomy. Even Helen and Paul feel the same about the politically scenario in the country. But their circumstances are different as Paul has to work closely with the natives. Paul is daily, hourly conscious about the silent protests of the Africans. His life is completely reverse to that of an average Johannesburg person. Though the Nationalist rule is little bit changed materially in the beginning, later it has continued to humiliate the natives. They experience shockingly sordid living conditions, poverty, inarticulate horror towards the government which bursts into rebellion. Cabinet masters start addressing them as "Kaffirs" in the Parliament. They always discuss how to preserve the purity of white races of South Africa and how to keep the country immaculate. The African is always treated as outcast. Hence the natives have developed a kind of aversive attitude towards the whites unconsciously. Decrees and laws may pass over the heads of the people whom they concern, but there is no need of medium of literacy to express humiliation. It spreads dumbly even an animal and a child who cannot speak can understand such kind of humiliation. Thus it sinks into the life of different layer people.

When the Nationalist Government has planned to implement Apartheid, the existing segregation between the ordinary lives of white and black both socially and economically is little more tightened. The ban on mixed marriages is introduced and white and black men and women cohabit is also prohibited. Paul has observed some examples of white and colour cohabit are humiliated. In the beginning the relationship between Helen and Paul is very strong but later it has started debilitating when Paul blames her for his late meal. "Hell, Helen, you are becoming a rotten wife." *TLD*, 290

In another context, Helen's visit to a place where township riot have taken place is ridiculously commented by Paul. He says, "Helen's adventure at the barricades" *TLD*, 334.

As a great relationship is weakened and the society has become increasingly radical, finally Helen decides to leave South Africa like her Jewish friend Joel Aron. As he shows paternal wisdom, Helen always admires him and his role is morally strong. Their relationship remains unfulfilled because of the differences in their nationality. But finally Joel decides to go Israel. When both meet in Durban before the boats depart, the discussions between them bring many changes in Helen's opinions. She listens to some little native minstrels, singing in rain. Those sad voices make her extremely calm and make her think practically. She introspects whether she is running away from the risk of love, the guilt of being white or the danger of putting her ideals into practice. Finally she decides to return South Africa. Now, she is happy as she is out of illusions. It is phoenix illusion. Thus Gordimer shows growing liberal consciousness through her character Helen.

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45. Spiritual Elements in Paulo Coelho's 'By the River Piedra I Sat Down and Wept'

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Paulo Coelho is a Brazilian lyricist, theatre director, actor, journalist and novelist. He is one of the most successful authors of his generation. He is the recipient of not only Crystal Award by the World Economic Forum but also ample international awards. His books have been translated into a number of languages. He won the most prestigious Guinness Book of World Records for having the most translated books by a living author. Coelho had a spiritual awakening when he went to the pilgrimage of the Road to Santiago de Compostela in 1986. Paulo Coelho 's readers give value and esteem for his awareness of the problems in the world, his spiritual interests, his morality of character, his veracity, but most of all, for his ability to communicate with everybody. By the River Piedra I Sat Down and Wept is the first volume of Paulo Coelho's trilogy 'On the Seventh Day'. In this novel, the author describes the pilgrimage that the reader undergoes while going through the work. It's a journey from the physical plane to the spiritual plane. It is a one- way mind versus soul, doubt versus belief, and confusion versus tenacity. Ultimately soul overcomes the doubt. The physical world is composed of five essential elements so also the spiritual world is constituted by five elements. Everything in this Universe is made of the panchamahabhutas. Pancha literally means "five" and mahabhuta means "element" or "reality." These five physical elements are responsible for the structure of the universe. These are the building blocks of the material world. The five elements are: space, air, fire, water, and earth. Every element has its unique qualities.

The human body is made of these five primary physical elements, whereas the human soul is made of five primary constituent qualities like joy, love, wisdom, purity and peace. These five elements of the human body and the human soul are the building blocks of creation. Balancing these five physical elements on the earth for the Universe to stay in order, the human body is to stay in good health and the human soul is to stay in happiness and richness. If any imbalance takes place on the earth, it leads to natural calamities, in the human body, it leads to health disorders and in the human soul, it leads to vices such as anger, sorrow, greed etc. A person, who faces a lot of difficulties, can experience the above vices and can gradually transform with the guidance of the Supreme Beings. Coelho's protagonists confront difficulties and get transformed by some other human beings and supernatural beings. Paulo Coelho's By the River Piedra I Sat Down and Wept is different from many other books. His ideas and writings are sitting somewhere between spirituality, self-help, religion and fiction. Paulo Coelho's fundamental teachings are visible in each event, meetings and conversations of the characters in the novels. According to Coelho, everything/body is important, every movement is meaningful and ultimately nothing is insignificant. Coelho's each novel is an antidote to the situations take place in not only the lives of the characters in the novels but also the real life of the people. All of his books consist of his first hand information of moral and spiritual views. In an interview Coelho shares: "In a certain way I try to share with my readers my inner quest, that's basically my spiritual quest. I don't have anything to teach, I don't have anything to explain about the universe, I don't believe in explanations of the universe, but actually I do have something to share. It is how I am experiencing this strange and sometimes very tricky path . . . by sharing something, I realized that I'm not alone, that there [are] a lot of people that share with me the same preoccupations, the same ideas, the same ideals, and the same quest for a meaning for this life."

Paulo Coelho extends his views in an interview about receiving spiritual guidance or wisdom. In this context he speaks about the involvement of both the mind and the heart: 'There are those who are vague because they do know what they're doing, but who also know that the language of alchemy is addressed to the heart, and not to the mind'. Coelho thinks that spiritual guidance has a particular form. It is noted that the reputation of his teaching indebt much to the rejection of structured religion, similar to the way in which it offers an antidote to the insufficiency of atheistic existentialism in providing meaning, value and persistence. Spirituality is a personal and individual approach. Richard Winter comments: "For three hundred years or more, many philosophers and scientists have been

urging us to find our own meaning and identity without reference to religion. But in the last twenty years there has been a widespread rediscovery and acknowledgement of the importance of religion and spirituality”.

Paulo Coelho’s protagonist Pilar who is 28 year old young woman in *By the River Piedra I Sat Down and Wept* studying in a small village named Zaragoza. A letter from her childhood friend has given a sudden surprise for her. Her friend invites her to attend his lecture in the nearest village where she is studying. Pilar recollects the joys of her childhood days with him. She knows that he has travelled a lot and learnt abundantly. He attracts the woman from various places as his preachings are about the feminine face of God. Pilar spends a week with him who is and has been in love with her from his childhood. She listens to his lecture series and transforms herself from a cynic. She progresses towards the growth of her inward and outward personality. Ultimately, she accepts that the love is possible in this world and it cannot be a hazard to the goal of life. Pilar proved that love can give a potent support on his path of spirituality.

Spirituality is a process of self-transformation. According to Waaijman, spirituality means "aims to recover the original shape of man, the image of God. To accomplish this, the re-formation is oriented at a mold, which represents the original shape: in Judaism the Torah, in Christianity Christ, in Buddhism Buddha, in the Islam Muhammad.” Pilar and her friend, the two lovers have seen the Immaculate Conception in Spain and France. Their memories about the Pyrenees, incredible cathedrals, St. Teresa, indescribable sceneries in France, grotto, wine, well, gardens, snow hills, the medieval architectures, mountains, the kissing gestures, breaking the glass, magnificent paintings, Spanish love stories etc. are flooding vividly throughout the novel. The lovers share their views about love at first at the well in Saint Savin. Well is the symbol of unconditional love.

Water is a feminine symbol and a symbol of purity. It refers to the creation and generation. Water has no shape and colour so it changes according to the circumstances and situations. It is an intrinsic part of most spiritual beliefs. Its spiritual and healing properties are seen in rites and rituals. Different aspects of water reflect the vast array of civilizations that have made water the central element in all the holy practices. “A city can be moved but not a well. It’s around the well that lovers find each other, satisfy their thirst, build their homes, and raise their children. But if one of them decides to leave, the well cannot go with them. Love remains there, abandoned—even though it is filled with the same pure water as before.”

Pilar slowly learned that he has become a famous spiritual teacher who can perform miracles and curing diseases. He expresses his feelings towards her that he never stops loving her. He also says that in fact he has entered a seminary, and now is in the middle of making an important decision. He is in between the devil and the deep sea that he has to dedicate his life for the Church, or the woman he loves most. Though Pilar is very confident and independent woman falling in love with him and ruins her perfectly-organized life. When the time comes her heart betrays her sense, and she is soon falling in love with him. She always thinks that how she can attracts him. While accompanying him for seven days, Pilar has been reluctant towards God and her Catholic faith. But she starts to learn his spiritual ideas about the feminine side of God. He also explains her: “In order to find God, you have only to look around but meeting Him is not easy. The more God asks us to participate in His mysteries, the more disoriented we become, because He asks us constantly to follow our dreams and our hearts. And that's difficult to do when we're used to living in a different way. Remember that human wisdom is madness in the eyes of God.”(137) Conversations between Pilar and her friend throughout their journey are quest for spirituality. Paulo Coelho justifies all the physical and spiritual elements in the novel. The two lovers experience joy when they ponder over their life from childhood to present. Spiritual joy, is permeated with peace. It gives a sense of calm, of security, of complete quiet. It renders us more loving, more compassionate and inspires us with the desire to help others participate in our joy. Finally spiritual is a duty towards others. Paulo Coelho says in this novel: “Joy is sometimes a blessing, but it is often a conquest. Our magic moment helps us to change

and sends us off in search of our dreams. Yes, we are going to suffer, we will have difficult times, and we will experience many disappointments — but all of this is transitory it leaves no permanent mark. And one day we will look back with pride and faith at the journey we have taken.”(8) His wisdom transforms Pilar to listen to her heart and soul. He makes her understand that the call from him is nothing but the call from her soul. She binds herself with the exercise of 'the Other' till she gets realized. He makes her realize that 'the Other' will say how one should be like. He says to her about how to avoid it and how to get back the faith in God. At every moment, he guides her to get satisfaction and understand to live life fully and peacefully. She leads her life unsatisfied in Zaragoza but the journey with her friend is given her true love and mental peace. She purifies herself not only winning the heart of her childhood friend but also throwing her past into the water of Piedra. Ultimately, Paulo Coelho spreads the message that all the spiritual elements are interlinked in the life of all human beings.

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## 46. Bhartrihari`S Aphoristic Slokas

Bhartrihari is one of the greatest poets of Sanskrit Literature. Nothing in particular about his life is known to us. There are many stories about his birth, childhood and education. Bhartrihari's Trisati (Three hundred poems) is well-known throughout the Sanskrit-speaking world. They are full of aphorisms. An aphorism is a short, witty statement which contains general truth. Bhartrihari's slokas (poems) contain much truth and wisdom. They are about education, society, knowledge, wisdom, stupidity and so on. In the following sloka Bhartrihari describes how difficult it is to convince a `moorkha` (that is a stupid). The sloka is as follows: "Sakyo vaaraitum jalena hutabuk chatrena suryaa thapo/ Nagendro nisitankasena samadou dandena gourgardhabha/ Vyadhir bheshajanam grahaischa vividhair mantraprayogairvisham/ Sarvasyoushadhamasti sastra vihitam moorkhasya nastausdhadam." The meaning of the above sloka is as follows: It is possible to extinguish fire by water. We can escape the heat of the Sun by using an umbrella. A wild elephant can be brought under control by `ankusham` i.e., a goad. Donkeys and other animals can be controlled by a stick. Great diseases can be cured by medicine. Poisonous bites can be cured by `mantras` (incantations). But there is no medicine which is prescribed in Sastras which can mould or even convince a moorkha i.e., a stupid. It is very clear from the above sloka that it is very difficult to mould a stupid. Bhartrihari describes the greatness of the pious and stable minded yogis (hermits) in the following: "Asha nama nadee manoradha jala trushnatarangakula/Raga grahavateee vitarka vihaga dhairya druma dhvamsini/Mohavarta sudustaratigahana prottunga chintatatee/Tasyaha paragata visuddha manaso nandamti yogeeshwaraha." The river named ambition is filled with waters of desires, waves of wishes, crocodiles of passions, whirlpools of ignorance and an endless shore of depression and the river has the capacity to fell down the strong trees of courage; but the yogis (hermits) whose minds are pious can easily cross the river. (Vyragya Satakam-Trishna Dooshanam-Sloka No-10)

According to Monier-Williams: "Numbers of wise sayings have from time immemorial, been constantly quoted in conversation. Many, thus, orally current, were of such antiquity that to settle their authorship was impossible but occasional attempts were made to give permanence to the floating wisdom of the day, by stringing together in stanzas, the most celebrated maxims and sayings, like beads on a necklace, representing a separate topic, and the authorship of a whole series being naturally ascribed to men of known wisdom like Bhartrihari, Chanakya, much in the same way as the authorship of the Puranas and the Mahabharata was referred to the sage Vyasa." It is very clear from the above opinion that Bhartrihari's slokas are full of aphoristic, moral, wise and philosophical sayings which are useful to one and all. Bhartrihari's Trisati has brought him name and fame. In the Neeti Satakam he describes a stupid who is stubborn and unconvincing. In the Sloka -No: 4 he describes: "Labheta sikatasu tailamapi yatnata peedayan/Pibetcha mrigatrishnikasu salilam pipasardhitaha/Kadaa chidapi paryatan sasavishanamasadaye/Nnatu pratinvishita moorkhajana chittamaradhayet." The meaning of the above Sloka is as follows: We can get oil from sand by hard work; we can drink water from mirage : we can get the horn of a hare; but we cannot entertain a stupid. In another Sloka, Bratruhari describes: "Vyalam balamrunala tantu bhirasau roddham samujmbhate/Bhettum vajramanim sereeshakusumaprantena sannahyati/Madhuryam madhubinduna rachyitum ksharambudherihate/Moorkhanyaha pratinetumitchati balatsooktaihi sudhasyamdibihi." The meaning of the above Sloka is as follows: The person who tries to bind an elephant with a lotus root, the person who tries to cut a diamond with a DIRISENNA (That is Mimosa sirissa amp; Acacia Speciosa) flower, the person who throws a drop of honey into the sea in order to make it sweet, and the person who tries to convince a stupid with soft words are one and the same. The above images are wonderful. They make the reader to think about the mental condition of a stupid. They are useful to reader to know how difficult it is to convince a stupid. The above comparisons throw light on the poet's capacity in analyzing the mentality of a stupid who is not at In another Sloka Bratruhari opines



that: “Prahasya manimuddharen makara damstranara/Tsamudramapi samtaretprachala doormi malakulam/Bhujangamapi kopitam sirasi pushpavaddhdayet/Natu pratinivishta moorkhajana chittamaradhayet.” The meaning of the above Sloka is as follows: We can pluck out the gem from the mouth of a crocodile; we can cross the deep sea; we can bear the serpent on head by taming it but we cannot. The above lines make it sure that even the venomous creatures like serpents can be tamed whereas a stupid never allows himself to get convinced. It is because of his ego. In Sloka No: 10 Bhartruhari describes a stupid as: “Sakyo varayitum jalena hutabhuk chatrena sooryatapo/Nagendro nisitankasena samado dandena gaugardhabhaha/Vyadhirbheshajanamgrahaischa vividhairmantra prayogairvisham/Sarvasyaushadhamasti sastra vihitam moorkhasya nastyausadham.” The meaning of the above Sloka is as follows: Fire can be extinguished by water; the heat of the sun can be escaped with the help of an umbrella; a wild elephant can be controlled with ankusham (goad); an ox or a donkey can be controlled with a stick; diseases are cured by taking medicines; poisonous bites are cured with incantations but no medicine has ever been prescribed by Sastras to control the stupidity of a stupid. The above Sloka tells us the truth that a stupid is more problematic and dangerous than the serpent and it is hundred percent true. Thus Bhartruhari describes a stupid. His use of images is noteworthy. The above comparisons and contrasts are apt and thought-provoking. They bring out Bhartruhari’s worldly wisdom and deep understanding of human nature. Commenting on the greatness of Bhartruhari’s Trishati-Three Shatakams Macdonald says: “Scattered through the various departments of Sanskrit literature are apophthegm in which wise and noble, striking and original thoughts often appear in a highly finished and potential garb. Owing to universality of this mode of expression in Sanskrit literature, there are but few works consisting exclusively of potential aphorisms. The most important are the three collections by the highly gifted Bhartruhari entitled respectively, Niti Shataka or century on conduct, Srugara Shataka (century on sex) and Vairagya Shataka (century on renunciation)”. The above opinion seems to be convincing and is not far from truth. According to Professor Lasan, “The slokas of Bhartruhari are concise and principled; That is why they are accepted by all. His works will attain the best place in Indian literature”. The opinion of Professor Lasan is hundred per cent true because the slokas of Bhartruhari are full of aphoristic statements which contain much wisdom in them.

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### 47. Mary Tyler’s Insights into the Vision of Indian society in *My Years in Indian Prison*

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Mary Tyler narrated her prison experiences in the form of a book titled “*My years in Indian prison*”, which captures the imagination of the readers with a personal and emotional touch. Her diary describes the physical and mental trauma she underwent in Indian jail during political emergency in India (1975-77).-Her diary describes her days in Indian prison, wide spread gender discrimination, corruption, poverty, violence and other social evils. Mary takes pains to narrate everyday incidents of the prison. Her quest for justice and freedom play an important role in her diary as it analyses multiple problems. The diary demonstrates her attempts to integrate the different aspects of her personality and the prison experiences, which renders the piece a highly distinctive quality as an artistic product. Mary’s insight into the vision of Indian society shows her unique power of observation which is more illuminating than any propaganda. The paper explores how the diary forms the text in self recording the experience of the author and the significance and the purpose of the writing in prison. It also focuses on how the medium of diary helped her to fulfill the need of the self as a human being and as a woman.

The paper is a study of the prison diary (Autobiography) of the firebrand British lady’s *My Years in an Indian Prison* which was translated into Hindi as *Bharatiya jailon mein panch Saal* by AnandSwaroop Varma. The book published in 1977 provides a very personal and humane account of wretched life inside Indian jails. Mary visited India at the invitation of Amalendu Sen Who is an Indian friend of hers, she married him three months later and a month later both of them were arrested. Tyler was charged with being involved with the Naxalite movement or the Maoist armed movement that had broken out in many parts of India in the late 1960s. The period of her visit to India, Calcutta was that of a greater turmoil in the city everywhere. Young people also spent all their lives in the city giving up home, comfort and education to share hard life of the peasants, sacrificing themselves in the urge to create a better India. The theme of oppression is felt throughout her work. When Indira Gandhi declared a state of Emergency in 1975, a large number of people of India were deprived of their freedom and fundamental rights and put in jails. The event remains a dark chapter in the history of the subcontinent. In fact, India is a country committed to secularism and democracy .But earlier promises were broken. The present paper focuses on the British woman writer who was humiliated and incarcerated in India due to autocracy. The conflict of values in politics is reflected in the prison writings in the background of political Indian history. The theme of political struggle is clearly observed in the prison diary of Mary Tyler. She portrays the politicization of India during the political Emergency and shows that the Non-violent revolution is the only solution to national problems. Thrust in her writing has been governance, reforms, resources efficiency and issues such as freedom, democracy and corruption .She finally points out that there is a need to know the history of political Emergency in India to look for a solution for the sake of the next generation. One of the aims of writing Prison Diary as Autobiography has been to reveal to the readers, the injustice, oppression, helplessness and struggles of many of the disadvantaged people of India.

The autobiography is a detailed account of the five years, Mary Tyler spent in prison encapsulating the torture, the corrupt system, the code of behavior among inmates, the protest against brutality, the helplessness and what keeps the hope alive among prisoners. She was acquitted in all cases that the police charged her --Vara Vara Rao remarked that “Mary Tyler’s *My Years in an Indian Prison* was palpably realistic because she had lived in close contact with prisoners in a Bihar jail” (Captive Imagination 178). Who are the people in jails? Are they dangerous criminals, a threat to society? Why should people worry about these people? What are the conditions in jails? What is the effect of confinement on the human psyche, away from family, friends and relatives, persistently nagged by fears? Caught in their own complexes, with no one to console them, how does a prisoner live through his\her years in jail? *My years in Indian prison* answer all these questions. Mary Tyler was brought to her cell in Hazaribagh Central Jail, Bihar, India in June 1970. The police used

derogatory words and interrogated her. They labeled her a Maoist, a dangerous communist revolutionary. They searched her person, taking away her money, wristwatch, handkerchief and hairclips. The Autobiography opens with Mary being interrogated by the police. They shoot questions and false statements at her:

“You are Chinese”

“No, British”

“I say you are Chinese. Where is your passport?”

“In Calcutta.”

“You are lying. I have your passport. Do you want to see it? (Tyler15).

Man’s cruelty to man is unbelievable. Mary Tyler’s account of her years in Hazaribagh jail reflects largely the background and nature of her co-prisoners crimes and inhuman atmosphere in atmosphere in Indian jail. The police charged Mary Tyler with fifty-one others including her husband, Amalendu Sen with insurgency. The suffocating and deplorable condition of women in the prison according to Tyler.” There were never less than forty prisoners and when we finally left Jamashedpur two years later, there were forty four women and twelve children sharing the fifteen feet square cage”. The daily interrogation took place at frequent intervals and the newspaper emblazoned with headlines describing her as “Gorilla girl”, accusing her variously of having tried to blow up a uranium complex, engaging in a forest gun battle with police and bombing a police station left Mary Tyler in distress.

The treatment meted out to those arrested under the pretext of being naxalites breaks even those standards set by jail authorities themselves. Lack of proper accommodation, bad food and an almost complete absence of medical facilities were the basic problems the prisoners encounter. The food served to the prisoners was soggy rice mixed with stones and paddy husk, blackish green water consisting of a few lentils and five or six pieces of potatoes complete with spackled skin pieces and coated with a slimy sauce. The monsoon season worsened the situation of the prisoners who were packed in rooms with leaking roofs soaking them when it rained, during freezing temperatures. The prisoners covered themselves in dirty old blankets. Mary Tyler was stunned by the unresponsiveness of the jail staff who never ventured out in those downpours and took a note of their problems.

Mary Tyler also states the unresponsiveness of the Indian authorities who were disputing the validity of her marriage with Amalendu Sen and prevented her meeting from her husband Amalendu. Mary Tyler has learned of many prisoners, several of whom had young children, too small at the time of arrest to separate from their mothers, but grow up in jail. Mary being an alien shares her experiences of joy and sorrow with them overcoming the barriers of language and is touched by the co-prisoners problems. She became closer to them and empathizes with their feelings. The label attached to the writer Mary Tyler as Gorilla Girl / Naxalite leader points out to the stark discrepancies in the police system of Hazaribagh Central jail. She observes the ill treatment of the prisoners, which also adds to the poor functioning of the democratic system in India.

The appearance of an exquisite lady, the secretary of coalmine, who was arrested in connection with the murder of a mine manager at the Kedla colliery, Hazaribagh captured the attention of Mary Tyler and other prisoners. The treatment of the jail authorities befitting her status as a “political prisoner” increased their curiosity. Expensive western foods, Indian delicacies, costly garments and countless pairs of sandals were provided to her. The political prisoner commanded several servants from among the female prisoners to work for her from dawn to dusk for no payment. The political prisoners were treated with indulgence and difference by the jail staff, who were uncomfortably aware that in the ebb and flow of the type of politics prevalent in India, those now in custody might one day be in power (48). In contrast, when Amalendu’s mother visited the jail

she was allowed neither to see Mary nor to leave the clothing she had brought for Mary. Mary Tyler also focuses on the ill treatment of a particular class of co-prisoners who were termed untouchables by many orthodox Hindus. The degradable conditions of Harijans, who were called unclean or untouchable can be seen when others refused to touch them or eat the food they prepared. Mary enjoyed the cooking of one Harijan lady, Saibonissa. She was moved by the generosity and open-heartedness of women who had little but so unhesitatingly shared whatever they possessed. (55)

Mary Tyler states the police, who failed to address the problems of prisoners and who failed to stand by the oath taken by them at the time of serving the nation are ignored because of greed or lust for power. The practice of untouchables in prison shocked Mary. Gandhi said “Untouchability is crime, Harijans were called as people of God.” the words of such great leaders were completely ignored in a democratic and secular country like India. Mary Tyler introduces a few of her jail inmates Rohini, Kalpana, Sukri, Saibunissa with whom she shared her feelings of joy and sorrow. The male officers’ visit to the female ward without a word or sound of warning (ignoring the bell they are supposed to ring to enter the female ward) surprised the female prisoners completely. The screams at the prison of suspected Naxalites shock even the neighborhood. A reader wrote to one of the newspapers that he was unable to sleep at night because of the screams of people being tortured in the police station near his home (63). The failure of police in identifying the naxalites and painting everyone as naxalites and killing them shows to what extent the law functions properly. The denial of bail in a relatively minor case for a harijan shows the corrupt government system. Mary Tyler’s new companions at the new jail who lived in a world of ghost, witches, and evil spirits, kings, queens and superstitions. Most of them had never seen a newspaper but were eager to learn and asked Mary many questions

Mary Tyler also presents the wide spread superstitions among the female prisoners in the jail. Anyone who was repeatedly ill, was considered to be under the evil eye. Some put black marks on their children’s foreheads and tied charms around their waist to ward off evil spirit. The prevalence of child marriages though banned by law and the alarming tales of girls who had run off with men of their own choice, the punishment imposed on the girls presented Mary Tyler with status given to women in Indian society. The husband was such as revered figure that most of the Indian women would not even utter their husband’s name, It was regarded as a sin to have one’s head uncovered in the presence of a male person, or to talk to one’s father –in-law or one’s husband’s elder brother. Mary Tyler narrates the stories of a few of her female companions who had been regularly beaten by their husband’s for no proper cause. The vulnerable conditions of women presented by Mary Tyler depict the widespread inequality of women in all respects. Women, who is considered a backbone of any family is looked upon with disrespect by many people. They were tortured mentally and physically. Mary Tyler’s act of kindness in nursing a sick lady and restoring her to normal health shows her care and affection for fellow-prisoners. Mary Tyler though a foreigner adapts herself to Indian culture which is seen when she puts vermilion in her parting hair to resemble a married woman.

Mary Tyler presents the vulnerable conditions at Chatra a sub jail, thirty meters from, Hazaribagh by stating that the prisoners there suffered from various diseases due to lack of medical facilities. Mary says that premature deaths were almost an everyday occurrence in such jails. The death of an eighteen month old boy who became a victim due to lack of medical facilities in Chatra jail left Mary and others prisoners in a pool of grief. The practice of selling the prisoner is clothing quota by the Assistant Jailer and the convicts in charge and entering in the books as issued to prisoners revealed the amount of corruption in Jail. Ujwal kumar singh mentioned a comment on the condition of jails in his work during Emergency “The story of Hazaribagh was not an exception. The condition of naxalite prisoners in West Bengal jails was no better” (232, Political prisoners in India). Justice delayed and denied to prisoners in Jail showed the lapses in the law and government. Mary Tyler puts forth the Deputy High commission secretary’s proposal for her to agree for voluntary

repatriation. Mary was also warned by telling her that she could be sentenced to twenty years imprisonment or sometimes death sentence.

Mary Tyler's diary reveals the attitude of particular class of people towards inter caste marriages. Mary was surprised to notice the power of caste system in a secular state of India. In jail she faces a Hindu woman who refuses to touch the food cooked by non-Hindu or Harijans and the taboos she adhered to. An example of how caste rigidity could serve the purposes of those elements in society who wanted for whatever reason, to hinder progress was given me by one of the wardresses, who said that in her village the Brahmans members of the "highest" Hindu caste had warned the people not send their children to the local school where some of the teachers were Christians and harijans ; contact with these people would make them "lose caste"(100).

The prevalence of caste system even in Indian prison reveals the deep rooted mentality of orthodox Indians. Even after independence the questions like " kya jat hai"? Presents the individuals bent of mind towards castes. The deplorable conditions of women prisoners and wardens who were sexually exploited were the problems that bothered Mary Tyler. Mary Tyler's protest for the fellow prisoners for justice bears fruit at times. The widespread and rampant incidents corruption in Jail administration has a place in Mary's diary. Mary observes that not all the violations are penalized and it was the poor and quite often the innocent who are victimized. Mary's love for India can be evidently drawn from her diary where she gives a helping hand to protest against injustice for the co-prisoners while in jail. The rich and the poor, the high and the low caste discrimination among the people especially the rulers in a democratic country like India disturb Mary Tyler. These words show Mary's concern for her fellow prisoners. Hindus considering childbirth as dirty business fit to be handled by women of the chamars, one of the Harijan castes upsets her deeply. The lack of medical facilities and female doctors to attend to women during childbirth and leaving the mother child to their fate presses the need a for the change in the attitude of men towards women and society together. The ailment of the prisoners suffered from in the jail due to poor sanitary conditions included illness all time, symptoms of sick liver and kidney, body pains, anemia, intestinal parasites, boils, sores, and many other symptoms of malnutrition or vitamin deficiency.

Mary Tyler's interaction with her co-prisoners Dulali and Kumari focuses once again on the prevalence of caste system and gender discrimination in poor country like India. Dulali, a Harijan woman was considered untouchable. Mark Tyler shares that the wardens and a few others find Harijans food too dirty to eat, but they were quite happy to accept the bribes .The family background of another Hindu Peasant, Kormi disturbed Mary Tyler. She came back feeling hurt because the duty warden had said, what,do you mean to tell me that Tyler eats food touched by a lavatory cleaner?it was a pity he had gone away ,otherwise I would have told him straight away what I thought of his comment: like the rest of the staff , though he might find Harijans food too dirty to eat , he was quite happy to accept the bribes they gave him (152).The Holi celebrations were a memorable experience marked as a new stage in relationship among the women prisoners. The celebration of Holi festival marks a new stage of relationship which is a unique experience in Mary Tyler's life. The atmosphere of harmony, the mingling of so many different types and castes, the overcoming of so many inhibitions and prejudice, was something unique in Mary Tyler's Jail experience (173). The news about the death of Mary Tyler's mother left Mary in a pool of tears her mother's words to stay optimistic smothered her mind throughout her stay in the Indian jail. Mary's friendship with a tribal girl Leoni from whom Mary comes to know how the wardens lived a miserable life where sexual harshment was inevitable part of the oppression these women encounter.

Mary Tyler was curious when she came to know that the Soviet Union, a country which was supposedly concerned with the well-being of the world's oppressed people declared its all-out support for the action of the India government. Ms Gandhi's Emergency led to the fixation of her trial dates several weeks before 4<sup>th</sup> July 1975. Mary's lawyer whispered that all the cases against her were to be withdrawn. It was decided by the prosecution to withdraw the case on the ground of "inexpediency".

Mary did not even notice the peculiar wording drafted by lawyer sent specially from Delhi for the occasion until the High commission secretary present at the hearing pointed it out to Mary Tyler. The wording was hastily amended. Mary realized that she was to be acquitted on ‘grounds of expediency’, because her further detention would be prejudicial to the good relations between two commonwealth countries, India and Britain. The judge remarked that these grounds were very weak, however he had heard nothing in the evidence so far adduced to make him object to the petition. The judge called Mary to the witness stand and said, “You are acquitted of all charges. Go and be Happy “. Said, “How is it possible to be happy with so many people still held jail without trial (185). Mary’s remark expresses her deep concern for her fellow prisoners. The police officer presented Mary with a deportation order instructing her to leave the country (India) within seven days. The order was dated 17<sup>th</sup> June and signed by the Joint secretary to the Govt of India. The British Council officer visited Mary and booked a plane ticket to England the next day. Mary could not sleep and was constantly remembering her inmates and her diaries that she had written in jail. Mary longed to see Amalendu and his family but in vain. Mary’s journey from the jail to railway station saying goodbye to all her inmates in Jail left many in tears. The beautiful countryside of Bengal, banyan trees, bamboo thicket mud houses on route to railways station made her feel how much she loved India. Reflecting on the warm VIP welcome at the airport, long journey by plane, interview by a journalist and the thought about Amalendu, she reached Britain. Mary was given a warm welcome in her native land. Mary Tyler’s concern for Amalendu, Kalpana, Bina and thousand of alleged naxalites who are still in Jail without exception and in conditions very worse. As C.L.L.Jayaprada stated her comment on prison life “Thus jail become a mirror to reflect the captivity and slavery of the people in the world outside” (Prison Writing in India 98).

According to Mary, India can be considered as a truly independent India, a better India only when equal status is given to women with men and women are respected in the society and not considered as rich men’s playthings. Apart from inequalities of gender, those of castes and classes also exist in Indian. Corruption and favoritism also work systems of governance and justice. Mary remarked unless the burning problems are addressed the India’s agony will continue. India had gained independence 60 years ago. But nothing had changed for its poor. While her focus is on the judicial system, which fails to give speedy justice to under trails and the administration, which is full of bottlenecks she also describes, graphically the discrimination, women prisoners undergo due to class, caste and gender. Though the book is a powerful depiction of Mary Taylor’s long struggle with the judicial system to have a fair trial and get released also portrays powerfully her positive spirit and courage. As critics leave noted later, her look is a source of inspiration for many young people who dreams of bringing change in social and political conditions in India. Here is an uncommon late of honesty, quiet suffering, heroism and sacrifice.

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## 48. The Colonial Allegory: J.M. Coetzee’s *Waiting for Barbarians*

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*Contemporary Literary Perspectives*

*Waiting for Barbarians* is strategically set in an indeterminate moment when an increasingly defensive imperialism launches vengeful attacks against its enemies. The novel is published in 1980, a year before Gardiner's *July's People*, as Stephen Clingman in the *Novels of Nadine Gordimer* puts it: ...it shares with the latter work, the semiotic project of seeing the present through the age of the future, in other words, of decoding the signs of and codes of the present through the perspectives made possible by imagining the future (1986:202). The novel crystallises the central issue of the debate conceiving the ethical vision of Coetzee's fiction, and his importance as a novelist. It has obvious ramifications for the White opponent of apartheid South Africa in 1980, the year of its publication. The novel presents an allegory of imperialism that draws parallel to the divergent political situations of contemporary South African concerns to lend the novel gain its compositional roots of realism. The novel centres on a frontier outpost in an unknown land at an unknown time, a walled town reinforced by the portentous term 'Empire' which stands as an emblem of mixed portents sagaciously represented by history. The narrative unfolds itself through a magistrate serving the Empire for a long time and who inevitably becomes empathetic outsider of cruelty, and heinous torture exacted by the bearers of the military office. He focuses on the condemnation of Empire, through a painful process of self-evaluation and self-critique. The eventful disclosure of the magistrate's own remonstrance against the imperialist prejudices helps him arrive at a burgeoning ethical stance. By contrast, history becomes objectified as History-as- myth. Partly constituting and partly legitimizing Empire's terrorism. As Frank Kermode in *The Sense of an Ending: Studies in the Theory of Fiction* says: What has made it impossible for us to live in time like fish in water, like birds in air, like children? It is the fault of Empire! Empire has created the time of history. Empire has located its existence not in the smooth recurrent spinning time of the cycle of the seasons but in the jagged time of rise and fall, of beginning and end, of catastrophe (1967:133).

The novel begins with colonel Joll and his men from Empire's Third Bureau arrive at the settlement to begin operations to deal with the perceived Barbarian threat. The frontier marks the point beyond which the Empire's domain gives way to territory inhabited by the nomadic barbarians. Joll and his men are torturers and interrogators driven by the directive to discover the 'truth' a 'truth' predetermined by Manichean ethos, and its own schema for self- assertion. Joll and his men round up prisoners and interrogate them. One of the torture victims, a young barbarian girl, has been nearly blinded, and has deformed ankles, which were broken by her captors. The magistrate develops an ambivalent interest in her – which reveals to him his affinity with her torturers – and she becomes the catalyst for his journey of self discovery. The magistrate takes the crucial decision to return her to her own people which can be seen as a device of reparation. He undertakes to provide her a decent shelter gently bringing her deformed and defiled body to order and finally paying her back to her people. I wanted to do what was right, of wanted to make reparation of will not deny this decent impulse, however mined with more questionable motives. There must always be a place for penance and reparation (1980:88). On his return, he is branded a collaborator with the barbarian *enemy* and he is tortured and reviled. The novel closes with the abandonment of the settlement by the Third Bureau garrison and the remaining population stays on *Waiting for the Barbarians*. The over Powered Third Bureau garrison is left in the lurk by the elusive nomadic people who by their stealth have sabotaged the operations of the Empire.

The novel takes its title from the poem of the same name by the Greek poet C.P. Cavafy which presents an anticipation of decolonization which does not occur. The poem offers an image of Roman Empire in decadent stasis, awaiting the arrival of 'the barbarians' who will take over the mantle of the government. The barbarians, in failing to arrive, in ceasing to exist, can no longer offer 'a kind of solution. In one sense the 'waiting' is a waiting for the imperialist self prophecy to be

fulfilled. This prophesy is partly a teleology of imperial history, justified by the presence of a preconceived *Other*. It is this ambivalence and contradiction identified in the Cavafy's poem that Coetzee's novel echoes.

At the basic level, the magistrate's story suggests an allegory of the situation of the contemporary South African liberal, facing the fact of complicity in apartheid. The novel having been set in an indeterminate time place has the potential of allegory to undermine the codes of the specific political hegemony. As Anne Waldron Neumann in *Escaping the "Time of History"?* Present Tense and the Occasion of Narration in J.M. Coetzee's *Waiting for Barbarians*," puts it: ..in a situation of such extreme political and economic oppression as South Africa's – where even visions, if they are too specific, can seem to impose a history – an unspecified, ahistorical allegory may make a more acceptable offering, which is, because more acceptable, perhaps even politically more efficacious (1990:81). Coetzee's Empire represents a consummation of the frontier hypothesis in colonial thinking since the eighteenth century, but specific features connect it to the South Africa of the period when the novel was being written. Indeed, its very remoteness, its deliberate anachronisms, and its denial of historical plausibility resonate with the somewhat phantasmagoric quality of the state's projection and vocabulary at this time. Moreover, the arrival at the Magistrate's outpost of the Third Bureau, led by Clonel Joll, marks the point where the State shifts gear and becomes more blatantly terror- ridden.

Undaunted by the absence of a tangible 'enemy', Joll and his soldiers torture an old man and his young nephew who say they were coming to the village to seek medical attention for the boy. Either Joll or the Soldiers under his command kill the old uncle and torture the boy by twisting a small knife in his skin. Joll's attitude toward this murder and torture reveal the essence of his character.

First I get lies, you see – this is what happens – first lies, then pressure, then more lies, then more pressure, then the break, then more pressure, then more lies, then more pressure, then the break, then more pressure, then the truth (1980:5).

These actions reveal Joll's barbarian character, which remains consistent throughout the novel and serves as a focal point for the reflections of the narrator, a magistrate who for years has been the lawgiver in the frontier village of about three thousand people and who, prior to the Joll's arrival, had looked forward to a quiet retirement. The magistrate is at once a servant of the same empire that Joll represents and an ethical and humane man who is repelled by Joll's barbarities.

The second section of the novel begins with the magistrate observing a "barbarian" girl begging on the streets. One of Joll's captives she has been questioned, tortured and left behind to survive or die. The magistrate sees her ankles have mended crookedly after having been broken and that she has a strange way of regarding him. The girl's mystery is partly the result of torture. Foucault argues in *Discipline and Punish* that the purpose of torture is to get to the soul, the last vestige of selfhood in which resistance lies buried. As such torture is in fact a way of producing the soul, for it writes soul hood on the body through pain (29). Later, after being tortured himself, the magistrate uses language similar to that of Foucault's He (Mandel) deals with my soul: everyday he folds the flesh aside and exposes my soul to the light (118). The magistrate attends to washing of her feet and takes the basic form of atonement or expiation. This is a further significant implication, introducing the novel's parodic link with the moral framework of South African liberal humanism. The washing of the feet invokes this context, placing the emphasis on liberalism's Christian component – a nuance that brings to mind, the figure of Alan Paton. The liberal Christian path to social justice through forgiveness and reconciliation has as its literary correlative the religious tragedy of *Cry, the Beloved Country*. Coetzee in *Waiting for Barbarians* emphasizes a gentle critique of this heritage, a critique that repoliticizes and eroticizes it, displaying liberalism's fetishization of victim hood and revealing it



as a more humane but still essentially self-validating and dominating form of Soul formation. Thus, looking at the image of himself in the partially blinded eyes of the girl, the magistrate begins to see the image of Joll: I am disquieted, “what do of have to do to move you?” ... “Does no one more you:”; and with a shift of horror I behold the answer that has been writing all the time offer itself to me in the image of face masked by two black glasy insect eyes from which there comes no reciprocal gaze but only my doubled image cast back to me ... No! No! No! ... There is nothing to link me with torturers (44). The realization of complicity proves to be intolerable for the magistrate. He tries to forget the girl by paying more frequent visits to the bird woman, but without effect. Gradually, the conviction grows that he should undertake a journey to the barbarian to restore the girl to her people.

A powerful contributory factor in this decision is his recurring dream in which he sees children building a fort of snow in the middle of a wide plain. The dreams crystallize in lucid imagery the meaning of his desires for continuity and reciprocity. In their play the children copy the form of life the magistrate knows. They are building a castle, analogous to the magistrate’s outpost. The central image is that of a young girl who sits hooded with her back toward the advancing magistrate. At first he is unable to imagine her face, later, he peeks around and sees a face Blank, featureless; it is the face of an embryo or a tiny whale; it is not a face at all but another part of the human body (37). In the next dream, he looks, at her again, but this time he sees that She is herself, herself as of have never seen her, a smiling child, the light sparking on her teeth and glancing from her jet-black eyes (53).

The implications are clear: through the sequence of dreams, the child acquires greater definition, offering herself as an achieved individuality, a process that contrasts directly with the magistrate’s experience in relation to the captured girl. The internal conflict of the magistrate manifests itself in his relationship with the girl. When he takes her into his home he knows immediately that this is at once an act of compassion and coercion: The distance between myself and her torturers, I realize, is negligible I shudder (29). His first act with her – one that he repeats time after time – is in its outward form sacramental: he bathes, massages, and oils her feet and broken ankles, much as Mary, the sister of Lazarus, anointed the feet of Jesus. The magistrate, however, doubts, his motives in performing this ritual. The first time that he does it he is aware that while it is a gesture of kindness to the girl, it is also a means of escape for him: I lose myself in the rhythm of what I am doing. I lose awareness of the girl herself (28). He even wishes to “obliterate” the girl, whom he considers “ugly” and sees himself as no better than her torturers: I behave in some ways like a lover – of undress her, I bathe her, I stroke her, I sleep beside her – but I might equally tie her to a chair and beat her, it would be no less intimate (43) The magistrate feels guilty because he thinks that in his ministrations to the girl he is attempting to decipher her scars in order to understand their meaning: Is it then the case that it is the whole woman I want, that my pleasure in her is spoiled until these marks on her are erased and she is restored to herself --- Is it she I want or the traces of a history her body bears? (64) The other end of Coetzee’s novel is the magistrate’s evolving ethical awareness. The Magistrate himself passes mentally between the unclean and the clean as his fascination with the torturer leads to identification. Like some nineteenth – century nihilist out of Turgenev, he finds the idea of complete leveling destruction a momentarily attractive beginning of reform: It would be best ... if these ugly people were obliterated from the face of the earth and we swore to make a new start, to run an empire in which there would be no more injustice, no more pain (24). Not surprisingly, this flight of fancy is short-lived. In Joll’s temporary absence, the magistrate returns to the day to day certainties, administering the law and feeding and healing the prisoners to prepare them for a return to their former lives. A dramatic change takes place when the magistrate returns to the village after reuniting the girl with her people. He is arrested by Joll’s minions for *treasonously consorting with the enemy*. Stripped off his magisterial powers and cast into prison, he feels a tremendous sense of elation at being a “freeman”. His alliance with the empire is over. He maintains his sense of humility: In my opposition there is nothing heroic let me not for an instant forget that (78). His incarceration affords time for reflection and the development of his ethical views: I should

never have allowed the gates of the town to be opened to the people who assert that there are higher considerations than those of decency (81).

At the same time, he must not succumb to the same plague that has infected Joll. After seeing a file of “barbarian” prisoners whose hands have been wired to their pierced cheeks, he thinks, What has become important above all is that I should neither be contaminated by the atrocity that is about to be committed nor poison myself with impotent hatred of its perpetrators ... let it at the very least be said ... there existed one man who in his heart was not a barbarian (104). The magistrate is reminded of the first round of interrogations of the girl, as he witnesses the barbarians, and is moved to mount a certain resistance particularly when a hammer is drawn out for the purpose of breaking the prisoner’s feet, a fate suffered by the girl. At this point he expresses old-fashioned, liberal values of decency. Coetzee’s literary precedent would appear to be Kafka’s *In the Penal Colony* – notably in Joll’s writing *Enemy* on the backs of the prisoners and in the magistrates resounding “No!” Look! I shout, ‘we are great miracle of creation! But from some blows this miraculous body cannot repair itself! How - ! words fail me. ‘Look at these men! I recommence. ‘Men!’” (107) On that occasion, he also tried to console himself by elevating his role to that of the witness to suffering, a role sanctified with an air of tragedy: When some men suffer unjustly, ‘I said to myself, ‘it is the fate of those who witness their suffering to suffer the shame of it : But the specious consolation of this thought could not comfort me” (139). The Magistrate’s liberalism however does not provide a final position either. For one thing, as he acknowledges, it is easier to assert standards of fair play than to call for justice or the surrender of power. Indeed, none of the options available to the magistrate has lasting validity; in fact, it is more typical that events leave him feeling baffled and stupid.

In the sixth and the last section of the book, the colonel and the magistrate, have a final, climactic encounter. On unfamiliar terrain, Joll’s troops have been routed and slaughtered by the barbarians. Badly in need of mounts and provisions, the ragged survivors return to pillage the frontier out post before continuing their desperate retreat. In Joll’s absence, the magistrate has resumed his position as administrator of law; he is cleanly clothed, his beard trimmed, he has regained a sense of dignity. Joll appears in a state of desperation his dark glasses are gone: he locks the door of his carriage against the magistrate out of fear. Staring through the window glass of the carriage at the torturer, whom he sees clearly now, the magistrate must struggle against the plague of hatred. An urge runs through me to smash the glass, to reach in and drag the man out through the jagged hole, to feel his flesh catch and tear on the edge, to hurl him to the ground and kick his body to pulp (146). Ultimately, he perceives that it is only through *seeing* the other in the imagination that we are able to overcome such hatred. The magistrate has attained sufficient vision to overcome his double thought identification with the torturers through a will to the truth. In his dreams and in his conscious mind he has seen his compassion for the barbarian girl as the key to the labyrinth. Near the end of the novel the magistrate reflects: To the last we will have learned nothing. In all of us, deep down there seems to be something granite and unteachable. (143).

There is no indication that the public statement and pointed writings of J.M. Coetzee, Alan Paton, Nadine Gordimer, Andre Brink, Alex la Guma, Athol Fugard, and others have altered the beliefs of those perpetrating the turmoil in South Africa and elsewhere. In Coetzee’s world one makes ethical choices with little expectations of improving the external scheme of things. Rather, such choices make life more bearable moment by moment for the individual in the face of untroubled certainties. In the last scene of *Waiting for Barbarians*, after Colonel Joll has retreated to the capital along with his troops, the frontier village returns to momentary peace, waiting for barbarians. The magistrate’s final thoughts convey the essence of Coetzee’s sense of human condition: “It is not a bad snowman. This is not the scene I dreamed of. Like much else now a days I leave it feeling stupid, like a man who lost his way long ago but presses on along a road that may lead nowhere.”

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## 49. Prodding Act in the Novels of Shashi Deshpande

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Indian woman writers have made the most significant contribution in the field of fiction. Among Indian woman English novelists, Shashi Deshpande occupies a prominent position. Shashi Deshpande, a renowned Indo-English writer and a prominent the Sahitya Academi Award, possesses deep insight into the female psyche. In India, where women have pre-designed roles, which does not allow any room for individualism, identity and assertion, Shashi Deshpande has emerged as a writer possessing deep insight into the female psyche. To create like “phenomenal woman”. Shashi Deshpande portrays modern, educated and career-oriented middle class women who are quite sensitive to the eternal changing times and situations. Her women are aware of the cultural and social shortcomings to which they are subjected in this male-dominated society. They rebel against well-entrenched social inertia. Quietly aware of the predicament of a woman in this male-Chauvinist society, especially when she is not economically and ideologically independent. Her women stand at the crossroads of traditions, caught up in a conflict between their family and professional roles, between individual aspiration and social demands. From the traditional roles of daughter, sister, wife and mother, they emerge as individuals in their own right. They achieve it not by being brazen feminists or iconoclasts but by a gradual process of introspection and self-realization. They are neither trail-blazers nor self-effacers, Deshpande herself calls them “middle of the road kind.” Along with articulating the frustration and disappointments of middle class educated women who experience the social and cultural oppression in the male-dominated society, the present paper attempts to explore the budding of new women unwilling to be rubber dolls for others to move who aspire self-reliance through education, defy the patriarchal notions that enforce them towards domesticity and assert their individuality, in *Dark Holds No Terrors* and *A Matter of Time*. The Indian society basically being the male-dominated society does not allow tolerance for a better woman even within a marriage. ‘Instead of getting her problems solved after her marriage, her problems get intensified by the male chauvinistic attitudes, beliefs of the society affect the husband wife relationship.

Saru is the heroine of her first novel *The Dark Holds No Terror* (1980). The novel is the story of a marriage on the rocks. Sarita (called Saru) is a “two in one woman” who in the daytime is a successful doctor and at night a terrified trapped animal in the hands of her husband. Manohar (called Manu) who is an English teacher in a third rate college, is a jealous husband and the victim of inferiority complex. Saru is not happy in his company. She is unable to bear the sexual sadism of her husband. She is highly self-willed and her problems ensue because of her oversized ego and innate love for power over others. She defies traditional codes at the slightest threat to her importance as that in what she possessed and craved for in her mother’s house. She is a broad minded woman and realizes that economic independence alone could be an insurance against subordination or suppression. She moves from the first ‘inner space’ to another inner space’ to become an independent and strong woman. She wants to prove herself as three angles, like biological, psychological, and social. Saru wants to walk into the wide world.

Shashi Deshpande’s second novel *If I Die Today* (1982) is a campus fiction. It is the story of Manju has been a loving and affectionate wife before she turned into an emotional pretzel. Now she is neither content nor confident. She is in a rather miserable state and unable to see that her feeling or misery are not due to her faults. She seems to have become a victim of what psychologists call a passive and aggressive. Manju does not feel any pleasure even in her motherhood. She thinks that she is only like a breeding animal. Their marriage is simply a physical union and there is a great vacuum in their mutual understanding and love. In this way we find the Manju the ‘given’ motherhood is a burden. Manju is crying for freedom but it is not possible for her. In the novel she says “I thought its trap keeping you in cage until you lose the desire for freedom, until you lose the desire for freedom, until you forget what the world ‘freedom’ means.” The fate of a Hindu family

woman is related to her partner, In the case of the novel “Roots and Shadows” (1983) has a theme of tradition and modern views among the female characters of Shashi Deshpande. The novel deals with a woman’s attempt to assert her individuality and realize her freedom. Have you noticed that the wife always walk a few steps behind her husband? That’s important very important, balance it’s symbolic of the truth. A wife must always be a few feet behind her husband. If he’s an MA, you should be a B.A.If has 5’4” tall, you should n’t be more than 5’3”tall. If he’s earning five hundred rupees, you should never earn more than four hundred and ninety-nine rupees. That’s the only rule to follow if you want a happy marriage....women’s magazines will tell you that a marriage should be an equal partnership can be over equal. It will always be unequal , but take care that it’s unequal in favour of your husband. If the scales tilt in your favour, god help you, both of you.

Through education determination and an inner strength, the modern women like sumi, saru Aru are capable of putting their life on desired track. Sumi however shows a departure from the previous protagonists, Indu, Jaya and saru who dreaded loneliness and disintegration resulting from a broken marriage and opted for a compromise though without losing their identity, In her novel Moving on (2004) Shashi Deshpande is once again concerned with patriarchal resistance. Manjari is the new woman, who redefines freedom and also relationships. She is a model practitioner of relational autonomy, situated in family and by relationship, yet subservient to none. As an affection ate daughter,a loving sister, a caring mother and a good friend, she is hardly imposing or demanding, and is not dependent on anyone. Shashi Deshpande makes the position of women quite clear in her novels through portrayal of her protagonists’ inner and outer journeys. In the place of Western feminisim,what Deshpande focus is a kind of gendered humanism. A strongly developed class consciousness figures repeatedly in her novels. “A girl is the young plant that gets neither light nor water, she is the flower that would have blossomed but cannot half fed and half wage for her labour. She gets only half wage for her labour. The country got its freedom, but she continues to be bonded” (Kamala Bhasian). Her writing is clearly a part of Indian literature and emerges from her deep root in middle class Indian society. She uses a very simple language to describe simple languages to describe simple lives especially of the Indian women. Shashi Deshpande is rooted in reality. In an interview given to Lakshmi Holmstrom in 1993 she said: “ My back ground is very firmly here, I was never educated abroad,my npvels don’t have any westerners for example, they are about Indian people and the complexities of our lives...My English is as we use it.” In her novels, we get the theme of the poverty stricken, hardworking, sincere and silent women of India who lives like animals. Shashi Deshpande’s major concern is to depict the anguish and conflict of the modern educated Indian women caught between patriarchy traditions on the one hand, and self expression, individuality and independence for the women on the other. In Deshpande’s literary world there are characters taken from a all the sections of life. They are medical practitioners and writers, educated housewives, uneducated ones and maid servants. Marriage is a very strange thing. It,s meant to tell the world that two people are going to ive together, to declare that their children will be legal ,that these children can inherit their property. It’s meant for social living...At the same time marriage is an intensely private affair. No outsider will ever know. What goes on in someone else’s marriage. It’s closed room, a locked room...Deshpande’s best work is, *That Long Silence*. The narrator Jaya, an upper middle class house wife with two teenage children, is forced to take stock of her life when her husband is suspected of fraud. They move into a small flat in a poorer locality of Bombay, giving up their luxurious house. The novel reveals the hollowness of modern Indian life, where success is seen as a convenient arranged marriage to an upwardly mobile husband with the children studying in “good” schools. The repetitivenss and sheer drabness of the life of a woman with material comforts is vividly represented, “the glassware that had to sparkle, the furniture and curious that had to be kept spotless and dust-free, and those clothes, God, all those never ending piles of clothes that had to be washed and ironed once again” (That Long silence) Though she is a writer, Jaya has not achieved true self expression. There is something almost suffocating about the narrowness of the narrator’s life.

The novel contains nothing outside the narrator’s narrow ambit. India’s tradition and philosophy (which occupy an important place in the work of novelists like Raja Rao) have no place

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here. We get glimpse of Hinduism in the numerous fasts observed by women for the well being of husbands, sons or brothers. Jaya's irritation at such sexist rituals is palpable; it is clear that she feels strongly about the ill-treatment of the girl child in India. The only reference to India's "glorious" past is in Jaya's comment, that in Sanskrit drama, the women did not speak Sanskrit-they were confined to Prakrit, a less polished language, imposing a kind of silence on them. In spite of her English education, Jaya is like the other women in the novel, such as the half-crazed Kusum, a distant relative, or Jeeja, their poor maid-servant. They are all trapped in their own self created silence, and are incapable of breaking away from the supportive yet stifling extend family. While analyzing her novels, she realizes that a similar progress in the protagonists life is portrayed in them. All her protagonists –Indu, Saru and Jay were shown to be in a state of confusion at the beginning. Slowly as the novel unfolds, they go through a process of introspection, self-analysis and realization. At the end, they emerge as more in control of themselves, and significantly more hopeful.

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Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni is one of the new authors who belong to the group of young Indian writers that emerged on the literary scene as among the ground-breaking novelist in the genre of south asian diasporic literature. Her characters are the inheritance of the Indian – American hyphenated community a new identity to accommodate and assimilate .she feels that immigrants are still battling to establish their new identities in the foreign land and that their chosen country may not be a glad about their cultural moorings. Chitra banarjee Divakaruni was born in Calcutta on July 29, 1956 in India. She lived in several cities as a child and teenager. As the second –born child and the only girl among three brothers spent her childhood days in sibling rivalry. she studied in a convent school in Kolkata. At the age of nineteen she came to united states of America .she received a masters degree from Wright State University in Dayton, Ohio and a Ph.D., in the University of California, Berkeley in 1984. She become founder member and president of Maitri, an organization in the san Francisco area that works for South Asian Women in abusive situations. She started writing for herself, and during the mid 1980’s. She joined a writer’s group at Berkely University. She now lives in California. As she began living in united states, Divakaruni became more and more aware of the differences in culture.

Divakaruni has published poetry, short fiction and novels. First work was *The Reason for Nasturtiums*. Divakaruni began her writing career as a poetess. In 1995 her first book short stories *Arranged Marriage* was critically acclaimed and received many awards, including the American Book Award. Beside her work as an author, Divakaruni also teaches creative writing at the college level at the University of Houston. She has written a piece for the New York Times “Writers on Writing” which features on this experience and what it taught about the novel. Her work has appeared in publication as *The New Yorker*, *The Atlantic Monthly*, *MS*. and *Best American Short Stories 1999*. Novels like *The Mistress of Spices*, *Sister of My Heart*, *The Vine of Desire*, *Queen of Dreams*, *The Palace of Illusions*, *One Amazing Thing*. The aspect integral of Divakaruni’s writings is the revelation how the process immigration transform a woman into a new entity at the same time when the infinitely greater responsibility of maintaining her cultural identity also falls on her. Such a schism between the former identity and the new identity generates personal crises for many immigrant women and Divakaruni projects these women as strong characters who have the power to counter patriarchy in a variety of ways.

The focus of a majority of Indian–American literature has been the struggles of immigrants to navigate complex changes in their existence, including issues of cultural and personal identity. Identity issues that pervade in diasporic Indian communities are overviewed in an article by Ajay Kumar Sahoo in it, he asserts: “Immigrants often face the problem of identity at the initial stage of their settlement in the host society “(88). Sahoo defines individual identity as emphasizing “how one sees the world from a particular position and relative to what aspects or how one experience self-hood” (89). Individual identity is often explored, according to Sahoo, based elements of a diaspora, including language, religion, cuisine, and the arts. The multiplicity of experience of a multicultural group, not just in U.S.A, but anywhere there are people of more than one role and culture staying in proximity with each other, requires a genre that gives the freedom of a loose structure that can accommodate the polyphony of voices of collective discourse.

The immigrant writers translate and transmute inflexible, oppositional ethnic and natural categories through their writing, eventually changing perceptions and evolving hybrid identities. In this sense, the diasporic experience can be seen as vigorous, reformist and producing its own literary reaction. This is what Sushila nasta calls ‘a poetic of migrancy’. The various women of Divakaruni’s texts are caught between the traditional customs of South Asia from which they have emigrated and

their present experiences with more westernized culture of America. The individual is forced into one category of racial identity and another, the women of her texts exist in between categorical constructions of racial and sexual identities. Instead of battling to be one person and another, these characters are neither, unidentified by the terms that are normally used to describe the aspects of one's identity. While living in such a liminal space, the self-perceptions of these women are dramatically altered, for the manner in which in they see themselves changes due to the uncertain nature of their interstitial environment. The characters move beyond a duality and toward a condition that is more complex and numerously divided. In place of double consciousness, the women of this text develop *multiple consciousnesses*, resulting in a self that is neither unified nor hybrid, but rather fragmented. The multiplicity is a significant plight for characters, for as their different consciousness contradict each other the women are left uncertain as to the nature of their identities, and not knowing where they fit in America society. Yet paradoxically, it is this very condition of multiplicity that provides the means by which the conflict of consciousness can be resolved for the characters. The women character create a capable of living in a world in which the individual exists not as a unified one, but rather as many, bound by no borders and infinite in possibilities of creating consciousness and inventing identities.

In her novel *The Mistress of Species* (1997) Divakaruni weaves a tale that incorporates magic and mysticism side by side with the gritty reality of life for a variety of poignant characters. Divakaruni's writings tackles the intricate and multifaceted identity issues faced by immigrants, with an emphasis on those experienced by women. *The Mistress of Species* is full of people negotiating the immigrant experience, and Divakaruni skilfully "builds an enchanted story upon the fault line in American identity that lies between the self and the community" (Merlin). The main character and the narrator of the novel, Tilloamma (Tilo) is originally born in India, then trained to be a "mistress of species" by a mystical teacher who resides on a magical island, and eventually sent to look over a spice shop in Oakland, California. Due to her diverse experience and transnational existence, Tilo is "chameleon like, (and) and she keeps changing throughout the novel, making clear how complex is the problem of identity crisis that Indians try to cope with in a foreign land" (Mittra). Throughout the novel Tilo is joined by a host of other people that share aspects of life as immigrants, but each also has their own individual story.

The principal character called Tilo, at the moment when the story begins in the course of time, several identities are seen. The temporary border lines of Tilo's first identity, born ugly and unwanted in small village in India, Nayanara, Star of the Eye, is discarded by her family. She began to fortell what would happen. She knew who stole Banku the water carries buffalo, where the gold was buried under the earth, how to find zamindar lot ring. Aware of the state of discomfort related to her first identity. She thinks her supernatural talents, earns a luxurious livelihood for her family people from every walk of life praised her and take her with them. She finds no comfort in her new identity of the queen of pirates. Which is that of the Bhagyavati, bringer of Luck and Death, as she leads for self destruction. She throws herself into oceans, advised by the sea – serpents, they wanted to give her a new name, Sarpakanya, snake maiden: but later she moves in search of an ancient "spice island" were the old one rules. To reveal the process of identity search and self-assertion begins, she who was a Nayanara and Bhagyavati emerges on the island nameless, were the old one trans her using charms of species in order to help others, were she never experiences motherly affection from the old one, which she should have experienced at home.

Tilo, in her new name, searches for identity. It is much reluctance the old mother gives her a mission knowing that it would be a matter of time. Tilo decides to use her magical power through the shop in Oakland, California as she encounters the various people who come to her for help. Majority of people who are all Indian customers immigrants to the Bay Area, varying from wealthy to struggling. Who are to be fulfilled through Tilo's powers, a denial of desire is imposed on Tilo claims, "of all things in my store, they are the most ancient. For even here in this new land America it



is the same things we want again and again.” In her role as a Mistress of the supernatural skills when working with the species and using their power can be perceived in terms of recognition of her higher than natural or usual and thus she realised her space, a marginal space which weaves through her life for re- construction of her inner true –self. The old one used to say that the hands are very important to call power out of the species. The old one warned her not to give her heart to anyone as the court dancer of Indira, Tilotamma was warned by Brahma not to give her heart to man but only to dance. Then the old one wrote her name on her forehead that became a real name. She had no pitiful mortal man to love one day the old one took them all to the lore of sleeping volcano and asked them to choose the place where they want to work. Then Tilo selected Oakland, the other city by the bay then she woke up in America on a bed of ash. The store became a protective cell to hell. She should not look at the mirror. When she woke up, she felt happy to be a Mistress. Then in the old spice shop she meets different Indian Immigrant customers with different problems and she heals their problems by giving different species. In the store, Tilo has closed the door then she begins to think about the ordinary life that she has given up for the species. Later on a Friday when she is about to close the door, there enters a young man, Raven. She begins to long to see him. On Monday, the American comes to meet Tilo, Tilo told herself that she had to be cautious as the old one on an island told her not to love any man but later she decides to seek the help of Raven to help one of her customer Haroun who was in trouble. Raven takes her to Haroun's house but he was not there, then Raven declares his love for her. The onset of Tilo's feeling of loneliness, Raven hints at his heritage, as he tastes a dish prepared solely for his tongue. Tilo, warning him of food's spiciness states, “it is too hot for white man's mouth”. After the moment Raven says, “so you think, I am white” after the arrival of the person into her shop who also identifies in terms of loneliness, she thinks of him as of a “lonely American” and he becomes in course of time, “My American for her”. She needs to get feminine identity as she desired to launch herself in her new life with Raven. Tilo almost becomes a beautiful young woman Raven was not able to believe it. Raven takes her to his room, species began to leave her as she has fallen in love with Raven when they both become one everything goes back to its old shapes spices began to leave her while they are returning to the store, Tilo made excuse to Raven and considered their love as a fantasy Indian fantasy. The rich American business man, that the possibilities of a new life unfold and Tilo finds herself incapable of passion indulgence and release.

Not only Tilo as several identities even Raven, though coming from a different culture, his own self-identification is also problematic as he goes through several identities but through a surprising turn-off events in adolescence he discovers his actual identity suddenly only after meeting with his great grandfather, a native American. Till that time Raven, experiences a fractured identity and says, My world was like a bag turned upside down, with all the certainties shaken out of it.” Raven is what he finally considers his true name, as he attempts to identify with the culture denied to him. Raven meets Tilo in her shop sees her as a paradigmatic representation of Eastern beauty, an “authentic...Real Indian.” Lauren Merlin in a review in *World Literature Today* says, “overcome by her attraction to Raven, Tilo yields to her own wishes rather than those of spice”. At this flouting of their rules, “the spices themselves rise up against her demanding that she chooses between love and power.” Tilo's growing realisation that her role as mistress of species would enlarge to being the mistress of something more than the magical species commits her to re-definition of the self. It is an exploration in which she discovers that the only form of the true self would be not to deny it but to indulge in it to be able to emerge beyond the boundaries of everyday life. In her love with Raven she is over-whelmed by a nostalgia for the other. The moment of crossing the line is the moment at which to enact the process of transformation by performing a ritual with shampati, fire but species do not respond to her. She has to lie down till she hears a voice calling her Tilo. Then in the end she hears the word “Earthquake” and she wants to identify the voice. She begins to think whether earthquake killed her and Raven. She is actually saved by Raven from the earthquake Raven too want to be in love with her. Tilo accepts his love and understands that the past life is over. Raven suggest that as she she

belongs to India and America, and names her Maya were she is rechristened by Raven. She finds her identity of marrying Raven and abandons the practice of species.

Tilo, the mistress of species, throughout the novel becomes a liminal person realising that she is neither a mistress of spices nor a lady love of an American. She has many names often becomes a blend of loneliness and sacredness. She is presented with a moment in and out time with multiple identities. Tilo was born in a village and she was named “*Nayantara*”, then the pirates carry her away and then she is called “*Bhagyavati*”. when she decides to reach the island the snakes named her “*Sarpakanya*.” For becoming Mistress of spices. She changed her name into Tilo meaning “a life giver” and a restorer of health and hope in the process of identity. She arrive at a final definition on her selfhood. Tilo knows the species origin , their colours and their smells. The species of the power are from her birth land, land of ardentry of poetry, Indian . Tilo dispenses wisdom and possible cure not only provides an immediate insight into contemporary American society and also tries to gives the appropriate species endow her with an inner eye through which the sufferings of the alienated, the persecuted and the damned find a voice. It is only through those who visit and revisit her shop, she catches the glimpse of life of local Indian expatriate community. She provides species, not only for cooking, but also for the homesickness and alienation that the Indian immigrants in her shop experience. Not only Tilo has multiple identities even other characters face the multiplicity of identity like Jagjit the shy frightened boy transformed to jag by the endless hostility and abuse he has to bear for his accent and turban. He was assaulted at school for not knowing English because of which he changes his identity from jagit to jag responds to his sense of alienation and racial abuse by restoring to gang wars as he is initiated into a group which makes him feel protected . Geeta , the question of identity are differently poised . Geeta blames her grandfather for having pitted her parents against her, for haveing forced her to confess her love for an American ,suddenly and viciously without preparation were she was ready to change her identity to an American but at last she refuses her boyfriend and lives with her family. In the case of Ahuja wife’s caught in the trap of arranged marriage with a ageing man, the voice of tradition and social expectation are not different for Indians in America. she was trapped in America were she wants to come back to India she was not happy with her husband and the living alone in an alien land. Geeta’s father and other imagine, see historicise and remember the space that they left in preference of new land, America , in which they feel trapped and sapped off by the cultural contestation over naming and possessing the land . They become failures and as a result they have a desire to be cured by the prescription of species. Their psyche turns out to be an empty space. However in the end of the novel, they realised at the moment of crossing the line they have to enact in the process of transformation being immigrants in an alien territory. They become totally outsiders not only to others but to themselves. In her role as a mistress of species she accepts the condition of virtual captivity and enforced passivity the equates with the idea of being stripped as she is suspended between a number of apparent but by definition illusory, binary, oppositions , emigrant and immigrant, bringer of luck and death, administer of species and exploiter of senses, the old life and the new one with Raven, the known species and the unknown bodily desires and so on . Tilo chooses a name that “can mean many things,” a name that embodies the multiplicity of her identities , the many consciousnesses that lie with her. Interestingly, “*Maya*” is also an Sanskrit name, and the juxtaposition of a name so representative of a cultural past with Tilo’s present power suggests that Tilo still lives in between spheres, with contradictory spaces and times comprising the rather ambigious landscape of her existence. In naming herself, Tilo reveals that which she is made of: multiple consciousnesses that allow her to exist as not as South Asian or American only, but rather as everything in between, living a life that spans the endless boundaries of space and time and in which identity is filled with the promise of endless possibility and eternal evolution.

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## 51. Traces of New Wave Feminism and Varied Expressions of Power in the Women characters of Nayantara Sahgal's 'Rich Like Us'

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*"A woman must have money and room of her own if she is to write fiction." -Virginia Woolf*

### Feminism in the Indian Context

Feminist situation in India possesses a dissimilar dispensation. Indian society has always been highly hierarchical. To understand and sympathize the sensibility of feminism in India, it is important to observe that Indian feminists present altogether different picturesque scene. The long and painful suffering of women, the bitter struggles for the exception of the idea of equal pay for equal work, the continuing battles on behalf of woman's right to abortion and practice of birth control are some of the visible marks of the gender inequality that have persisted. It is interesting to note that the feminist movement in India was initiated by men and it was only later that women joined. The authenticity of feminine sensibility and feminine experiences would demand a brief scrutiny of the changing position of women in India. The study of the Indian feminine psyche evolves a change from tradition to modernity. Feminism has transformed the precision of life and literature. The second wave feminism that began in 1960 dealing with legal and social rights of women had shown its impact on Indian women authors as well. The women authors who had exposure to the world outside, the political movements that were going on in different parts of the world and also the social issues within the country, tried highlighting those issues through their writings.

### Nayantara Sahgal

Nayantara Sahgal is an Indian writer in English. Her fiction deals with India's elite responding to the crises engendered by political change. Nayantara Sahgal has a unique authenticity over Indian politics because of her familial association with the political family of the Indian democracy, the Nehru's. Vijayalakshmi Pandit, mother of Nayantara Sahgal is Jawaharlal Nehru's sister. This has helped Sahgal to observe the variations in Indian politics very closely and thus reflected in her works. Sahgal's sixth novel, 'Rich Like Us' has received accolade from critics as an insightful political fiction and helped her win the prestigious Sinclair Prize (Britain) in 1985 and the Sahitya Akademi Award (India) in 1986. The chief temporal setting of the text (from 1932 to 1975) encompasses both the Indian independence movement and its aftermath, leading up to and including the infamous political Emergency declared by Indira Gandhi, and because it overtly treats questions of governmental policy, the majority of scholars have focused almost exclusively upon the novel's engagement with national politics, disregarding the implications of such a macro-narrative for the micro-narrative of gender. Ramesh Chadha commends the mutual exclusivity of Sahgal's national and gender politics as he asserts that "along with the political themes, [Sahgal] also portrays the modern Indian woman's search for individual freedom and self-realization." (Ramesh Chadha 261) Thus failing to analyze the negative relational links between the discourses of nation and woman, Chadha unproblematically describes Rich Like Us as a "feminist" text. While Shyamala Narayan admires the "social commitment and contemporary relevance" of what is "probably [Sahgal's] best novel" (Shyamala A. Narayan 794), Jasbir Jain identified and appreciated the novel as a discerning "political biography," "the story of a country ... [in which] the protagonist is India," (Jasbir Jain 142)

### Rich Like Us

"The country had been in a mess, people screaming for more wages or bonus, or just screaming, too many political parties, so humiliating to explain to foreigners. And then overnight a

magical calm had descended like in Taiwan or Singapore. The idea of a leader, someone to look up to...fulfilled a yearning for tidiness, and a woman in command put at least one woman beyond the furies all others face. And then the Emergency was so popular.” (Rich Like Us, 87) The novel, *Rich Like Us* which depicts the political scenario of India during the period of emergency, is woven around a dual narrative— Sonali is the narrator in first person and the other is the omniscient narrator alternating between three voices— that of Rose, Nishi and her father Kisoralil. The novel partly deals with the life of a young and committed Oxford-educated administrative officer Sonali, who possesses the intellectual strength to tear apart clichéd and outmoded traditions. She lets her family know her horror of an arranged marriage and consequently an inevitably stifling life. She is posted as a joint secretary in the Ministry of Industry, and in that capacity, one expects her to wield considerable power, being a woman officer working in the reign of a woman Prime Minister. On the other hand, when she exercises her power to reject an application that has failed to impress her in terms of national welfare and logical necessity, she falls out of favour and gets abruptly demoted and transferred to her native state, in favour of her ex-fiancé and class fellow Ravi Kachru, who steadily climbs up the professional ladder, through unquestioning loyalty to the PM. Ravi is a Kashmiri like Nehru and hence he has an added claim for proximity with the reigning powers. Sonali succinctly evokes the hazards of being a woman as opposed to the privileged position of Ravi being a man: “...he was a man. He had never fought a battle for freedom...never had a sari throttling his legs, making walking in the wind and running to catch a bus a threat to life and limb, never had his mother set up a howl when he...got a haircut. He had no idea what the simplest subjugations were all about.” (123-124) The other part of the novel is seen through the story of Rose, introduced in the very first chapter, a cockney-accented chocolate shop girl from London who falls in love with an Indian garments-businessman Ram Surya, magnetically drawn to the enchanting world that he weaves around her by his eloquence. Despite knowing about Ram’s first wife Mona and a newborn son Dev, Rose leaves behind her lonely parents and forsakes her country to come to India as Ram’s second wife. Rose symbolizes personal courage, compassion and genuine human warmth. She takes many grave risks in her life trusting her instincts blindly, goes on to make friends with her unbending father-in-law Lalaji, even takes charge of the business when Ram pursues the seductive Marcella and, in the absence of any real fulfillment, creates a small circle around her with Sonali, the crippled beggar in the tomb and the faithful servant Kumar. It is the brave, outspoken and powerful voice of Rose that her stepson Dev finds unbearable and hence, gets her silenced forever through one of his youth camp thugs.

*Rich Like Us*, with its focus upon the female protagonists, Sonali and Rose appears to be dealing with the feminine sensibility emphasizing the issues of women. At the same time it also seems to be dealing with the prevailing nationalist paradigms, which work to the detriment of women’s issues. Sahgal has written with a social, nationalistic view point, exhibiting only a limited commitment to charting female agency or to radically redefining women's roles, she states revealingly in a 1989 interview, "I have never written from any specific ideological viewpoint. If I have, I have a nationalistic viewpoint." (V. Mohini 65)

Sahgal also opines that it is almost impossible to separate politics from reality in India as life is so political here. That is to say, politics become an integral part of life. She thus discloses that her criticism of national politics is based on the general experiences or sufferings of women in general and issues of suicide and dowry murders in particular. There are various representations of suicide in *Rich Like Us* which correspond to a macro-political level rather than specifically interventionist women's behaviours. For instance, there is a reference to the Sita myth in the context of a discussion on nationalist allegiances and is, significantly, voiced by a man. Mona the “legally-wedded” wife of Ram, is constructed as a stereotypical, long-suffering Hindu wife, who employs all means including religious- to win her husband back from the snares of the white other-woman i.e. Rose. She observes numerous fasts, holds umpteen religious pujas at her place for the purpose and, finding none useful, tries to immolate herself; that being the final measure available to an ideal, virtuous Hindu woman which is to be cremated by her husband thereby retaining her place as his legally wedded wife. She

considers that as the right way and doesn't even hesitate to think in other lines. The references to myth also occur later in the novel, while referring to Sonali's great grandmother's death. At the same time, the mention of the two original nineteenth-century accounts of widow burnings is to interrogate the broader bases of nationalistic and societal corruptions rather than to investigate the particular religio-cultural suppression of women. As it is observed, the position of man is generally left unquestioned. There is, for instance, no questioning of the Britishers' emphasis upon the strong hold of "superstition" on the women (RLU 126), their objectification of the suicides, or their assumption of gender inequality as a mark of Indian inferiority. Similarly, there is no criticism of Sonali's grandfather's condemnation not so much of the horrific practice of 'sati' itself but of the acquiescence of Hindu India which fails to question its own pernicious beliefs and practices. Sonali's grandfather does not portray his mother as a person who would manipulate the issues for personal benefits or safeguard her son, rather casts her as a victim requiring the protection of Mr. Timmons. Just as the 'sati' motif is evidence of Sahgal's hegemonic nationalism, so is her treatment of the Emergency a testimony to her disjunctive feminism. Although Indira Gandhi is not identified by name and does not appear onstage as a character in *Rich Like Us*, her presence permeates the narrative consciousness. From censure of the prime minister's nationalization of banks and a denunciation of her belief in "family rule," through a dubbing of her executive tenure as a "dictatorship" and an accession to "imperial power," to a likening of the excesses of the Emergency to those at Austerlitz and Dachau (RLU 155, 82, 156, 52), Sahgal repeatedly condemns her violence to the democratic process. While her criticisms of the Emergency are well founded, there are some troubling questions, posed from within a feminist perspective, regarding her treatment of Mrs. Gandhi in *Rich Like Us*.

Sahgal presents Indira Gandhi as ostensibly gender-neutral politician who fails to consider the particular ramifications of her governmental policies upon women. Although her mother, Kamala Nehru, was an ardent advocate of women's rights, Mrs. Gandhi repeatedly denied being a feminist because, as she put it, "I always felt that I could do anything I wanted." (Zareer Masani, 275) Her privileged upbringing—akin to that of her cousin, Nayantara Sahgal—unconstrained by her sex, also led her to underline her status as a *zoon politikon*, a politician without gender, claiming, "I don't think of myself as a woman when I do my job. According to the Indian Constitution, all citizens are equal, I'm just an Indian citizen and the first servant of the country." (Stanley Wolpert, 366) Thus it was that the woman who was seen as synonymous with India did little to advance the cause of women. During her tenure as prime minister, Indira Gandhi failed to appoint even a single woman to her cabinet or to patronize any feminist group or movement in India; and none of her economic objectives outlined in her Twenty-Point Programme announced during the Emergency focused specifically upon women's upliftment. It was her belief, that women's problems had no link with the specific oppression of women but with the general national problems of poverty and unemployment, that contributed to the declining status of Indian women in post-independence times. Except for once, Sahgal does not mention Mrs. Gandhi's characteristic exploitation of her identity as woman. At the same time she brings in a comparison between Mrs. Indira Gandhi and a positive portrayal of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, presenting her gendered nationalism. The minimal criticism voiced by the pseudo Marxist characters of Ravi Kachru and the unnamed prisoner in jail regarding the collusion of Gandhi's pacifism with bourgeois capitalism is quickly overturned by Sonali and Kishori Lal. Sonali, in particular, serves as the author's mouthpiece, unstintingly praising Gandhi's actions, particularly his satyagraha [truth force, nonviolent] movement, his agitation for "human rights," and his commitment to the "new epic" of equality (RLU, 100-02). What Sonali/Sahgal ignores in her eulogy to Gandhian nationalism is its inherent paternalism and associated reinforcement of some of the most regressive beliefs underlying Indian women's suppression. Sahgal's more direct attempt to identify herself with Indian women by declaring that *Rich Like Us* presents two "heroines" and no "heroes" is an important point to be noted. Her praise of Sonali and Rose as women who "were willing to risk the unknown, to make difficult, adventurous choices and to brave the consequences" (Nayantara Sahgal, 95) is grounded in a historically male heroic vocabulary; and her ambivalent conceptualization and

treatment—from a feminist viewpoint—of the two characters once again underlines Sahgal's paternalistic politics.

Having come to maturity in post-independence India, Sonali is offered as the type of the new Indian woman, an educated, professional, single female dedicated to the progress of her country, an ostensible product of the new constitutional equality accorded to all Indian citizens. "People like you, especially women like you, are going to Indianize India," remarks her father (RLU 24), further suggesting an integral link between national and feminist politics. A closer examination of Sonali's life, however, points up perhaps most unequivocally Sahgal's problematic stance on the woman-nation nexus. Though Sonali expresses her rejection towards the clutches of marriage, there are instances where she depends on men for important decisions. For instance she says that her father should have suggested her to resign during emergency. Sahgal tries to portray her feelings and emotions to some extent through the character of Sonali. Mrs. Indira Gandhi has cancelled Sahgal's scheduled appointment as India's ambassador to Italy. Similar correlation can be seen where Sonali was demoted from her post and was transferred to her home town. But, Sonali resigns from the civil service not as a resister protesting the overthrow of the Indian constitution but as an escapist who cannot face her demotion and transfer from New Delhi: "I was a civil servant until I was thrown out, soon after the emergency began," she admits (RLU, 232). Nonviolence and passivity were also the hallmarks of Gandhian Satyagraha, especially as specific enjoinders to women. She believed that female sex is not the weaker sex. It is this strategic gendering of the ideal nationalist satyagrahi that Sahgal symbolically reproduces in Rose's person, casting her, ironically, as the most traditionally Indian of the female characters, erasing her autonomy as a woman so that she might become a "legend" to others, leaving them a "legacy" of her strength amidst adversity and her sati-like self-sacrifice (RLU 41,234). Marcella's prominent—and paradoxical—role at the end of *Rich Like Us* is yet another measure of Sahgal's ambivalent nationalism. Earlier depicted as a "husband-hunter" and an unscrupulous "enchantress" of men (RLU, 90,94), she is transformed at the novel's conclusion into Sonali's fairy godmother and Rose's stand-in as well as cast as a *deus ex machina*: her declaration that the Emergency will soon be over marks a symbolic "gift of the future" to Sonali and, by extension, to India, thereby precipitating the (seemingly) positive outcome of the novel (RLU, 234). By writing a nationalist political narrative in *Rich Like Us*, Sahgal thus—perhaps largely unwittingly, but nonetheless decisively—proves complicit in the discursive oppression of Indian women. By writing from within the bourgeois nationalist ambit, she participates, additionally, in the silencing of subaltern nationalism. Finally, by extolling British over Indian civilization, she reveals the dual alienation—in its elitism and imitativeness—of her Eurocentric "nationalist" consciousness, so that Stuart Hood's remark that Sahgal is "not an Indian writer" but "an English writer working in a tradition which is hers by birth, education and class" (Stuart Hood, 676), takes on an added, ironic significance, reverberating beyond the formal to the politico-cultural, beyond the strictly belletristic to the ideological.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, the study reflects the struggle of women for equality in the political background. Irrespective of the differences in the age, position, culture and nationality, the oppression of women is common. Whether it is the administrative officer Sonali, the ideal, traditional, Indian Hindu wife Mona, or the English woman-Rose, who married a polygamous Indian, they all share a common chord of feminine sensibility and sensitivity experiencing the oppression. The study thus reveals the growth and development of Indian feminism reflecting the traces of New Wave feminism and the varied expressions of power in the women characters of Nayantara Sahgal's *Rich Like Us*.

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## 52. Reconceptualising Gender & Modernity in Selected Novels of Chetan Bhagat

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Chetan Bhagat has deftly portrayed the women characters in his novels. His women use all tactics to serve the female instinct. However, they do not serve it for their own benefit but for the welfare of the society. They incarnate the new woman, who chides the man for feminine behaviour. They come out as the icons of vitality and bravery for the young women. They always take initiative in the courtship. Thus, they break the social protocol –man ever chases woman. They are the chasers and the men are the chased. Bhagat is the first writer among his contemporaries who has delineated woman as the hunter and the man as the quarry under her blind fury, moreover for the higher purpose. No doubt, that he writes according to the things keep in mind related to present circumstances of the society. Bhagat seems sad over the human's attitude changes towards holiness of the creative force of (sex) life during the span. In almost all his novels Bhagat has glorified sex and he nicely portrays this physical bonding. In his writings the feelings of youth for friend, love, nuptials, and sex is not at all touching or emotional, on the contrary, it is quite sporty. Love, as it is an emotion, the youth feels the vibrations of it every now and then.

### Reconceptualising Gender

Vidya is quirky, open about her intentions, and rebellious. She is not shy; she is open about her sexuality and does not hesitate in making advances towards the guy she is interested in. In *The 3 Mistakes of My Life* we see how Govind and Vidya fall in love with each other, indulge in sex every now and then, and keep their accounts of physical relationship update for the ready reference. In this novel after being engaged physically at the age of seventeen only, Vidya admits: “Wow, I am an adult and am no longer a virgin, so cool.” (201). Bhagat has installed it in the willingness of the woman. He tries to show the actual position or condition of today's society. Society has been changed from normal to modern aspect. Bhagat has served it as the unifying force. His men and women perform it and break virginity knot without social rituals. At last, they either get married or committed to live together happily without any conditions and norms.

Bhagat values it with many accolades as ‘spark’, ‘instinct’, ‘the inner voice’, ‘the higher power’, ‘the ultimate super power’, ‘the inner call’ etc in his novels, blog and columns. It seems that he does not believe in any deity personified by man. His protagonists are never spotted to go to temple. Bhagat perceives the force working in woman, specifically in her natural instinct. He frankly discusses woman's dynamism in all of his novels. He focuses mainly two characteristics of his men and women –daring and astonishment towards sex and life. These are the salient attributes of the life force also known as liveliness. Bhagat seems to believe that the youth bestowed with these virtues can bless the society with the world citizen i.e. the super human being. Bhagat's men and women sincerely serve the ultimate purpose of the life force. The purpose goes here: “Woman must marry because the races must perish without her travail...” In his debut novel, *Five Point Someone*, we can see the romanticism and the love affair of Hari and Neha. Neha is impulsive, pretty, has a round face and attractive toes. Daughter of the domineering professor, Neha comes as a breath of fresh air in Hari's life - which chiefly consists of studies, ragging, and butter chicken. Hari meets Neha while jogging in the morning, when she knocks him over as she is driving around in a bright red car. Neha gets ready to do anything for her love. Her character is a sensitive portrayal of what it is like to be young and female in an overprotective, patriarchal world. Of course, just when Hari gains her trust and they both make love i.e. loses their virginity before marriage and feel content: “Half an hour later we lay on the bed, spent but completely content.” (168)

Vroom in the novel *One Night @ the Call Centre* loves Esha, and proposes her three to four times, and she keeps rejecting him all these times. Even though it is so, they work together and

maintain quite a healthy friendship. Shyam and Priyanka have been in relation ever since their college time. When they think that they should break up, they formally come together and put a break to their relationship. Ultimately after all they come together, and decide to marry but the things that happen in between show us the changed relation equations of our time. Shyam as he says wants to 'move on', a new terminology in the subject 'Love', develops a casual love relationship with another girl at the call center. A marriage proposal of an NRI working in Microsoft, entertains Priyanka's fiancée for the time being but when she learns about the baldness of the guy, her affection turns once again towards Shyam. Radhika is a married woman in her mid-twenties. Her marriage takes place after a whirlwind courtship in college. She now lives in a joint family with Anuj's ultra-traditional parents as her husband works somewhere else in a different city. It is tough for daddy's only girl, but it is amazing what women do for love. She has joined Connexion Call center in order to earn more and more and wants to give more financial assistance to her husband. She works hard day and night to keep her parents-in-law in good humour. Shyam comments on her condition: "Cooking three meals a day and household chores and working all night.... the dark circle around her eyes" testifies to her struggles to be an ideal Indian housewife. Radhika proves to be the best example of a good homemaker and deft customer care representative. She is an expert in handling kitchen and managing office promptly. She looks after her old mother-in-law. She loves her husband very much and trusts him blindly. When she comes to know that her husband loves some other woman of Delhi, instantly breaks her relation with him and goes to Chandigarh with Esha forever. This novel exposes filth of the modeling industry. Esha is assured with a modeling contract if she sleeps with a designer for a night. She offers herself but she cannot get the contract. The man turns out an opportunistic as he betrays her telling that she cannot be a model due to short height. He compensates her in-bed-deed by sending her money. She repents the deed and is haunted by a sense of guilt. Whenever the guilty conscience inflicts her, she cuts her skin with sharp blade. She believes, she can atone for her guilt by punishing herself. Varun loves Esha but she does not accept his proposal due to guilty conscience. Once he finds her badly cursing herself for the filthy barren deed and consoles her. He offers to accept her for his love-sake that is quite capable toward off her guilt. In '2 States - The Story of My Marriage', Ananya a fashioned, after his real-life wife Anusha, is probably one of Bhagat's most well-crafted women characters for obvious reasons. Long curling hair, sparkling eyes, smart, intelligent and feisty, Ananya is not only proud of her Tamilian background, but is also close to her parents. In one of his interviews to a newspaper, Bhagat says that it is their differences in cultural background, Ananya's steady and poised family, versus the protagonist Krish's tumultuous relationships is the focal point of '2 States The Story of My Marriage.' Ananya is more illogical than logical; Beautiful girl with lots of attitude who can pick fight with anybody, anytime and anywhere. She is confident, independent, and intelligent. However, she is caring and sensitive too. She dares to oppose the mess contractor because he provides bad quality of food to all the students. At that time, Krish offers her his help and takes her to a restaurant. The friendship between them develops very fast. Krish helps Ananya to learn Economics and at that time, both of them start meeting frequently. Krish proposes her and she does not deny. They start to live in the same room and take liberty with which Indian society is not custom too. She represents the voices of the modern youth who believes in the complete freedom of the fair sex. She believes in the equality of men and women. She knows her rights and does what she wants. She likes to wear shorts and smoke cigarettes. She does not care the criticism of others and their feelings. She only cares for what she likes. She does not like people patronizing her. She thinks modern women are intelligent and intelligent people do not like to be instructed unnecessarily. Ananya shares her opinion with Krish in a conversation with him. Krish reads a topic from the marketing case, 'Nirdosh – nicotine-free cigarettes'. And the very name of cigarette makes Ananya feel like a real smoke. She responds: "Who the fuck wants that? I feel like a real smoke (19)." Krish gives Ananya a dirty look which makes the latter react: "What? Am I not allowed to use F words? Or is it that I expressed a desire to smoke?"(20) Krish wants to know what she wants to prove by showing her over smartness. This makes Ananya consider him that male should know that women are intelligent people and they know what they should do and what they should not: *Nothing. I want you to consider the possibility that women are intelligent human beings. And intelligent people don't like*

to be told what to wear or do, especially when they are adults. Does that make sense to you? (20) Ananya and Krish have started studying together in Ananya's room. Krish cannot concentrate on his studies, as every time his attention would be caught by Ananya's looks. Out rightly he tells her so and the relationship gets started quite surprisingly. Particularly in this work, Love, marriage and sex in case of Ananya and Krish come together in a more mature way. They love and want to marry each other because they have a mutual understanding which is one of the major components in marriage. They look at sex as an obvious thing in love. That is why they indulge in sex every now and then: "Needless to say, one thing led to another and within two weeks we had sex. You put a boy and a girl in a room for a week and add lots of boring books, and sparks are sure to fly."(26) Aarti, in 'Revolution 2020' is a devoted, opinionated and ambitious girl. She is Gopal's 'close friend'. However, after he goes away to study, she falls for his best friend, the brooding-and-intelligent Raghav. She is steady, we can see, because even when her beau is embroiled in controversies or even underground activism, she remains devoted to him. In Revolution 2020 both Aarti and Gopal comes closer to each other, crossed the limits of friendship, come too close, and become one, at the hotel room. In spite of having fiancée, Aarti indulges in Physical relation with Gopal, knowing that the happening is wrong. "This isn't right, Gopal, she panted biting my lower lip"(221) Thus, all the fictions depict in metropolitan reality that the young generation is more in favour of love marriages than in arranged ones. The attitude of this generation towards sex is not laden with guilt. They look at sex as a way of expressing their love for their partner.

### **Reconceptualising Modernity**

Chetan Bhagat considers literature as a provocative pill, which works as a strong stimulant to the human mind. He enthuses the youth to purge untainted obstinacy of the social system. He strives to portray the mental stirrings of his personnel. His characters read the words and foresee the action. Chetan Bhagat has merged both highbrow and lowbrow genres into one, which is now approved as best-seller genre of the Indian English literature. He has endowed the genre with healthy humour and sanguine approach to life. Bhagat writes about the youth and specifically for the youth. However, the people of all age groups love to read his writings. His style is so simple that everyone likes it. He touches the nerve with young Indian readers and acquires almost cult status. Bhagat's novels have the theme of present day youth. He writes on the present issues of modern society. His novels are not political or sociological in character but are engaged in exposing the labyrinth of the human mind and indicating the ways to psychological fulfillment. Thus, his themes tend to wedge off the track of novelists. Each aspect merges with the other and sometimes one finds a number of themes woven together. Using these themes as a foundation, he is able to build up his characters in to a significant role.

Bhagat is straightforward in his approach to life. He listens to the voice of his soul, which he strongly believes in, is ever true. His novels are, thus, increasingly bold attempt to discover the meaning of life. They try to devise ways and means for eliminating the discrepancy between the individual's pursuit and the fulfillment. Bhagat's heroines are lovely misfits in the world in which they have to live and face the meaningless life. His characters just want to enjoy the life to its full length. Though they are not religious or saintly, they are humble enough to learn lessons taught to them by life's problem. While experiencing the normal claims of love and hatred, doubts and dilemmas, they try to face challenges of their lives by outstripping the narrow confines of their distraught selves. The influence of his mother on his works is a lot. While most of the protagonists in Bhagat's novels have uncomfortable relationships with their fathers, the mothers rarely have grey shades. His heroines, on the other hand, are clearly put on a pedestal. Bhagat looks at them with clear adoration, lingers on their smallest habits, exaggerates their quirks and idolizes them in general. The 'love' part in his novels has always been one of the central themes. Bhagat advises the people to stop looking at pleasure and enjoyment as sin. Human life is limited and if we don't enjoy our time here, what is the point of it. In fact, many say, sex is against Indian culture, a bizarre notion for a country where the great sage, Vatsayana is born. It is shameful to ignore it (sex) in the country where the

people worship Kamdev, the god of love and sex. The Lord Rama is learnt to take his wife into the exile and madly loiter in her search when she is missed, and the Lord Krishna plays raasaleela with the beautiful young maidens on the banks of the river Yamuna. Bhagat believes in sanctity of sex, that he validates referring to the Holy Scriptures of Indian culture. He says: “*Our ancient texts such as the Upanishads discuss sex in an explicit manner. The Mahabharata refers to Drupadi’s polyandry. The temples in Khujaraho leave little to the imagination*”.

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### 53. The Moor in Othello: The Play of Class in Man A Socio-Cultural Study

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#### Introduction

“How would it be, if I study the problems of Othello in the light of the observations made by James Paul Gee in his work ‘Socio-linguistics and Literacies was the idea occurred to me’, while I was going through it. No contradictions have ever been entertained in agreeing the fact that along with the Bard his master creation Iago is “Inimitable and unimitated.” Othello proved to be an easy pick to the evil genius. The Moor always seemed to be vulnerable to the irresistible temptations caused by Iago. Most of the times his machinations aimed at the glaring gap between two classes i.e., the cultural distance and racial differences. His was a more than success in overpowering the Moor’s soul, pouring seething torment in his heart blinding his reason and rational to wrench out the essential good and nobility from the Moor and left him to go a brute charged with carnal lust and spiteful brutality. But, “Did it all happen against the will of the Moor?” is the hanging question. Didn’t he give consent to Iago to master his wits and thereby safe drive his soul to abysmal depths? To understand the predicament of the Moor it would rather better to have a peep into the social setting where he was a participant and an active member of meaning making, who at once established solidarity and difference as well with the other members of it. Hence he was subjected to the “compatible incompatibility” of diverse discourses. To unlock the intricate social patterns, certain socio-cultural aspects are to be critically examined. They are (1) what metal was Othello made of? Or else what went into the making of the Moor? (2) Where was he in the wider European discourse or what was he before Iago’s interference (3) How did he construe his identity? and finally (4) Had it been a different story if the Moor was replaced with a man from the elite class?

#### Othello and the Society he was in

Othello’s intended ethnicity is in some dispute. Othello may be connected to Arab or Berber people of North Africa. Moor could also indicate non-white person who was not necessarily a Spanish or North-African Muslim. Othello is certainly not a Muslim as he names the Turks as ‘circumcised.’ Whichever of these categories Othello fits into, it is clear that Shakespeare portrays Othello’s race as setting him apart in some respects from the predominantly white European society in which he lives. “*Although Othello is respected for his military prowess and nobility of character, he inhabits a culture in which underlying racial tensions, in particular anxieties about the mixing of races through intermarriage, can be exploited. In Othello, racial stereotypes are both evoked and problematised.*” - Karen Kay

#### Othello for Others

Brabantio a man from elite class dispraisingly calls Othello “a thief, enchanter, charmer, abuser of the world, practiser of prohibited arts” and belittles his race by naming him ‘sooty bosom.’ The statement categorically marks the prevalent racial differences. A.C. Bradley supports Brabantio’s claims as he says “He doesn’t belong to our world and he seems to enter it we know not whence almost as if from wonderland.” His world is filled with marvelous people, magic handkerchiefs and prophetic sibyls. For Iago he is an old black ram, Barbary horse and base man. By this Iago strikingly points Othello’s vehemence, corner lust added with brutal strength. His tendency to be jealous is pointed out when Emilia asks “Is he not jealous?” Even in the Duke’s praise of Othello ‘Thy son in law is fairer than black’, his blackness is with him. When Iago says “These Moors are changeable in nature,” he attributes the quality not to the man but to his class. Referring to the word “whore” Desdemona asks Iago “am I that name Iago?” It talks about her decency and how far she

stands culturally away from the black Othello. Again Casio's lament at his General's death "This did I fear but thought he had no weapon" Spells out Othello's love for honor as well as his rashness. The moors behavior is incredible to Lodovico when he exclaims "Is this the noble Moor whom our senate call all in all sufficient." His individual uprightness can't be glorified better when none other than Iago recognizes "The Moor is free and open minded."Therefore, Othello has been ensnared in the conflicting and competing discourses that at once invite him in and throw him out.

### **Othello for himself**

Othello's narration of his tale of love "she loved me for the dangers I had passed and I loved her that she did pity them" reveals his low self esteem. The word "Pity" signals his dire want for love and care. His words, "Rude am I in my speech and little blessed with in the soft phrase of peace." hints at his social inferiority and baseness. Othello is always in fear of losing his beloved. He unconsciously entertains the idea of gap between his world and that of Desdemona. This further makes him being insecure and uncertain of his love. It reflects in "If I were now to die, I were now to be most happy, for I fear my soul hath her content so absolute that not another comfort like to this succeeds in unknown fate. The very behavior continues as we see him responding un-usually to Iago's comment "I like not that." At a point he almost pleads Iago to give his "worst of thoughts and worst of words." Thus it would be assumed that he is emotionally imbalanced and insecure and carrying seeds of inferiority. The traits that can make a man prone to be jealous even before the interference of Iago into his business.

### **The role of socio-cultural elements in meaning making**

James Paul Gee had undertaken a study to prove socio-cultural elements such as 'values, attitudes, belief system, language, gestures' help the individual to construe the situation he is in. To mark the difference among the classes he recorded the responses of 3 socio culturally diverse groups of students to the same discourse. Each group was composed of six students from the same ethnic and social class. One among them was being African- American working class, the other white Working class students and both were again from the same inner City School where as the members of third group were from a very elite school situated in a quite wealthy suburban community. All the groups were asked to express their opinions on the characters in "The alligator and river story and their responses were recorded on a 5 point opinion scale ranging from most offensive to least objectionable.

### **The alligator and river story**

Once upon a time there was a woman named Abigail who was in love with a man named Gregory. Gregory lived on the shore of a river. Abigail lived on the opposite shore of the river. The river which separated the two lovers was teeming with man-eating alligators. Abigail wanted to cross the river to be with Gregory. Unfortunately, the bridge had been washed out. So he went to ask Roger, a river boat captain, to take her across. He said he would be glad to if she would consent to go to bed with him preceding the voyage. She promptly refused and went to a friend named Ivan to explain her plight. Ivan did not want to be involved at all in the situation. Abigail felt her only alternative was to accept Roger's terms. Roger fulfilled his promise to Abigail and delivered her into the arms of Gregory. When she told Gregory about her amorous escapade in order to cross the river, Gregory cast her aside with disdain. Heartsick and dejected, Abigail turned to slug with her tale of woe. Slug, feeling compassion for Abigail, sought out Gregory and beat him brutally. Abigail was overjoyed at the sight of Gregory getting his due. As the sun sets on the horizon, we hear Abig ail laughing at Gregory.

### **African-american students response**

- Roger was worse as he violated the social relations.
- Gregory was wrong to disown Abigail.

- Slug should not have beat him up.
- Abigail asked slug to beat up Gregory which she should not have done and more over she laughed at him.
- Ivan was right not to involve in the matter.

### **The white working class students**

They tried to probe into the inner psyche of the characters. For them morality is the rational in psychology and they gave priority to the reason. It was reflected in some of their responses. They said Roger play a cheap trick and Gregory tossed away his lover not listening to her reason they even interpret Gregory could have behaved in the same way if he had found himself in the same situation. Contradicting to the African class they read the text Abi never asked slug to beat up her lover, and reasoned slug's actions were out of compassion.

### **Elite upper class response**

They distanced from the characters they had examined and passed judgments over their actions for them the feelings of the characters were insignificant, but how they feel to the actions done by the characters was all important. They set themselves in the controlling class by saying "*we don't like the name of slug*", "*Gregory and slug could have done better to improve the situation*", "*we are not all comfortable with Abigail.*"

### **The world of African-American students**

- (1) They took the roles and spoke out their emotions through their characters.
- (2) Their world is highly emotional and exiting. Often they try to go beyond and out of the text to impart meaning to the discourse from their own social experiences.
- (3) On the other side the white students are quite unwilling to draw inferences from out of text.
- (4) The African class used terminology that we are traditionally associated with morality such as right, wrong.
- (5) For them morality is to follow moral precepts and not violating social relations.
- (6) They have eyes only for overt social relations and physical actions hence, never try to sink into the internal states.
- (7) They expressed their views with force and directness. They never mince or use hedges to be less offensive.

All these groups acted as true representatives of their respective classes.

### **The Moor in Othello**

Irrespective of the time of arrival, place of arrival both the African-American students and our protagonist Othello share a great many common traits. Othello is a man all for overt social relations. Any deviation from the norm is unacceptable to him. Loyal to husband is the sacred duty of a wife and sliming of it in any way is fatal to the code of conduct. That is why he justifies his murdering of Desdemona as a sacrifice. Moreover he proclaims he killed her not in hate but for honor. In the end also he bares the yoke of honor when he says he is one "who loved not wisely but too well." He is a man of robust energy and dynamic action. But "*he has no speculative or meditative imagination of Hamlet.*" His world is exciting and emotional. He has his eyes for the physical beauty of Desdemona. He utterly fails to fathom out her inner charm and purity. Even at the hour of murder, Desdemona's 'balmy breath, monumental alabaster like skin' appeal to him greater than the sincerity in her words and her devotion to the bond of marriage. The same emotional exuberance makes him a better poet than Hamlet. As Bradley puts it "Othello in one sense of the word by far is the most romantic of Shakespeare's heroes.

Poetry charged with intense feeling has never deserted him. Internal conflict is something foreign to him. Unable to bare the mental struggle, he cries out "why did I marry?" "Away from love or jealousy at once." His falling into trance talks about his feeble strength to be thoughtful. With

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no evidence to prove, only on the early account of Iago, he suspects his wife and gives a nod to kill Casio. It shows his vulnerability and rashness. Is Othello temperamentally jealous or not? Divides the critics into two. The elements of cultural distance, social differences, inferiority, insecurity and vacuum of action in one force out smarted the great warrior and made him prone to be jealous at any given time. Here, Iago seized the opportunity to work out his evil designs. At this juncture, any man of elite class could have shown a better resistance or might have taken a little more time to decide the matter. This is evident for Iago doubts his wife but never kills her for that reason and Cassio, is quiet casual about his affair with Bianca. In all the above instances, he is more a class than an individual.

To support our view, we have already seen most of these characteristic traits in African-American students in the socio-cultural study previously presented of course, in different forms.

### **Conclusion**

To sum it up in Bradley's words "Othello's mind for all its poetry is very simple. He is not observant. His nature tends outwards. He is free from introspection. He is given to little reflection and emotions excite his imagination, but it confuses and dulls his intellect. On this side he is the very opposite of hamlet, with whom, however, he shares a great openness and trustfulness of nature. It marks the unbridgeable gap between the two worlds and Othello falls a prey to the affectations, curtsies and niceties of the other world. Perhaps, in the world of his people, he would be a spotless monarch of both the state and his lady.

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## 54. Vikram Seth's *A Suitable Boy*: A Study in the Protagonist's (Lata's) Progressive Discovery towards True self

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Vikram Seth is unquestioningly one of the most versatile Indian writers in English of our times. His magnum opus novel *A Suitable boy* has brought him \$600,000 advance from an American publisher. It has created a literary storm and won the Commonwealth Writers Award as well as the W.H. Smith Literary Award in 1994. Daniel Johnson says "I have little doubt that Vikram Seth is already the best of his generation." The Guardian compares him to Goethe and George Eliot. The Washington Post praises him "A Tolstoy-on His First-Try." *A Suitable boy*, a novel is one of the largest novels ever written in the world. It has 19 sections divided into 477 small chapters. The length of the novel does not lessen the readability of the novel. *A suitable boy* is set completely in India. The main plot centres on the question of finding a suitable husband for Lata (Protagonist), a 19-year-old postgraduate in English Literature, a daughter of Rupa Mehra, a widow. The novel opens with the wedding of Lata's elder sister, Savitha Prasad Kapoor and of Rupa Mehra's warning-like advice to Lata "(Y)ou too will marry a boy I Choose" very soon after Lata falls passionately in love with a dashing young student called Kabir, a Muslim, and flirts with someone else, Amith Charatgee, a sophisticated Bangali Brahmin and a poet and finally marries to another person, Haresh Kanna. This paper is an attempt to present the protagonist's (Lata's) progressive discovery of her true self.

In *A Suitable Boy*, ultimately Lata "hate passion" 'passionately' for ever's she declares firmly to her close friend Malati. Lata does not make this decision because of Kabir being a Muslim or to obey to her mother. Neither does she choose Haresh because he can provide her with either riches or security and social recognition. Even now she feels a passionate attraction for romantic Kabir. What makes her make such a decision is her gradual maturity towards reality and pragmatic will power. Seth shows deep insight, honesty and truthfulness in the portrayal of an ordinary Indian woman's gradual development towards maturity. At the beginning of the novel Lata is 19 years old and at the end she is 20. Within this one year Lata grows from a moody and willful girl to a woman who realizes and understands her responsibilities and thereby acts accordingly. Through his characters Seth tries to profound his philosophy of life. Lata chooses Haresh not because of her mother's order, but because of a simple reason that she wants to marry somebody like Haresh. When she accepts Haresh's proposal, her mother and brother, Arun, are reluctant because of his (Haresh) shoe business. A second not unrelated point is that Haresh does not and can never aspire to move in the same social circle as we do. A foreman is not a covenanted assistant, and Prana is simply not Bensten Pryce. The small of leather cling rather too closely to the name, the Czechs who are his bosses, are technicians, sometime barely literate in English, not graduates from the best universities in England. In a certain sense by choosing a trade rather than a profession, after his graduation from St. Stephen's Haresh has downgraded himself. I hope you do not mind my speaking frankly on a matter and society is exacting and cruel: you will find yourself excluded from certain circles simply by virtue of being Mrs. Kanna. (1293) This snobbish attitude of her brother reflects her attitude towards her fateful selection. She has yet feels a passionate attraction towards Kabir, yet she chooses Haresh, the decision which is difficult and painful to her friend Malati. But she does not choose Haresh because he will give her riches, comfort or social recognition. Her practical decision is a cry against stifling snobbery and blind passion, and towards championing the cause of rationality, stability and economic productivity – "Haresh's feet towards the ground, and he has dust and sweat and a shadow. The other two are a bit too God-like and ethereal to be of any good for me" (1299).

Vikram Seth has allowed his heroine the opportunity of choosing among three suitors who are totally different from each other in their behavior as well as appearance. The first of the three is

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Kabir Durani , the handsome and dashing Muslim student to enter Lata's life but sadly their love does not last forever: *She smiled to herself now,not aware of her surrounding still holding the book,she looked up.And this was how a young man,who had been standing not far from her,was included,unintentionally, in her smile.He was pleasantly startled,and smiled back at her.Lata frowned at him and looked down at the page again.But she could not concentrate on it.*(46) Though Kabir has princely look Mrs. Rupa Mehara considers him the most unstable to whom Lata must avoid But Lata is unable to forget his charm and his oozing sexuality and falls desperately and passionately in love with him". But his lack of financial stability and impracticability and inter-racial marriage make Lata disgusted. In course of time she has begun to think of Kabir: *"When I am with Kabir ,or even away from him but thinking about him, I became utterly useless for anything.I feel I am out of control like a boat leading for the rocks and I don't want to become a wreck."*(1298) The second man to enter Lata's life is Amit chatterji. He is gifted intelligent, vitty but eccentric and materialistically spoilt poet. He is Meenakshi's elder brother and so enters Lata's life more as a relative and a friend than a suitor to frustrated Lata Amit's company serves as the best possible balm. Gradually Amit is attracted to Lata's charm and innocence. He makes a 'modest proposal' to her which is in the form of a small poem: *"As you have asked for black and white,/May I send these line to you/In the tacit hope you might/Take my type at least as true./Let this distance disappear/And our Hearts approach from far/Till we come to be as near/As acrostically we are."* (1288)But his proposal does not move Lata and she rejects him. She also advises him that they can always be good friends and never be a wife and husband: *"We are too a like.His moods veer and oscillate as wildly as min.Can you imagine the life of our poor children?And if his mind's on a book I do know if he'll have any time for me.Sensitive people are usually very sensitive-I should know."* (1296)Haresh , the last man to enter Lata's life and stands as A *Suitable boy*.In the authour's view he is "Stakhonvite Hero of Labour"(1125) she thinks of Haresh generous , optimistic and responsible. All his positive qualities make Lata choose Haresh as husband .As David Myers states "Lata is not marrying Haresh .She is marrying a symbol of what Vikram Seth would like to proclaim as his hope for a new Indian man. (1994). Furthermore Lata is in love with him. His unaffected way and sincere concern for everybody endear towards Lata. *"But there was something adventurous in losing herself entirely in a world that she did not know with a man whom she trsted and had begun to admire and who cared for her so deeply and steadily.She thought of a painless Haresh;smiling his open smile ,she sat him down at a table so that she could not see his correspondent shoes;she ruffled his hair a bit and well ,he was quite attractive! She liked him.Perhaps,given time and luck ,she could even learn to love him."* (1292)

Through Lata has been passionately in love with Kabir, she is virgin and she lacks in any kind of sexual knowledge until her mother presents her with the book dealing with sexual positions and book its entitled "Ideal Marriage" (1331) so there is no guarantee that this idea as passionless will continue through out her life time. Lata's innocence become very much evident when the narrator comments that, after she has read the Dutch author's sex manual she "was a much repelled as fascinated by what he had to offer" (1331).So there is no reason why Lata and Haresh's marriage won't turn out to be happy wholesome in spite Haresh being "the bronze caske"(1299). As Malati so candidly points out to Lata. "however", as David Mayers says ' in the navel , the author ( Vikram Seth) suggests the meaning of life is to be found in arranged marriages, the renunciation of sexual demonicism (...) passion and fanaticism of all kinds must vigoriulsy exorcised and rational calm and humor must dominant in the human personality.

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## 55. Post Modern Narrative Framework in Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things*

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### Introduction

The development of the postmodern novel as a narrative form owes much to the fragmentary form of the picaresque narrative ,diversity of perspectives in epistolary novels of 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century realism and 20<sup>th</sup> century self reflectory modern novel. Post-modernism as a whole, tends to resist definition or classification as a movement. Postmodern fiction makes use of almost every technique that has so far been employed in the narrative tradition. Postmodern narratives invents new terminology that deconstructs the whole narrative tradition ,focuses the fictionality of work [surfiction],on the writing process[metafiction],on the ambiguity of meaning [narrative within narrative],on the lack of authenticity[ intertextuality],and plays with the narrative language[parody and pastiche]. The Postmodern author uses different narrative elements to problematise the relation between fiction and reality, and argues that there is nothing outside the text that may be supplied .Contemporary writers like Jorge Luis Borges, Orhan Pamuk and Samuel Beckett consciously and intentionally used post-modern narrative techniques. The forerunner of such post-modern narratives is Lawrence Sterne's 18th century satire *Tristram Shandy* and Cervantes *Don Quixote*.

Post-modernism involves not only a continuation, sometimes carried to an extreme, of the countertraditional experiments of modernism, but also diverse attempts to break away from modernist forms. In Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things* there is a definite story but a multitude of different stories as well that form a kaleidoscope view of events and experiences countered by the characters of the book. The present paper analyses the post-modern narrative framework in *The God of small things*. Before analysing them it may be useful to explain the various techniques the author uses to narrate the novel.

- Intertextuality an important element of post-modernism is the acknowledgement of previous literary works. The term intertextuality is first used by Julia Kristeva to refer to the distinction between creativity and activity. She argues that creativity does not assume the existence of an earlier process, material and model. Productivity, on the other hand, assumes a pre-existing raw material. Each so-called new text is a reworking of the existing body of literature. Intertextuality signifies inseparability and inter-involvement of one text with the other texts through allusions, citations, assimilation of formal and substantive features of other texts or by participation in the linguistic and literary conventions that have always existed. Any text, therefore is in fact an Intertext – an intersection of number less other tags that have already been written and said that is going to be written in the future
- Metafiction, an important technique used many post-modern authors to feature their writing, which, essentially, is writing about writing, an attempt to make the reader aware of its fictionality, and, sometimes, the presence of the author. Authors sometimes used this technique to allow for flagrant shifts in narrative, impossible jumps in time, or to maintain emotional distance as a narrator . Metafiction violates the standard novelistic expectations by experimenting with subject matter, form, and temporal sequence; departs from the traditional category of realistic romance.
- Historiographic metafiction The term "historiographic metafiction coined by Linda Hutcheon referred to works that fictionalised actual historical events or figures. Historiographic metafiction is different from a historical novel. Historiographic metafiction uses and abuses history, which is absent in a historical novel. Thomas Pynchon's *Mason and Dixon*, for example, features a scene in which George Washington smokes marijuana.

- Irony, playfulness, black humour: post-modern authors were certainly not the first to use irony and humour in their writing, but for many post-modern authors, these became the hallmarks of their Style. They have often treated very serious subjects – World War II, the Cold War, conspiracy theories – from a position of systems and disconnected, and tried to depict their histories ironically and humorously.
- Pastiche many post-modern authors combine, or “pasted” elements of previous genres and styles of literature to create a new narrative voice, or to comment on the writing of their contemporaries. Postmodern authors use elements from detective fiction, science fiction, and war fiction, songs, pop culture references, and well-known, obscure, and fictional history.
- Temporal distortion this is a common technique in post-modernistic fiction fragmentation and non-linear narratives are central features in both modern and post-modern literature. Temporal distortion in modern fiction is used in a variety of ways, often for the sake of irony. Time may also overlap, repeat or bifurcate into multiple possibilities.
- Magic realism is maybe literary work marked by the use of still , sharply defined, smoothly painted images or figures and objects depicted in a surrealistic manner. The themes and subjects are often imaginary, somewhat outlandish and fantastic and with a certain dreamlike quality. Some of the characteristics features of this kind of fiction are the mingling and juxtaposition of the realistic and the fantastic or bizarre, skilful time shifts convoluted and even labyrinthine narrative and plots, miscellaneous use of dreams, myths and fairy stories, expressionistic and even surrealistic descriptions, arcane eruditions, the elements of surprise or abrupt shock, the horrific and the inexplicable.

## About the Novel

The main events in *The God of Small Things* take place during some December weeks in 1969 and the setting is Ayemenem, a town in the equatorial south Indian state of Kerala. Seen for the most part through the eyes of Rahel, Ammu’s daughter, the narrative moves between two points in time, 1969 and 1993, and the perspective subsequently switches between Rahel seeing things as a seven year old girl and an adult woman. 1993 is the year when Rahel returns to Ayemenem to meet her brother Estha after being separated for 31 years. Haunted by memories from the past, the novel is something an excavation of a trauma; Rahel looks back at her life to examine it. Postmodern in its Handling of time, the plot circles between the ‘present’ and the past, digging deeper and deeper into the tragic secrets of Rahel’s life with an effect similar to that of a detective story, keeping the reader anxious and curious about how things really happened to the very end. More and more details are added, more and more perspectives are offered as the narrator flashes restlessly forwards and backwards. Out of the many qualities about her novel one is that the reader has the privilege to see a course of events from several very different vantage points, and this is also reflected in the novel’s epigraph: “Never again will a single story be told as though it’s the only one” (John Berger). Roy weaves her plot, thread by thread, into a Colourful, multifaceted story; added to the narrative are different cultural references to Shakespeare, *The Sound of Music*, Kathakali (traditional drama-dance) and the music of The Rolling Stones which create a patchwork of associations and connotations. But the novel is not just a beautiful and intricate postmodern saga; it is definitely an intervention into (Especially Indian) culture with its close, almost overdone description of caste transgressive intimacy, and its critical account of the local communist leader and Kerala communism in general. We now turn to some relevant strategies that inform us about the narrative Framework of the novel.

## Post-modern narrative framework in the Novel *The God of Small Things*

Post-modernism celebrates instability in point of view thus giving a work either several beginnings or several endings. In 1939, Irish novelist and journalist Flann O’Brien wrote in, what is considered by many to be one of the first works of postmodern fiction, *At Swim-Two-Birds*:

*"A good book may have three openings entirely dissimilar and inter-related only in the prescience of the author, or for that matter one hundred times as many endings."*[O'Brien, 9].

In the first place, we find that the novel has a number of beginnings. The many beginnings are finely interwoven with the novel's temporal fragmentation, that is, its constant shifting in time and space. One of the story's several beginnings takes place in Ayemenem, Southern India, in the month of May and quickly jumps forward to the next month to Rahel's return and to her brother Estha's 're-return'. We see another beginning and the narrative slides to twenty-three years in the past, to the fateful two-weeks prior to the death of their English cousin, which for the narrator is "in a purely practical sense [...] It all began when Sophie Mol came to Ayemenem "[Roy, 28], these are just a few of the novel's beginnings. Another beginning is the story of a pappachi and his moth. His meditative exposes the family's Anglophile tendencies. Similarly, *The God of Small Things* does not have a definite end, it leaves room for the reader to interpret and end the Novel as they so wish. John Simmons writes that the novel finishes in the middle of the story, but there is no ending just an end to the narration of the events [Benoit, 104]. These several beginnings and abrupt ending exposes a sense of instability; an instability which all the post-modern writers celebrate in their writing.

Moving onto the temporal distortion prevailing in the novel, there is a constant shifting in the time and space. The time shifts between the past and present that gives the novel a sense of imbalance. The novel can be divided into chronological [the timeline of the narrative] and a-chronological [the time relating to history within the novel's context, e, g. the History House, the caste system, the love laws] [99] Roy uses this "fragmentation of chronological time" to highlight the importance of a-chronological time [105]. The novel's temporal framework is not a continuous narrative but a disordered mix of various time that can only be pieced together by the reader thus we see that the temporal distortion is set into the narrative frame work of the novel to achieve a post-modernistic effect.

The metafictionistic rendering of the Novel can be clearly visualised in the two Central and the interwoven threads. The first traces the traumatic events experienced by an Indian family living in Ayemenem during a two-week period in 1969. The family includes Mammachi, her two grown children, Ammu and Chacko, who are both divorced and have returned home, and Ammu's 7-year-old twins; Rahel, and Estha. Terrible things happen during these two weeks; Estha is molested by a stranger; Chacko's half-English daughter Sophie arrives from America only to drown accidentally; and a love affair between Ammu and an untouchable worker named Velutha which results in Velutha's brutal beating by a group of Policemen, a beat that takes place in front of the twins and that results in his death. The second narrative depicts a day in 1993, when Estha and Rahel meet for the first time in the violent events twenty-three years before, a meeting that culminates in an incestuous sexual encounter. In addition to these two main threads, other stories are told about each of the characters, both before 1969 and after. Roy presents the two central stories in more or less alternating chapters, but each chapter weaves back and forth over that time period, creating a complex series of references and allusions. The narratives are punctuated with repeated flashbacks and images, as present events return in the past, and, inexplicably, future events appear to disrupt the past. The narrative is not a continuous one but a disordered one that can be culled together by the reader. Roy's text echoes the way her characters are experiencing the present moment, one that always senses the already haunted by past and future events. At times, Roy employs a third person omniscient voice that seems to have access to multiple characters; at other times, the voice slips into free indirect discourse, speaking with the style and observations of, say, the young Rahel or the child version of Estha, inviting the reader to see and experience from a particular point of view. This extreme experimental writing of Roy only insists on the fictionality or fabrication of the novels and betrays the construction of reality, which is essentially a postmodern narrative strategy.

Roy further exploits the postmodern tool, historiographic metafiction to the maximum in her debut novel. Historiographic metafiction fictionalises actual historical events. In the novel one can find history [facts] judiciously intertwined with fiction. History and politics are inextricably linked to the narrative framework of the novel. The novel depicts 1969 turbulent India where protest against the caste system was common place. The social events and class relationships in Kerala in the sixties form an integral part. The novel depicts 1957 Marxist government Kerala with EMS Namboothiripad its Chief Minister. The novel also narrates how government had to resign due to the Antigovernment strikes led by Congress, which has the support of the church as well. "Fortunately before the year was out, the peaceful transition came to an end" [Roy, 67]. Roy also relates historical events with what happens to her characters. "Ammu was eight months pregnant when war broke with China" [21]. When Indo Pakistan war began Ammu got separated from her husband "the war with Pakistan begun, Ammu left her husband and returned, unwelcome to her parents in Ayemenem"[20]. Thus the novel amalgamates the nation history with the personal history into the narrative framework of the novel either for comic end or for serious effects.

Another important feature post-modern literature is magic realism. Magic realism is a style that has been most widely adopted by Latin American authors including Gabriel Garcia Marquez and Isabel Allende. Roy's fellow Indian writer Salman Rushdie also relies heavily on this style. Magic realism is not overtly present in the novel; it could be argued that the temporal fragmentation hints at magical realism. However the most obvious use of the style is in the twin's telepathy and their interconnectedness. One always knew when the other was near, they laughed at each other's funny dreams, Rahel knew what the *Orange drink Lemon drink* man did to her brother. And "she remembered the taste of the tomato sandwiches –Estha's sandwiches, that Estha ate – on the Madras Mail to Madras"[7]. Rahel also notice that her cousin, Sophie Mol was awake for her own funeral and performed a "secret cartwheel in her coffin"[9]. This could, however be put down to the post traumatic stress induced hallucination due to the fact that they had recently witnessed a man being beaten to death. Alex Tickell maintains that if we examine the description of the funeral in more depth Rahel translates the fact that Sophie Mol died 'because she couldn't breath' into a claustrophobic living burial [Tickell, 57]. Though not explicit, the seeming magical realism is also woven into the narrative framework of the novel.

Intertextuality and pastiche, a postmodern narrative strategy is also diligently woven into the narrative framework of the novel. There are numerous allusions to other literary works history, folklore, fairy tales, cinema, pop culture, etc. In the novel Roy uses many references to 1960 British culture At the airport in cochin, Sophie Mol her, English cousin arrives with *go-go* bag and "she walk down the runway, the smell of London in her hair" [Roy, 106] Several references are made till last about the hair and her *Love-in-Tokyo* hair clip. Roy explains that *Love-in-Tokyo*, a type of hair accessory that comprises two beads on a rubber band. Interestingly Roy alludes to the *Love -in-Tokyo* which is also the name of a 1960s Indian Bollywood film.

One of the most obvious and important intertextual references are that of Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*. In the novel "Roy makes several use of metaphor "Heart of Darkness". She says in Ayemenem, in the heart of darkness ....but about the darkness, about what the darkness is about"[Liddle,1] Heart of Darkness also appears in reference to Kari Saipu and the 'History House' He is referred to as 'Ayemenem's own Kurtz', which is an explicit reference to a central character in Conrad's Novel. Other interesting intertextual reference include *The Great Gatsby* as a reference to the inherited wealth. Also the Napoleon and his famous saying "you can't make an omelette without breaking eggs" is alluded to the chapter 1; "The Old Omelette and Egg" [Roy,15]. Another instance of an intertextual reference is to Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*. Mammachi's letter to the regional Manager of the Bombay-based pickle factory, *PadmaPickles* for advice on picking mangoes [125]. Many more instances like Chacko quotes *The Great Gatsby*, Estha cites *A Tale of Two cities*, the twin know both *The Jungle Book* and the parts of *Tempest* by heart, and the whole family is

captivated by *The sound of Music*. Roy thus uses intertextuality and pastiche into the framework of the novel to bring out the aimed effect.

Roy is at times whimsical and her tone strikes ironical note and exploits black humour to the utmost in her novel. She achieves these postmodern features through the playful language she adopts. Every incident in the novel where she writes expressions phonetically, uses Malayalam words in English, uses non-standard capitalisation, punctuation and spelling and invents new words and expressions. The characters in the novel are multilingual. Hence the characters in the novel use Malayalam expressions intercalated in English sentence. One of the first examples in the book is the chapter 1 where the police inspector Thomas Matthew informs Ammu “that the Kottayam police didn’t take the sentences from veshyas”[10]. Ammu's inability to legal claim to any property including the pickle factory is clearly depicted in the ironical words “thanks to our wonderful male chauvinistic society” [45]. Expressions like *Orange drink Lemon drink man* and *Locusts stand I* [is a Latin expression distorted by the memory of a small child and refers to the legal term *locus stand i*, which translates literally as "place of standing"]. A couple of instances of Irony black humour which Roy weaves into the narrative framework can be explored through the life of the Pappachi who is seen as quite comic and the clownish. According to his son, Chacko, he was an incurable *British CCP* which is short for *chhi-chhi poach*, which in Hindi means ‘shit wiper’. Chacko also calls Pappachi an anglophile[41]. All these humorous expressions are used to represent Pappachi is a symbol as misogynistic society and Roy uses his character to undermine the male dominating chauvinistic society.

Roy also succeeds in bringing out and subalternity, most intriguing and frequently used term that the post colonial and postmodern writers into her narrative framework. The novel depicts ‘social subaltern’-socially belonging to the marginalised and oppressed class and ‘gendered subaltern’-women as the oppressed and marginalised class. The former represent by the untouchables, Dalit Velutha and the later by Ammu and other female characters in the novel. The novel depicts the subaltern being dehumanised by the dominate hegemonic ideology. It also exposes the Indian social reality. Amidst all the progress, secularism, equal rights and justice the novel actually, shows how these ideologies are jeopardised, and how the subalterns [female and Dalit] are fated to marginalised and constricted life of humiliation and torture. The instances of feminism, apart from the woman being treated as a subaltern, run from the beginning till the end of the novel.

Another term worth considering in regard to the narrative framework of the novel is the Regionalism. *The God of Small Things* is undoubtedly a regional novel which takes the landscape in Kerala with its customs, manners, social structure, social, cultural and the religious practices and focuses its attention on the life of particular well-defined geographical region-Ayemenem. The Novel includes regional myths, folk songs, local names of people and places, and the vernacular language-Malayalam. This helps the novelist to probe into the working of the society, culture, individuals and many other related issues. The novelist also takes freedom to attack evil social practices like casteism and corruption in the public life.

## Conclusion

To conclude, Roy’s novel *The God of Small Things* is rendered in postmodern narrative framework. She achieves this end by adopting and assimilating various post-modern tools. Its unpredictable, fractured temporality non conformity and playful idioms, are few subversive devices. Roy uses postmodern framework to undermine both Indian and British colonial society making it one of the most important works of postcolonial Indian fiction since Salman Rushdie’s *Midnight’s Children*. This revolutionary novel catapulted Roy into fame and infamy and has caused much controversy in the Indian subcontinent and beyond and has earned her threats. Though the novel on a



whole is a tragedy, narration does end with a note of optimism, with the word *tomorrow* in both English and Malayalam.

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## 56. Portrayal of Woman's Psyche in Manju Kapur's *Custody*

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Post modern English literature is invigorated with the growing number of internationally acclaimed Indian English fiction writers and their contributions to the world of fiction. Among them there is no dearth of Indian women novelists who majorly focused on various women issues. Many women novelists have taken women related themes to portray the role of women befitting them in either traditional or modern Indian family as well as societal settings. The women novelists like Kamala Markendaya, Nayantara Sahgal, Anita Desai, Sashi Deshpande, Bharathi Mukherjee, Manjukapur, Gita Hariharan and the others have intuitively perceived the gender issues upsetting women and presented women as individuals. Until then individualism, quest for identity, protests and concepts of rebelliousness have often remained alien ideas, as far as women were concerned. The role women play both in family and society has acquired a drastic and dramatic change with the change that our society is taking - economic, social, political, and the intellectual perception. While analyzing that processes the modern-day women writers who no longer consider women as oppressed are now expressing themselves without prejudices the women's role as a central focus. Most of the women novelists concentrate on the narration of what they felt about their women and their lives in post modern India instead of depicting women mere suffering individuals. Their novels thematically preoccupied themselves with the subject matters like women as individuals, family relationships and their role in the society. Manju Kapur is one among such women writers who look into the struggle of the protagonists with a different outlook taking into account the complexity of life and tries to have her own concerns, priorities as well as her own ways of dealing with the predicament of her women protagonists. While concentrating on the contemporary Indian Women Novelists who have written after 1980, Babita Kar & Urvashi Kaushal observe that 'The crux of Manju Kapur's work rests on addressing issues like female emancipation, their physical aspiration and their efforts in repositioning themselves in the present social environment.'

Manju Kapur was born in 1948 in Amritsar, a city familiar with sectarian conflict and has lived through turbulent times in India. She graduated from the Miranda House University College for women and went on to take an M.A. at Dalhousie University in Halifax, Nova Scotia and an M.Phil. at Delhi University. . Manju Kapur is a professor of English where she is a teacher of English literature at her alma mater Miranda House College, Delhi. She is married to Gun Nidhi Dalmia and lives in New Delhi. She has three daughters named Amba, Maya, Katyayani and a son Agastya. She has written five novels: *Difficult Daughters* (1998), *A Married Woman* (2002), *Home* (2006), *The Immigrant* (2009), and *Custody* (2011). Her debut novel *Difficult Daughters* published in 1998 received a great international acclaim and was awarded the Commonwealth Writers Prize for the best first book Europe and South Asia (Eurasia). *Difficult Daughters* earned her great success, both commercially and critically, in India as well as abroad and was one of the best sellers in India. In this novel the protagonist tries to find a place for her in a world where her life is depicted by familiar duties and becomes embroiled in a forbidden affair while the seismic upheavals of the partition surround her. In presenting the protagonist with a central theme of search for control over one's destiny, Manju kapur apparently showcases her inclination towards her feminist approach in depicting the inner subtlety of a woman's mind, and displays a mature perception of the female psyche. With her finely tuned character portraits that are caught in chaotic life situations, she speaks with great narrative eloquence for the middle-class women and undoubtedly there are many parallels with Jane Austen as a novelist. Manoj Kumar Sortha in the article named, 'Struggle for Identity: Comparative Study of *Cry*, *The Peacock* and *Home*' expresses that Manju Kapur's novels are constructed around the woman's quest for self fulfillment autonomy, self- realization, autonomous personality and self-actualization. Manju Kapur depicts the inner psyche of women. A close psychological study of the protagonists of Manju Kapur's 'Custody' reveals the matured conception of the female psyche and the inner delicacies as well as rigidity of a woman's mind.

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The present paper is based on the latest novel of Manju Kapur entitled 'Custody' in which she has focused on the modern woman's psyche which is mystifying with all its complexities. In the novel a new and entirely different issue of human life is expressed by Manju Kapur who can be considered as one of the significant new voices of India in the field of literature. Kapur displays a mature understanding of the social issue entangled with the life of woman and she depicts this issue through the characters portraying women in various manifestations. She deals the theme with a perfect blend of the personal life and the external circumstances with a sympathetic outlook. The purpose of this study is to understand enigmatic woman psyche with diverse attitudes and inexplicable emotions and also to analyze issues related to the upper middle class women who caught in the struggles of modernity and the modern ways of Indian life. The female perspective of interpreting issues related the custody of children amidst the shattered relations between the mother and father and disturbed families due to infidelity and infertility is well portrayed in the novel highlighting the very crux of the problem. The novel shows the story of Shagun and Ishitha, the two protagonists whose lives are involved around the custody of the two children of Shagun and Raman Kaushik.

Marriage is one of the most prominent themes in the fictions of Manju Kapur and in her works, with all her intellectual and emotional outlook, she gives multilayered treatment of the issue that is taken to explore. The most dominant theme found in her fiction includes marriage, family relationships, mother-daughter relationship, husband-wife relationship, separation, and extramarital relationship. In India marriage is considered as institution in which it is not just the union of two individuals that takes place but it is something more, the union of two families, the relatives and the society in general. Manju Kapur very delicately deals with the issue of marriage and divorce in her latest novel Custody, a heartrending tale of marriage break-ups. In her online interview with Randomhouseindia, when she is referred as issue based writer, she talks about her novel and her interesting issues to write, *"I think all issues are grist to the writer's mill. Depends on what inspires you, what pushes the narrative forward. In my case it has been the things you mention, but rather than focus on the divorce, infidelity etc., I look at the consequences of these actions, which I find more interesting. Not what propels a divorce, but what the long term consequences of this are for everybody concerned."* She also adds about her characters in the novel and their extreme behavior, *"And here I have been thinking that although none of the characters come out wholly shinning, you do sympathize with them all! Misery, anxiety, tension does bring out the worst in us – that would apply to any conflict situation. Where children are concerned, ones deepest feelings are at stake, and this provokes all kinds of extreme behaviour."*

In this book Kapur explores the adjustments and frustrations in modern life because of which marriage encounters the gaping distances and as a result the characters suffer from intellectual, emotional and physical distance in their relationship. Sushila Chaudhary and Usha Sharma, in their work on Feminism in India and Manju Kapur's Fiction express that Manju Kapur's fifth novel Custody is not just a social commentary, but a novel that is true to the universal angst of modern marriage, with its burden of individualism. As said by Sheeba Azhar and Syed Abid Ali, while studying the portrayal of Indian Middle Class Women in Manju Kapur's Novels, it is well observed that the idea that all women are meant to get married and be submissive to their husbands was given a second look when we read the novels of Manju Kapur. The women characters in her novel marry and one suffers because of social pressure and feels suffocated within the bonds of marriage and eventually breaks free of it and there is someone who tries to adjust to it somehow and if it fails then makes the relationship work in a different way.

Down the history it has been observed that change is inevitable leading to the situation in which human life undergoes a continuous evolutionary process and thus constant societal evolution has changed Indian family system a lot. These changes can be seen at many levels – social norms, accepted ways of thought, communication and behaviour, and the role of family and their relations.

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These changes, however, have slowly been woven into the fabric of Indian system, gradually being absorbed as the new norms, reshaping the role of family and the Indian values of interdependence, modesty, family honour, and social hierarchy and so on creating the unimagined uncertainty of matrimony. In the present scenario globalization plays a key role for all these societal variations. Globalization, foreign intrusion and establishment of MNCs in the name of globalization have left the urban Indian families rich and confused in the modern world thus family relations are experiencing a dramatic change. There is such a drastic change occurred in the life of Raman Kaushik, a CEO of a multinational company in India and belonged to urban upper middle class family of Delhi, who has to travel frequently as a part of his business responsibility around the world. He lives with Shagun, his extraordinarily beautiful wife and their two adorable children – eight year old Arjun who resembles her and two year old Roohi who is after him. He is the man, who is a successful at his professional life, reaps the monetary benefits and accompanying lifestyle of his work at the Brand, a company that invests largely in the manufacture of soft drinks. His entire family appears to be so complete with supportive parents and caring mother-in-law. This whole scene has been shattered by Shagun's meeting with charismatic Ashok Khanna, Raman's dynamic new boss who lures her to betray her husband with her passion towards modern ways of life. She convinces herself: *'Had he been a home-grown Indian and not the boss, she would have found a way to refuse, but this man had been imported from abroad and she did not want to seem unsophisticated. So she went for coffee, and in the spirit of sophistication, dispassionately reveled in the admiration emanating from him, knowing she was still in a role, and it was nice to play away from home.'* (11)

She starts lamenting on her role as wife and mother at a very young age: *'Later she decided she must have been unhappier than she realized. She had been brought up to marry, to be wife, mother and daughter-in-law. She had never questioned this destiny, it was the one pursued by everyone she knew.'*(26) But slowly the relationship between Shagun and Ashok begins to get serious and more fiery, daring and passionate. The extent of her selfishness reaches to stage where she has no regrets about lying to her husband or to her own mother and her ability to be cruel is visible in the choices she makes and finally she is forced to choose. *'Now the destroyer was in her heart, threatening what she had once held dear. All her energy was spent in keeping secrets. She had to be constantly vigilant, constantly invent excuses, convincingly justify absences from home, phone calls, even a preoccupied expression.'*(33) She quits her married life feeling the illusion in the coherence of her own family and attracts towards the sophisticated life shown by Ashok in the western influenced world of Indian life. But she suffers herself to get rid of her older self and build a new one with a sense of materialistic advancement but a gradual loss of emotional succor and mental solace. In search of material comforts, she even makes her children face the constant taunts psychologically and emotionally as they have to bear the consequences of the bitter conflict between Shagun and Raman in order to win the custody of them. There starts the legal battle between Shagun and Raman actually it is between Shagun and Ishitha particularly for the custody of Roohi and they both play their tricks to win it in and outside the court leading to subsequent complications and struggles for the custody of the children.

Shagun and Ishitha, are thus the two women protagonists of the novel, belong to the middle class families from Delhi with some similarities and a lot of contrast in their characterization by Manju Kapur. To Indian parents, marriage of a daughter is not actually a matter of ceremonial celebration, but a practice rooted in traditional ritual, more of a moral and social responsibility. They feel relieved, mentally as well as morally; it is the same in case of Mrs. Sabbarwal and Mrs Rojara whose life time ambition is to get the daughter marry. As typical Indian middle class young women, without any second thought and any preference to their own career, Shagun and Ishita just listen to their parents and get dolled up in marriage with the most prospective Raman and Suryakanta respectively. Both the protagonists are happy for some time to lead their married life, but they undergo the trauma of divorce, Shagun by her own choice without any pertinent reason except her own happiness while Ishita by fate with the most common cause of lack of motherhood in India. But

both attain power in their second marriage, in a way as it is compensation to what they do not possess in their first marriage, which is the power to assert and rule their own life. Both the protagonists who defy social convention and traditional moral standards show a kind of protest in not only getting married second time but also having physical relationship before marriage with the man whom they marry. The novelist shows their struggle to reconcile themselves with discontentment within marriage, moving boldly into the relatively new and uncharted territories of Indian divorce. Shagun's quitting Raman's house and marrying Ashok is her act of self-liberation while Ishita is thrown out of Suryakanta's house and finds her life liberated when she meets and marries Raman and looks after Roohi as her own child. Some women like Ishita, Raman's second wife, may be fully satisfied being guardians of her family. Ana Garcia Arroyo in her study of the novel, "But Shagun's spirit, like that of so many other women, is different. She has never been able to guide her own life; everything has been decided by parents, family, cultural customs."(Muse India)

Shagun, the most radical by nature and democratic in attitude, is a stunningly beautiful woman, leaves Raman as she is the most discontented protagonist, who does not endure her discontentment, despite a comfortable lifestyle and having two beloved young children, in her own pursuit of satisfaction and happiness. Though she seems to suffer very few pangs of conscience, and is more concerned with the pragmatic difficulties of extricating herself from her first marriage. She has flickers of guilt at the beginning, but increasingly prioritizes her own life and feels self-liberated through her passionate affair with Ashok, though she finds herself struggling to define her roles as wife, mother and lover. Finally she seems to succeed in her second marriage and glittering life in America with the affluent and adoring Ashok. Her admiration towards her life with him is well expressed in the letters she writes to her mother from America and she does not have any regrets for her deeds. She starts working there as told by her husband whereas when she is with Raman, she never thinks of that. Kapur presents Shagun as the changing image of women moving away from traditional portrayals of enduring, self sacrificing women towards self assured assertive and ambitious women making society aware of their demands and in this way providing a medium for self expression.

Shagun moves abroad abandoning her picture-book-perfect family life, but Raman refuses to divorce her and the case is dragged to court, with each party trying to defame the other and resulting into a crude battle for the guardianship of their children. While the parents are embroiled in a legal battle for custody of the children, they do everything they can to make the children feel worse. Shagun uses her son, who is a replica of herself - selfish, cruel and indifferent to anything but his own satisfaction, as her biggest weapon in her custody fight. She makes her own children find their own ways to tackle the crisis because they are confused and feel divided loyalties swarm around them, throwing them into tough, emotionally disturbing situations with their parents. But she takes the issue of custody her own children to fight against Raman. Her thoughts related to this are well revealed in the letters she writes to her mother. "*Do you ever get to see Roo? Raman must know she misses you. He is beginning to show signs of paranoia, as though I would kidnap the children!*(344-345)" "*How unreasonable. Didn't I phone Raman, threaten him with a contempt case? Further threaten him with not seeing Arjun? Appealed to his better self? Now Ashok feels I should come up with a more effective strategy.*"(372) Thus Shagun is no incarnation of the virtuous and self-sacrificing, but depicted as an Indian modern woman who is no longer willing to suffer and sacrifice for her family, moreover she is willing to dismantle the family and cause pain in pursuit of her personal contentment. In contrast to traditional India setting where this type of decision are generally taken by men making the wives face all hardships, Shagun takes the extreme step of breaking the relation. The same is given by Ana Garcia Arroyo in her study, "But as it is the wife, Shagun, who walks out of an oppressive marriage and finds love in a relationship that is more equal and democratic,"(MUSEINDIA)

Ishita, the second protagonist, although not strikingly beautiful like Shagun, is wise, kind and generous. Shagun is contrasted with Ishita, the middle class and more average Indian woman who desperately wants to be a wife and mother, and finds her highest contentment in these roles. She gets married to Suryakanta to lead a happy life making her postpone her higher studies plans, adapting to her new family and trying to be everybody's favourite. Her happily arranged marriage collapses as soon as her husband and in-laws discover that she cannot conceive and as a result she has to undergo painstakingly many tedious medical treatments to get rid of her infertility, but in vain.

*"Smaller than the ants on the ground, smaller than the motes of the dust in the sunlit air, smaller than drops of dew caught between blades of grass in the morning was Ishita as she sat in the gynaecologist's office" (62)*

Endless doctor visits, medical tests and continuous taunt from relatives shatter Ishita's confidence and shake the foundation of her marriage. Every time whenever she visits the doctor for IVF her body and mind aches severely. Her glimmering hope for becoming a mother once flickers when finally an embryo of her own is developed by doctors and kept in the IVF lab and she becomes very sensitive towards her unborn embryo in the incubator, *"Prayers, prayers, more prayers. Please stay, please grow. You are my only chance of happiness. So many people to love you, just come into the world. I beg you."*(64) Finally she is divorced on ground of being barren, and who initially imagines (along with her parents) that her life is therefore over, being labelled rejected goods and returned. She feels dejected and agonizes on her situation. *"She could not conceive, whereupon SK had decided he could not love her. If only she could tear out her whole reproductive system and throw it on the road. She hated her body, hated it. (121)* But she endeavours to find pleasure in freedom and social work with the help of Mrs. Hingorani, and is able to continue living with some degree of dignity and even job satisfaction in her volunteer work with abandoned street children with the love and support given by her parents. With her tragic past behind her, Ishita reinvents herself and her life and becomes a strong woman. Two parallel lives of divorcees are brought together with Raman's younger daughter seeking a mother in Ishita and the two meet frequently and empathise, he eventually marries her, who lavishes her love on Roohi, his young daughter, fully intending to replace Shagun, the real mother who has to pay the price of losing her daughter for freedom. In contrast Ishita fights for the full custody of Roohi as maternal love and jealousy surges in her who cannot bear to part with her beloved daughter and moreover she does not want her to suffer psychologically torn between torn two mothers, two homes, and two countries. She feels complete responsible and possessive for Roohi and even persuades Raman towards not sending the child to Shagun during holidays and get permanent custody for her by saying, *"Raman, haven't you heard of parents circumventing the law so far as custody is concerned? Now Shagun knows we don't send her easily. Suppose she decides to keep Roo, what will we do? We don't have the resources to fight her there. It's not as though you can retaliate through Arjun. We will simply lose her. Are you ready to take that risk?"*(341) She always thinks about the wellbeing of Roohi and feels threatened of losing her, *"I am only talking about the welfare of the child, that's all such things can cause psychological damage, then the whole life is ruined."*(342) She even tries to avoid Roohi's mingling with Arjun fearing that he may influence his sister against her for that she always moves to her parents house whenever Arjun is with Raman. She trembles a lot and becomes over anxious of her daughter to whom she is mother by heart. Her mindset changes from being mature and understanding to a neurotic mess when it comes the case of her child she loves endlessly. *"Day by day she enveloped Roo in a fierce and fearful love. The child was hers, if there was justice in the world she would remain hers. To this end she fasted, to this end she turned religious, to this end she superstitiously visited astrologers and numerologists. Her fingers sprouted myriad gems glinting from thick gold settings."*(364) Thus the crescendo of a custody battle in all its legal hanky-panky between Shagun and Ishita takes place with all its psychological ugliness. Though both the protagonists end up married to other man, but have to face the aftermath of the bitter custody struggle for Raman's children, especially the innocent, withdrawn female child, Roohi. Kind and compassionate Ishita who has everything what Shagun does not have.

## Conclusion

In the present novel, *Custody*, Manju Kapur manages to create a grandeur atmosphere that reveals the various tragedies that one can go through. Each character in it has an individual mind set, unique in its own way, reflecting the modern virtues that are being adapted. The characterization of the two protagonists in the present novel by her, with her deep and mature understanding, is treated poles apart. The happy married life of Shagun and Raman Kaushik is marred due to her hostility towards her husband and her over ambitiousness in enjoying her life and Raman's staying away from home for most part of their marital life whereas Ishita's first marriage with Suryakanta is collapsed due to her infertility and consequently the hostility she faces from her husband who gives importance to that of his wife's prime duty is to continue his clan and family name but not the relationship between them. Thus Shagun quits Raman's life to find her self-liberation, but the same Raman makes Ishita feel liberated after she is thrown out of her first marriage. Ishita finds solace for her barrenness in life by upbringing Roohi as her own child in contrast to Shagun who abandons her own child for her own pleasures in life.

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## 57. A Sociological Study of Swami Vivekananda's Lectures "From Colombo to Almora"

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A vast corpus of primary and secondary works exist for the study of various aspects of Swami Vivekananda's life and his works but a critical review of the same is necessary to understand the contribution of Swamiji to Indian society. The present paper tries to fill certain gaps left unattended by critical works. Romain Rolland's work, *The Life of Vivekananda and The Universal Gospel*, shows that Vivekananda's thoughts had great impression on the mind of Romain Rolland who has presented a fascinating and impressive account of Swami Vivekananda's life and message. His style is as per his caliber and reputation. Regarding Vivekananda's journey of India he considers it as a great departure in 1891. Like a diver, he plunged into the ocean of India and the ocean covered his tracks. He was a prince despite all disguises with fires of genius burning in his eyes. His vast spirit never for a single day failed to widen its knowledge and its experience. Ultimately having a big cry at Kanyakumari, for the welfare of his poor countrymen, he decided to participate in the World Parliament of Religions, though he had no invitation letter. Romain narrates that Swami Vivekananda asked his friends to contact a religious society for this purpose, but the chief of the society sent the reply, "Let the devil should die of cold". The devil neither died of cold nor give up. So much so even in the Parliament of Religions, amongst them all, it was the young man who represented nothing and yet everything – the man belonging to no sect rather to India as a whole.

One of the chief and most original features of Swami Vivekananda's work was the discovery and declarations of the unity of Hinduism. He made the great men of India like Mahatma Gandhi, Aurobindo Ghosh and Rabindranath Tagore feel for the poor and work for them. His college friend Narendernath Gupta points out the general difference between other reformers of the nineteenth century and Swami Vivekananda. The method followed by other reformers was that of dilettante, touching the surface of great problems, but seldom attempting to probe deeper while Swami Vivekananda tried to hit the roots. *Hints on National Education in India*, written by Sister Nivedita, is an important source of information to understand the educational scenario of early twentieth century in India. Education as the development of the self has always been a part of Indian tradition. However modern education should reach out to every one is the main objective and element of present civilization. The education should not only enable a man to compete but also motivate him to look beyond one's individuality or family towards sociality. The concentration of Indian minds should be on Indian problems and Indian people. The writer opines that to feel nobly and to choose loftily and honestly is a thousand times more important to the development of faculty than any other single aspect of educational process. The need of the hour is that education should be nation making. The importance for the youth must lie outside the family. They should be ready to make sacrifices for their country. This book enumerates three ideals for the reconstitution of a nation. These ideals are country or religion, people and the national mind. Until and unless the education is extended to women, no national progress can be possible. Let the women be educated, resourceful, and strong and fit for moments of crisis, the nation will naturally grow. This work ponders over the purpose of Ramakrishna and Vivekananda schools.

Vivekananda was the first to point out that poverty is not a crime in India. What India needs is the economic development of the poor people so as to put an end to their exploitation by the rich classes. Unless the individuality to common people in India is restored, reforms will not yield the required results. Human dignity and self respect must be retained at all costs. Vivekananda had deep roots in the sacred literature of India with which his mother had nourished his mind which had taught mankind the ideal of the solidarity of the Universe, Renunciation, Service and Spirituality. He was

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probably the first among the 19th century Indian thinkers, who taught the world about India's glory. Both a man of knowledge and action, he dedicated himself to re-enthroning his nation in the position of world's spiritual leader, a place she had lost during the British period. His social philosophy is humanistic, covering all walks of life and social strata. His approach towards the poor and the needy was philanthropic. He spent his whole life for their emancipation of the weak and marginalized sections in India. In the, he had expressed his concern for this section in India. "I do not believe in a God or religion which cannot wipe the widow's tears or bring a piece of bread to the orphan's mouth", he wrote to Alasingha Perumal, on 27th October 1894. He upheld the Indian apothegm regarding *lokasangraha* or the 'holding together of all'. Indeed an early Indian thinker on integral humanism and total revolution, the Swami saw in the service of the poor and the needy the way to realize God. "If you want to find God, serve man. To reach Narayana you must serve the *Daridra Narayanas* – the starving millions of India..."

Vivekananda advocated *Advaita* as a social ideal and his socialism is not an economic or social doctrine. He was opposed to capitalism and to money power in society but did not invoke any philosophy of dialectical materialism. He always placed ideals above institutions and never thought in terms of seizing of political power by the masses. *Vedantic* socialism's cardinal principle is freedom, a free body, a free mind, and a free soul. This paper also analyses Swami Vivekananda's views on morality and his role in the Parliament of Religions along with his ideas about two great souls Shankara and Ramanuja. Vedanta that goes to establish the spiritual equality of all was the basis of the social philosophy of Swami Vivekananda. Though he was proud of the culture and heritage of his country, he didn't hesitate to point out its drawback. During his journey from Colombo to Almora to study the culture and civilization of the country, he came to know that the major drawback of Indian civilization was none other than its poor material condition which was due to the social and economic inequality of Indian society. Even when he sat in meditation on the rock at Cape of Kanyakumari, his patriotic mind was searching for means to strengthen India materially and spiritually. His patriotism was not merely an emotional love towards his country, but a passion to renounce for serving his fellowbeings. His wandering all over India brought him up against moral and social tyrannies over the marginalized sections of society that stunted the very growth of the nation.. Swami noticed that when a society became stagnant, all kinds of tyranny developed within it. This was the state of Hindu society at that time. The Swami realized the national stagnancy that led to all kinds of social tyranny and he decided to pool in all his energy and service for the betterment of mankind. Universal humanism was his religion and he wanted to make his own nation a tool for the growth of brotherhood, prosperity and harmony in the world. India's ancient culture would suffice this, he firmly believed. While delivering a lecture on *The Way To The Realization Of A Universal Religion*, at California on 28th January 1900, he said, "Let us take in all that has been in the past, enjoy the light of the present and open every window of the heart for all that will come in the future." In fact his philosophy served to unite mankind all over the world with the thread of divinity.

The emergence of social determinism, economic domination and caste discrimination in the post-Vedic Indian society had weakened its spiritual strength. The period had laid the foundations for establishing a new value system against the priestly hierarchy prevalent in society and succeeded in bringing about some The emergence of various schools of social thinkers in India in the later radical changes in the life of the common masses. *Lokayata (Charvaka)* was one such school that had formulated a social philosophy which is hedonistic and naturalistic in outlook. By rejecting the existing customs and manners prescribed by priestly hierarchy, it had captured the minds of the oppressed sections of society. But it could not formulate a social philosophy acceptable to the common masses due to its extreme attitude towards the social life of the people. There also appeared against priestly hierarchy certain spiritual revolts like Jainism and Buddhism which stood against the social determinism of the priestly classes and tried to open a way for spiritual salvation for the common masses. In fact, Jainism and Buddhism had a positive impact in the social life of the common masses during that period. The priestly classes were against the reflective and dialectical

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thoughts of the revolutionary thinkers of these schools. They wanted to bring about a revival of their hierarchy in Indian society and regained their lost power during the period of Guptas and Rajputs in the middle age of India's history. The emergence of innumerable castes and sub castes and the rigidity of the social and moral codes prevailed among the lower strata of society during the period had proved a hindrance to the social progress of the country.

Different cultures brought by Islam and Europeans into India during the later period had effected some changes in Indian culture. The Western thoughts and culture which were reflected in the socio-religious life of the people with the establishment of the British rule in India had weakened the spiritual and socio-cultural foundation of Indian society and disturbed the rich Indian value system, hindering the overall development of society. Keeping this in mind, social thinkers in India have suggested measures to raise the social, political, economic and spiritual status of the weaker sections of society. Many socio-religious reform movements launched by different social thinkers and organizations were emerged in improving social conditions without losing sight of the essential spiritual ideals that India had always cherished. Contribution of the 19th century patriotic monk Swami Vivekananda attains great significance in this context. Vivekananda was probably the foremost among the 19th century Indian thinkers who had taken earnest efforts to spread the glory of the cultural heritage of India across the globe, by dedicating himself to reviving the country's innate culture and heritage. After the demise of his Master, Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, Narendra, who later became Swami Vivekananda, had travelled the length and breadth of the country as a wandering monk in order to fulfill his Master's mission which was nothing but the 'spiritual salvation of the country through service of man. During this journey, he got the opportunity to mingle with people belonging to different classes, creeds and sex and also to observe many undesirable social evils like caste discrimination, superstition, atrocities towards women and above all decline of material prosperity. Swami Vivekananda has decided to embark on a mission to find out some concrete measures for the upliftment of the neglected and the oppressed sections of society. With his scientific, logical, dynamic and humanitarian social thoughts rooted in spirituality, he also tried to bind mankind with the thread of divinity leading them towards realization of Universal Oneness. He was well aware of the fact that the spiritual eminence which India had lost can be re-established only by inculcating spiritual, moral and cultural values in the young generation through the medium of education. His humanistic socio-religious philosophy, neo-Vedantic theory and educational philosophy is fundamentally aimed at inculcating spirituality in the modern generation which meant directing the modern youth towards exploring the dynamic, spiritual potential in themselves.

The poor condition of the weaker section of society including women who were neglected and harassed by the priestly higher classes grieved him. He did not hesitate to raise his powerful voice against caste and gender discrimination. He said, "The uplift of the women, the awakening of the masses, must come first and then only can any real good come...for India." True, he was not against the caste system of ancient Indian society and he regarded it as the natural order of any society, it being only an arrangement to maintain the social order. But he strictly objected the privileges and prejudices the caste system had brought in. Such differences were only the handiwork of the priestly communities which must be erased through education for good, he believed. In an interview in 1896, he said, "Modern caste distinction is a barrier to India's progress. It narrows, restricts, separates. It will crumble before the advance of ideas." He hated India's caste system that kept the downtrodden masses away from the main stream of the society. While addressing the gathering at Manamadura, he had expressed humorously his regret to this kind of ill treatment of the people of the lower strata in the name of caste and customs. "We are just "Don't touchists". Our religion is in the kitchen. Our God is the cooking pot, and our religion is "Don't touch me, I am holy. If this goes on for another century, every one of us will be in a lunatic asylum."

In Indian society the *Sudra* classes were kept in the lower strata, forbidden to accumulate wealth and receive proper education like the higher classes. These downtrodden masses had to suffer a lot

under the hierarchy of the upper classes. This plight continued down the centuries, even during the British rule despite the many developments the British were said to have brought to India. Having sworn to see India as a nation of human rights and dignity, Vivekananda initiated a programme for the spiritual and material emancipation of the suffering masses. While speaking on modern India he had expressed his wish for the establishment of a working class government or 'Shudra raj' in the present age. "Yet a time will come when there will be the rising of the Shudra class, with their Shudra-hood; that is to say, not like that as at present when the Shudras are becoming great by acquiring the characteristic qualities of the Vaisya or the Kshatriya, but a time will come when the Shudras of every country, with their inborn Shudra nature and habits not becoming the essence of Vaisya or Kshatriya, in every society", he said. During a heated discussion with a bigoted pundit on Hinduism in Pondicherry, he expressed his views regarding the uplift of the downtrodden masses in India. "The Swami spoke also of the uplift of the masses, and said that the time was at hand when the *shudras* (labouring class) would rise and demand their rights", wrote his disciples. In fact Swami Vivekananda was the early thinker to moot the idea of the working class government long before India had fallen to the grip of western oriented socialist ideology. The Ideal of Womanhood had great relevance in the social philosophy of Vivekananda. Like any other philosopher of India, he fervently believed that women are the custodians of the spiritual tradition and cultural heritage of the nation and so they should be honoured and given greater honour than the other sex. He falls in with the view of the ancient Smriti writer Manu that "wherever women are dishonoured, there all acts turn fruitless". But he is not in for blindly following all the dictates of tradition if they hamper the growth of women, her mind and freedom. His approach was both traditional and modern, which advocated the cultivation of a chaste, educated and dynamic woman who can guide the family and society on the path of truth and virtue.

Woman of his conception was the very embodiment of all the noble aspects, 'Sakti' or strength derivative of chastity, divinity, dynamism and all that are womanly. Nothing can be more potent than the sublimated womanhood, he fervently believed. Activating women in various faculties of national life could take society a long way in its onward march to fulfilment. Hence he had his rousing call given to the renascent India to uplift and empower her womenfolk. His own efforts to this end were of great significance. His initiation of women into monastic life, propagation of female education and his pugnacity against many of the social ills against them prevalent in his times constituted a glorious chapter in the history of Indian social philosophy and movement for the uplift of women. His approach was both traditional and modern, which advocated the cultivation of a chaste, educated and dynamic woman who can guide the family and society on the path of truth and virtue. Woman of his conception was the very embodiment of all the noble aspects, 'Sakti' or strength derivative of chastity, divinity, dynamism and all that are womanly. Nothing can be more potent than the sublimated womanhood, he fervently believed. Activating women in various faculties of national life could take society a long way in its onward march to fulfilment. Hence he had his rousing call given to the renascent India to uplift and empower her women folk. His own efforts to this end were of great significance. His initiation of women into monastic life, propagation of female education and his pugnacity against many of the social ills against them prevalent in his times constituted a glorious chapter in the history of Indian social philosophy and movement for the uplift of women.

### **Significance of the Paper**

In India, gender issues have gained unprecedented relevance in modern times. The emergence of new theories of feminism has added novel dimensions to them. Modern feminist movements which often tend to over reach themselves, seek to promote the image of woman in imitation of its male counterpart. Most of them adopt western assumptions and constructs in their vision of women and woman empowerment. Taking the European paradigms and parameters as models, these advocates of new feminism call upon the Indian women to fall in line with the western social ideas as the only way

to become progressive. These self-styled spokesmen of modernity are quite uninformed about the essentials of traditional Indian sociological thought.

Any sociological criticism will be inadequate if it restricts itself only to the level of phenomena and does not pay due attention to their conceptual foundations. An unfortunate slapdash into the western style of life has badly affected the purity and sublimity attached to the values of womanhood embedded in Indian tradition, bringing into vogue many undesirable social trends. The misunderstanding that what is western is modern and the consequent westernization in the name of modernization or globalization would only destroy the sublimities of the social structure India has been preserving down the centuries. Considering these facts, the study had stressed the need to develop an Indian Theory of Feminism which could meet the needs and aspirations of modern Indian women. The study also tries to present practically relevant reform measures advocated by Swami Vivekananda which could help the modern Indian feminist thinkers in formulating such an Indian theory of feminism.

### **Objective of the Paper**

The study of the social philosophy of Swami Vivekananda with his idea of womanhood as thrust area can lead to some practical suggestions which can give a healthy reorientation to our approach to the many peculiar problems plaguing the Indian woman. It also explores Swami's contributions to Indian society and also the social philosophy as a whole. He urged men to live the worldly life with spiritual strength and cultivate the qualities like selflessness, renunciation and love towards mankind. His life was an inspiration for many to attain self-realization through serving humanity.

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**58. The Penumbra of Race, Gender and Religion: A Critical Study of Women in Austin C Clarke's Novels**

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“Once their rage explodes, they recover their lost coherence, they experience self-knowledge through reconstruction of themselves; from afar we see their war as the triumph of barbarity; but it proceeds on its own to gradually emancipate the fighter and progressively eliminates the colonial darkness inside and out. As soon as it begins it is merciless. Either one must remain terrified or become terrifying—which means surrendering to the dissociations of a fabricated life or conquering the unity of one’s native soil. When the peasants lay hands on a gun, the old myths fade, and one by one the taboos are overturned: a fighter’s weapon is his humanity. For in the first phase of the revolt killing is a necessity: killing a European is killing two birds with one stone, eliminating in one go oppressor and oppressed: leaving one man dead and the other man free.”<sup>4</sup> — Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*.

Race, gender and religion are found to be parallel institutions that influence and complement each other in keeping racial discrimination and inequalities to achieve the neurotic orientation of the blacks in favour of whites. This paper explores the Carrefour of suffering of the Bajan community in Westindian experience on a white plantation in Barbados. The plantation owners treated the labourers as beast of burden and worked up them on the vast seas of plantation for menial wages.<sup>5</sup> The divide that has the only link in the form of violence of confrontation of permanent nature. Concepts that articulate the racial divide may be summed up as: “The difficulty was that though one could trap them like animals, transport them in pens, work them along side an ass or a horse and beat both with the same stick, stable them and starve them, they remained, despite their black skins and curly hair, quite invincibly human beings. To cow them into the necessary docility and acceptance necessitated a regime of calculated brutality and terrorism, and it is this that explains the unusual spectacle of property-owners apparently careless of preserving their property: they had first to ensure their own safety.”<sup>6</sup>

The Trans Saharan and Trans Atlantic slave trade coalesced a pseudo class unique in dimensions that could run the demon mechanism of colonialism without resistance. Austin c clarke's models are a true exponents of the Westindian confrontation of the white plantocracy. The standard binary of white man allied to riches while black man is burdened with poverty. In other words, it is poor to be black and black to live as poor man while the reverse is true of white man as if white man is gifted by God to live a rich and radiant life. To sum up the misery and silent suffering that black endured during colonialism. “ It hurt my heart to know what betrayal of life we lived without knowing it! And had to live!”(PH, 31) His first few novels like *'The Survivours of the Crossing'*, *'Amongst thistle and Thorns'* and his later novel *'The Polished Hoe'* revolves round the conflict of poor versus rich, black versus white race. His first novel, *The Survivours of the Crossing*, deals with the twin effects of race and gender discrimination of the black community on the white plantation in Barbados. The novel is set in 1964 just before its independence in 1966 where the world countries bid bye to slavery centuries back. Toiling on the vast seas of plantation due to the lack of an alternative sustenance, presence of literacy that brain washed them to be submissive to the white arrogance, issues like poverty due to menial wages, pauper economy that always ran on credit sponged their ability to sustain appeared to have mutilated their ability of negotiation for a better living conditions. The economy was designed in such a way that their whole week's labour and hardship on the plantation went underpaid, not enough to maintain a family to fall back in to a comfort zone of a family. This made these labourers in to indulgence of Rum food and women that put them always at the doorstep of credit. The plight of these indentured labour and the people on the plantation are the

props through which A C Clarke seems to voice out in his novels though which people can be educated of the ways and means to out jump the plunge pool in which the majority is inhabited by the plantation workers and the related crowd living in tight cudgel of the plantation owners. The colonial run institutions like the school to brain wash through British colonial education that tamed these blacks to a continual subjugation, church that advocates in the name of god the rule of all powerful crown, In order to keep them under tight cudgel they maintained a rum shop through mulatto Biscombe through credit. This mulatto acted a middle man through which these white plantation owners exercised an un challenged power. The mulatto set up neither appeared to belong to black nor been accepted by the white middle men, workers class who always swarm the credit facilitators like Biscombe, who in turn worked only for the benefit of the white overseer. The overseer always kept the worker in utter poverty beyond escape. Rum, physical torture on the vast seas of plantation, fiscal and the psychological bankruptcy is an obvious feature of racial discrimination.

In *The Survivors of the Crossing Rufus*, tired of the years of oppression, humiliation and shame, and inspired by the socialist ideas held by the Bridgetown Labour Party, recognizes that there is an immediate and desperate need for change in the system. The plantation for which Rufus and Boysie work laid off sixty men is closed down the factory altogether. Rufus claims that "in terms of socialism this means "sufferation, starvation, a plague! "(SC7) The black kin of the central character Rufus like Boysie (the plantation labourer) , Biscombe (a mulatto rum shop owner supported by the white overseer), Mr. Whippetts (the black school master who always feared of his job) and the Minister-are all against Rufus' plan, as a strike against the plantation would jeopardize their livelihood. In retaliation he devises a plan to strike against the plantation though he will be stiffly opposed. Rufus organises plantation workers in order to motivate them to unite and demand for a mere wage rise, the common facing is that of opposition. The strongly ingrained influence of the colonial experience perpetuated the idea that the black man is inferior and subordinate to the white man resulted in a kind of defeatist attitude. Boysie says: "I get credit from Miss Gertrude) Food Store for what the plantation pays me. I ain't no blasted socialist, man! And without that twenty shilling' on a Sa'rday, I can't get my saltfish and rice, yuh!(SC.8)" Boysie's attitude is typical of the apathetic self-hatred that characterizes the black labourers on the island. His remark points to two important facts: first, that the plantation wields unchallenged power over the lives of the workers and, second, that the workers have self-defeating complacency. Racial superiority garnered the unchallengeable iron hand of the white plutocracy. It devoured the black labourers to psychological subjugation. The economy was a pauper economy and most of the black lives ran on credit that could not make the black labourers think their lives on liberation grounds. For Biscombe a strike would mean that the men would not be paid and thus his sales would drop. Mr. Whippetts, was scared of the his job on hearing of the strike. He warns Rufus of the destruction of his career.

Mr. Whippetts says: "was sponsoring the son of a strike-strike-strike maker for a government scholarship"( SC, 30), "Ironically, it is only through education, as Whippetts rightly claims, that progress can be made. He says: ... this is a new age, an age of progress, and that progress coming through education, not through politics, not through independence, not through rabble-rousing." (SC, p. 24) and the white Anglican Minister resented strike by saying that it would be a violation of church doctrine: "It was not ordained by God for the people to rise up against their leaders, whether spiritual or temporal" (SC. 30) moreover a strike would also mean "fewer people coming to church during the crisis smaller congregations meant also smaller collections II (SC. 30) The school master says: 'If I had knew',...I would never enter his son Ezekiel, for government scholarship. This could ruin my whole career. I just enter' my application for the headmastership o' that .....this could ruin me for life!(SC.49) In an attempt to protect their own interests Biscombe, Whippetts and the Minister all disapprove of strike offering no support to this lonely leader. Rufus' revolt although began as an economic crusade for higher pay, surpasses to a self-awareness and self-identity. This event leads to alienation from his own black society especially Boysie. The middle-class blacks like Biscombe and

Whippetts enjoy a certain degree of affluence from the white plantation owner and a white-controlled police force, that exerts its power both directly and indirectly through native sycophants.

Racism moulded the psychology of these workers in such a way that they barely believed in themselves and rarely believed in a leader from one among them. They were in constant fear of uncertainty of livelihood and were in constant war to jeopardize their inner self. They were constantly negotiating inwardly with their helplessness, suffering, pauper life which only a society overpowered by racist plantation owners. In the novel 'Polished Hoe' the unseemingly greediness and accompanied by ruthlessness combined with colonial arrogance of Bellfeels ran down the spine of black men. He kicked a black man Golborne, in the groin, till he was disabled for life an act that terrorized the rest for life. "Mr. Bellfeels, that avaricious man, had his hand buried inside Golborne's pot. All this came out in the wash. Mr. Bellfeels had wanted everything for himself. A man with such needs and wishes, My God!" (PH.16) Along with these psychological taming of these black labourers on the plantation and the black poor around it racism devoured the internal structure of the black society. When Rufus first organized protest march on the plantation his own men like Biscombe, who eager to maintain a good rapport with the plantation owner, warns the manager of the impending insurrection. The police open fire on the workers, dispersing the crowd and wounding Rufus. Boysie maintains that the plan is futile, that nothing can change: "what been happ'ning here since Adam was a little boy" (SC.49). The sad reality is that the people are not united behind him nor have they the means by which to effect a successful revolution. Unity of the people would have been effective force against the ruling elite. Fanon points out "... Unity can only be achieved through the upward thrust of the people, and under the leadership of the people, that is to say, in defiance of the interests of the bourgeoisie." After the second meeting fails, and Rufus is delivered into the hands of the enemy by Jo-Jo, it is apparent that the plan will never be fulfilled. The officer says: "They are all communists! You give a black man a little learning and Christ, he turns round and tells you how to run the blasted show" (SC. 119) The identity motif and the central conflict of white versus black, rich versus poor is evident compounded by a psychological search for identity made Rufus in the survivors of the Crossing, Milton Sobers of 'Amongst Thistle and Thorns', Boysie in Trilogy "tragic isolatoes". Rufus suffered isolation due to identity consciousness, Milton suffered the same sense of belonging but he was too young to express and ran away in exile. In both the cases the novelist suggested exile in mute. Not only men and women characters suffer the race but children like Mary Matilda, and Milton Sobers and Biscomb's son suffer in the society that was produced by colonialism. The emotional and moral conflict between Milton and an unsympathetic, at times aggressively hostile, environment sterile and hypocritical school system, represented by a cruel and sadistic black master. Milton's experiences bring him time and again up against discrimination and hatred displayed not only by the whites "out the Front Road", but also by members of his own race.

The colonial masters structured the economy in such a way that the black labourers are left with no alternative for sustenance. Men are made to work on the vast seas of sugar plantation endlessly for mere wage. Women are employed in the household who mostly served as concubines to their masters, his associates or the middle men only to survive. Racialism raced to exploit men, women and children equally. The author placed his novels with a remote connectivity to the then economic scenario of the world as in 'The Survivors of the Crossing', a recession, in which layoffs due to the shift of sugar production from cane to beet that involved less labour which means no work leaving them to abject poverty.<sup>8</sup> The novel 'Polished Hoe' too was placed during the world war I where slave trafficking prevailed in some of the European colonies in spite of abolition of slavery world over. This is where the black women suffered dual exploitation. W. E. B. Du Bois calls them "double consciousness" from which he describes as follows, "[A black person] ever feels his two ness,- an American, a Negro, two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled Strivings; two warring ideas in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder" (Du. Bois, quoted in Byerman, 1995). Race discrimination is the greatest problem of this world, which Clarke's characters, especially female. If a black woman, the characters appeared to have lived a two

dimensional or multi-dimensional suffering level. she is twice alienated, exploited, concubine where there seemed no exit but death some times, yield to the circumstance for survival or a revenge by hoeing. His female characters were used to satisfy the physical needs of multiple men sometimes their own black men at times the middle men and infinitely the overseer in to material and monetary comfort . Stella of the 'Survivors Of The Crossing', Mary Mathilda of 'The Polished Hoe' were used as 'Hoe' or a whore! Stella's anguish upon the exchange she makes ..Christ knows, in order to put bread in my starving children's mouth. christ vex' with me, ....( SC, 41) In the novel 'Polished Hoe' Bell feels Mary Gertrude Matilda, for the first time as a girl of eight years and becomes a prospective buyer who looked as if he bought her to cow down for his lust not bothering to remember that he impregnated Mary's Ma forcibly. “ Then, Mr.Bell feels put his riding-crop under my chin, and rise my face to meet his face, to meet his face, using the riding-crop under my chin, and raise my face to meet his face, using the riding crop; and when his eyes and my eyes made four, he passed the riding crop down my neck, right down the front of my dress, until it reached my waist. And then he move the riding crop right back up again, as if he was drawing something on my body.”(PH.11)

Mary is portrayed as an embodiment of grace and beauty whom Bell feels, the plantation owner keeps her as his concubine by grabbing her from the her peers and other eligible black suitors. She murders Bell feels for sensually abusing her for years not only to satisfy his lust, but that of his friends . What hurts Mary is that he has scant respect for her as a human being and women. she is used more like a receptacle of his lust. In spite of enjoying the physical amenities provided to her by Bell feels and giving him three children, of whom one is the only boy child of Mr. Bell feels, a sense of pride, a doctor in occidental medicine, she harbours cumulative, pent-up anger over the years like smouldering fire waiting to burst to hoe his genitals to death. “With the temperament and determination of mind, I first started on a regular basis, to polish my hoe. And to pass a grinding stone dip in a car-grease, along the blade, since September the fifteenth last-gone; September, October, November just-pass, is three months; and every day for those months, night after night as God send, more than I can call to my mind. And I have to laugh, why, all-of- a- sudden, I went back to a hoe, I had first used when I was a girl, working in the cane fields, not quiet eight years of age. The same hoe, weeding young canes, sweet potato slips, ‘eight- weeks’ yams, eddoes, all those ground provisions. “The hoe that I used all those years, in the North Field, is the same hoe I used this Sunday night.(PH.6)

It is rather unethical that while the children of colonial masters inherit the riches accumulated by their parents it is the implements of agriculture like hoes that slaves like Mary inherit from their parents. “Ma herself used the hoe she inherited from her mother, my gran. And it was there, on the day she died, leaning up in the yard, strong as anything, strong as the day the plantation made it. This is the same hoe I inherited from Ma, Yes!(PH.53) The irony of the last line is obvious for Rufus points out, although "One kind of slavery they abolish, .. , they forget to abolish the next kind" (SC.24). Religion played a pivot role in brain washing the black brain to white. Ironically, Mr. Whippetts says: “... this is a new age, an age of progress, and that progress coming through education, not through politics, not through independence, not through rabble-rousing." (SC.24) The Colonialism through white education compounded by Religion brain washed the black brain to white. Austin C Clarke seems to claim in his novel ' Survivors of the Crossing.' that the more the education is, same will be the proportion of whiteness one adds to the white mask one wears. Whippetts is a prime example in this respect: he always used "artificial English." in the company of his inferiors" (SC.23)

Gorge Lamming points out “Religion played the role of co- cons pirated along with colonial education, breeding slavery, thistles and thorns as Clarke depicts in his second novel. Mary realises in the novel 'Polishe Hoe', that in spite of petty pilfering they are the ultimate losers in this game of colonialism while being laden with a sense of guilt brain washed by religious sermons. All of us, regardless to position, place, complexion, the ten commandments, we-all exacted something from the



plantation. A head of eddoes pull-up out to the ground; you brek-off a piece of cane and suck it, to bring up the gas outta your stomach; pull-off a few red tomatoes offa wine in the plantation kitchen garden, and hide them in a crocus bag. All of us, devout Christian-minded men and women attending sin-Davis Anglican Church, three times a Sunday, going to mothers Union every Wednesday night as God send, we all extracted our due from the plantation. “ But we paid dear With our lives. Every-last- one- of- us.” (PH.13)

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## 59. A Critical Study of the Feminist Perspective in Shashi Deshpande's *Roots and Shadows*

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The feminist writers mirrored the lonely plight of the female protagonist, her feelings of estrangement and loss of identity, her socio-cultural sense of inferiority and her morbid dread of the patriarchal authority. More and more women writers began expressing their anger articulating against the unpleasant social situation they live in. Sashi Deshpande is one such writer who revealed a consciousness of alienation, deprivation, and a quest for a new identity for women. Her writings are living evidences of the Indian woman's modern temperament, a rapid growth in their awareness, and the resultant urgency revealed in re-writing the man-woman interpersonal relationships in their typical Indian political, ethical, and socio-cultural background settings. In *Roots and Shadows* she has projected Indu as the central figure and seemed to succeed in presenting her predicament most effectively. Sashi Deshpande's perception of woman's reactions and responses, problems and perplexities and the complex working of their inner selves and their emotional involvement and disturbances enabled her to portray the character of Indu successfully.

*Roots and Shadows* by Shashi Deshpande is a novel which explores the inner struggles of Indu, who represents a set of modern women who are educated and are very much in contact with the society, dealing with the critical problems like love, sex, marriage, settlement and individuality. Right from her childhood, Indu had seen the secondary place women occupied in the family so that even a simple thing, like sending a cup of tea for her to the room, was considered a breach of etiquette. As a child she was told that she must be obedient and unquestioning. As a girl she was told that she must be weak and submissive and that she must accept everything, even defeat with grace. She was told that it was the only way for a female to live and survive. For a woman, intelligence was always a burden. Her family members liked their women not to think, not to be social. This is clearly evident when Saroja desires to learn music. Akka dislikes the notion of a woman learn music from a strange man. She opined that they were not that kind of a family where women sit and sing in front of strangers. For a girl from a decent family it was enough to sing one or two devotional songs, one or two arti songs. Indu's education and intelligence were always thrown at her like an accusation, "I had sobbed out my heart to old uncle one day. And he had said, "For a woman, intelligence is always a burden, Indu. We like our women not to think" (33). Such expressions reflect how women are trained to be feminine. Not only the systems of power and control, but also the practices generating social divisions promote a particular interpretation of culture. Indu resented all this suppression. They told her that there had to be at least the shadow of submission, if not the substance. The day she grew up, the knowledge of her womanhood had been brutally and gracelessly thrust on her with the cruel words saying that she was not clean for four days. Such had been her introduction to the world of womanhood. It had given her a rude shock and she started resenting the fact that she was a woman. Her study in the college made the situation even more complex where Akka restricted her not to meet the boys and cultivate friendship with them. This makes her rebel against Akka, her world, her values and marries Jayant against the wishes of Akka. The words of Akka at her marriage show her dislike to such marriages: "such marriages never work. Different castes, different languages... it's all right for a while, they realize."(74)

Indu who swore that she would never pretend to be what she was not changes after marriage. To her great shock and surprise, she found that Jayant had not only expected her to submit but had taken her submission for granted and she also, without being aware of it, submitted herself to him step by step in the name of love. When the realization came to her, she found it was not love but an adjustment as she never wanted conflict in her married life. As it was a love-marriage, she did not want to give any chance to her parents to blame her for the step she has taken. She wanted to prove

her success. In her journey to individuation she takes the role of the submissive wife unwillingly. Jayant believes that passion makes a woman unwomanly and expects Indu to be submissive even in the sexual act. Her disappointment in having to wear a mask even in such an intimate relationship causes a rift with Jayant. She willingly surrendered herself to him. In any thing that she did, her only thought had been to please him by doing the things he liked. And it was not he who pressurized her to do so. She did it of her own free will. It was as if they were on two different planes and she chose her plane according to his. It baffled her to realize that she who had considered herself to be so independent, so intelligent, so clever, she who had been so proud of her logical and rational thinking; she who had been all set to reform Indian womanhood had fallen into the trap waiting for her. She thought that the women of old believed that the greatest good luck for them was to die before their husbands did to die "*Suhagans*." She also wanted Jayant to be always by her side. She realizes that there was no difference between them and her as she was basically the same. She lost her identity like the women in the family she had broken away from. Her greatest sorrow was the realization that she could never be complete in herself.

As the novel progresses we find that Indu leaves one house and enters another to be independent and complete, but ironically enough, soon she realizes the futility of her decisions. Indu ridicules Atya's idea of not saying one's husband's name as it shortens his life and of circumbulating Tulsi and praying for husband's life. But then she realizes that she is not different from Atya-like women as she also wishes "that Jayant should be with her always all the time forever." (36) Only her reasons for thinking so are different. After marriage it occurs to her that whatever she was doing like looking in the mirror, dressing, undressing all, she was doing for Jayant. And this bitter fact of shedding her identity in her husband's frightens her. The paradox is that she is not happy with Jayant, but she can't live without him. She has achieved completeness with Jayant, but she doesn't want it. One can find that marriage has taught Indu the things like deception and artificial show. Her desire to assert herself had driven her from affection to hypocrisy. Indu herself realizes: "I had learnt to reveal to Jayant nothing but what he wanted to see. . . I hid my response as if they were bits of garbage." (41) All these bitter facts of losing her identity into her husband's frighten and scare her. It was not for this that she had left behind the family, which, despite all its failings raised her in such a way that she had not realized till others had told her much later that she had no mother. The gap had been so fully and completely filled in by what the family gave her: tender and loving care from Atya, deep affection from Kaka and perfect understanding from old uncle. There remained no gap at all. She was bewildered to find that her desire to assert herself had driven her from affection to hypocrisy. And this destroyed her certainty, her confidence and her assurance. It was at this time when she was oppressed by so many doubts and uncertainties that she received summons from Akka. It was more than ten years that she had left the family. When she was hesitating whether she should go or not, Jayant's words that she need not go as Akka was only her father's aunt—rather a distant relation makes her decide firmly. Jayant's words saying Akka as a distant relation sounded disloyal and treacherous to Indu which initiated her to leave for her ancestral house. It was only after coming back that Indu realized what the family had meant to her. She opined that she had to leave it to know what it meant to her. For ten years she had been away from the family to the life she had dreamt. But she easily slides back into the old ways and feels comfortable at home. Also she feels that it was where she belonged and not to the success-oriented society she had left behind with Jayant. She recollects how out of place and how lonely she felt there with Jayant. The realization came upon her that she and Jayant had restricted their life by drawing a magic circle around them. Life to the family seemed very simple. It was perennially the same meals and rituals forming the centre, surrounded by a penumbra of trivial activities of which gossip was the most important one. The word relax had no meaning there. One can talk in terms of realization only if there is tension which just did not exist in the life that they lived there. She was happy to be back. Again and again she told herself happily that she was home.

A great responsibility had been thrust on Indu's shoulders by what Akka did before she died. Akka had chosen her as her heiress and left her money and jewels to her. This act of Akka which

angered Indu makes her think that Akka had the last laugh by thrusting upon her the responsibility of the family she desired nothing to do with. She had wanted to be like her cousin Naren, i.e. completely detached and non-involved with the family. But now it was not possible for what Akka had done. Indu considers all the possibilities about the house whether to buy the house, sell the house or live in the house, which was her home and do the kind of writing she wanted to do. In the mean time she reconsiders her relationship with her husband and finds out what was wrong in it. In their married life Indu becomes instrumental in submitting herself to the whims and fancies of her husband Jayant. Jayant betrays her hopes for harmony and integration, for peace and happiness and in times of need fails to be a sheltering tree to her. Indu relinquishes her identity by surrendering before Jayant's masculinity by becoming his wife. Willingly she yields to the demands of marriage and moulds herself upto the dictates of her husband. But she never blames him, knowing well that it is men who dominate and women who submit. Sex loses all its rejuvenating power when it becomes a one sided affair. It surprises her to discover that Jayant still harbours preconceived notions of an ideal marriage inspite of all his modernity. Jayant is shocked to find passion in Indu. It puts him off. He never expected Indu to initiate sexual intimacy. Instead of her natural response she is forced to pretend, to be passive, unresponsive and still as dead on her nuptial bed. The tragedy of Indu's situation is that both meaning and meaninglessness are because of Jayant. It is Jayant who has made an "anachronism" of her, and created confusion in her mind about her womanhood. She does not believe in mothering and develops an aversion to the natural biological functions of the woman as a mother. She feels that her womanhood closes so many doors for her. As a woman, she thinks that motherhood is not compulsory but optional. By rejecting womanhood, she rejects the essentialist marking of certain social standards of femininity on woman. Through the character of Indu, Deshpande has portrayed the inner struggle of an artist to express herself, to discover her real self through her inner and instinctive potential for creative writing. It was not only her marriage which made her feel uneasy, but her writing also. She found herself writing only that which the editor said the public would accept, no matter how many lies she had to write in the bargain. Indu wants to bid adieu to her monotonous service but her husband, Jayant, does not approve of this idea. He is a barrier to her feminine urge for self-expression since he believes that a person like Indu can do nothing against the whole system by wielding her pen. Indu's hesitation to discuss her sexual dissatisfaction with Jayant suggests the emotional polarity between them. In a bid to becoming free of male domination, she defines her own self. She makes herself free of the image of the ideal woman and wife by having a sexual relationship with Naren, her cousin. It is the rediscovery of her genuine inner experiencing self, as Naren encourages her to express herself freely. It is Naren, who by his touch of love gave Indu the experience of release from shadow existence and be her real self. Naren, through his acceptance of her rejection, makes her realize that what she wanted was not hardness and not caring but involvement. "I wanted involvement, not detachment." (*Roots and Shadows*, 98) She was much drawn to Naren, who she found was equally down to earth. At one point in the novel when Naren tries to make love with her, she declares, "I'm essentially monogamous, for me, it's one man and one man alone." (89) But later she offers herself twice to Naren. And then the question haunts her on how she would view the act of adultery. Immediately after the act, she goes to her own bed, but deliberately avoids sleeping as it would erase "the intervening period and what happened between Naren and her." (167) Indu tries to reason out each and every action. Her mind starts musing over the reasons for giving her body to Naren. Indu's momentary physical gratification with Naren was not an outcome of sincere feelings, attachment or bondage between them but an outcome of lingering feelings for each other and even the physical relationship fails to establish new bonds between them. Still she decides not to tell Jayant about the infidelity committed by her. She concludes: "For that was not important. That had nothing to do with the two of us and our life together." (187) She knows that there are no genuine and strong feelings of love in her for Naren which may adversely affect her relationship with Jayant. She decides not to disclose her physical intimacy with Naren as he might not be able to understand its true nature.

Deshpande believes in healthy human relationships between men and women which must be based on companionship, and not on subordination of women. Women continue to be the sufferers in almost all the situations they face as the social norms and moral codes have been so framed as to be particularly disadvantageous to them. *Roots and Shadows* ends with affirmation of the individuality of Indu and also the principle of life which is endless. Through the image of the tree, Shashi Deshpande suggests that Indu has learnt to see not only her life full of possibilities for growth and grace but the very meaning of life itself. It is with this total understanding that Indu decides to go back to Jayant. It may be mentioned here that at the end of the novel, Indu realizes that Akka is not a sadist. In her quest for personhood and fulfilment, Indu had sought escape from family relationships, but had discovered how relationships are the roots of one's being and follow one like so many shadows that make life no more substantial than a shadow—a life without identity. Indu's flight from family relationships had only landed her in another trap of shadow existence waiting for her in the person of Jayant. Indu has confronted her real self and she knows her roots; she need not be ashamed of her body and sexual needs; she has to decide what her job will be; she is capable of taking decisions not only for herself but for others too, and life does not come to an end with individuals, be it Indu or Jayant. Indu returns equipped with that quality of courage necessary to face the challenge of identity crisis that her marriage with Jayant had always posed returns to suffer, to question and to find her roots. The meek, docile and humble Indu of the early days finally emerges as a bold, challenging, conscious and rebellious woman. She resigns her job, thus defying the male authority, hierarchy and the irony of a woman's masked existence. Her self-discovery is the frightening vision of the feminine self struggle for harmony and sanity. She comes out of her emotional upheaval, and decides to lead a meaningful life with her husband. The home she had discarded becomes the place of refuge, of solace and consolation and enables her to rediscover herself. It is Akka's house which offers her ample opportunities to know herself. It is here that she is able to discover her roots as an independent woman, a daughter, a mother and a commercial writer. Through the character of Indu, Deshpande has registered her awareness of the impediments to feminine development brought about by an economic system given to sheer materialistic happiness and inhabited by philistines like Jayant and a patriarchal family-structure which produce in women dependency, insecurity, lack of autonomy, and an incomplete sense of their identity. Deshpande has presented the feminist point of view with a clash of tradition and modernity, as reflected in the generation gap and conflict between women. Her protagonist Indu rebels against the traditional way of life, its rituals, ceremonies, and patriarchal values. Indu is shown perceiving the structuring of men and women in gendered roles, restricting her human potentiality and fullness. Besides she is shown struggling to transcend these restrictive and molded roles. She rebels, rejects and seeks freedom from the traditional norms and way of life by escaping into marriage. In the novel, Deshpande presents her protagonist pause at some point in her adult role as wife, and takes a long, careful look back into the formations period of childhood and adolescence. Interconnecting these two phases of youth and adulthood, Deshpande has provided a new insight into her life as woman within a particular society. Past events influence the life of the protagonist and these events gain meaning by what happens in the present. Deshpande uses the technique of flashback as the novel begins with Indu returning to her parent's home. Indu in *Roots and Shadows* is presented as a woman who wants to go in self-quest, and is free from the restrictions imposed by society, culture, nature and are also free from her own fear and guilt.

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## **60. Protest against Brutality and Oppression towards Women in *the Pakistani Bride* by Bapsi Sidhwa**

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### **Introduction**

Bapsi Sidhwa is an international feminist writer from Pakistan was born on 11<sup>th</sup> August 1938 in Karachi. She belonged to Parse community, which practices Zoroastrian religion. Sidhwa works for the rights of the women not only in Pakistan but also throughout the world. As a child, she had closely witnessed the violence during the partition of India and Pakistan, which became subject for most of her novels. Born in Pakistan, settled in United States and travelled to many other places in the world. As a Professor she taught at a number of universities in America, including Princeton, Rice University and etc. She is one of the Pakistan's preeminent and best known writers. She has won all the highest awards in Pakistan including the Sitarra-e-Imtiaz. She is also one of Pakistan's first English Language writers and the author of five novels like *The Pakistani Bride* (1983), *The Crow Eaters* (1980), *The Ice-Candy man* (1988), *An American Brat* (1990) and *The Water* (2006). All her major novels reflect the major problems like partition, oppression of women, traditions and cultures of Parsees and etc. As a strong feminist writer Sidhwa highlights the problems of the women in the society through her novels. Especially in Pakistan, women are not given any rights. They are not allowed to go to school, they do not have any choice of their future husbands, they do not come out without any escort, they have to use burkah and etc. Sidhwa, after observing the life style of Pakistani women, started writing about those meaningless restrictions imposed on women. Sidhwa voiced against the barbaric laws of Hindu and Muslim religions.

### **Brutality and oppression in *The Pakistani Bride***

It is the first novel written by Bapsi Sidhwa but published second. The novel is based on the real incident which happened in the life of a Punjabi girl. The incident is narrated to Sidhwa by people at army camp when her husband and Sidhwa went for honeymoon to the Karakoram Mountains. In the incident the girl was married to a tribal man whose ways of living are entirely different from others. As the girl was unable to adjust to the tribal ways, she tried to escape from her husband and in-laws. Unfortunately, she was haunted down by her husband and his clansmen and chopped her head off. The incident provoked Sidhwa to write *The Pakistani Bride*. The major difference between the real incident and the novel is the girl in the novel has escaped from the death where as in the incident the girl could not escape death.

The novel opens with the marriage of a fifteen year old girl, Afshan to a ten year old boy named Qasim. The incident reflects her helplessness towards her marriage with an innocent boy. She has no right to oppose this marriage. She accepted the decision of her father and she became the victim of her father's debts. "The girl didn't know whether to laugh or cry. She had been told that her groom was very young but she had thought that he would be, like herself, at least fifteen. She began to laugh, while tears of disappointment slid down her cheeks" (10)

As there was no other option, she had accepted everything cheerfully. So this is the case with many women in the society. As they do not have any option to disobey the traditions they accept whatever is forced upon them by their parents and the elders of the family in the name of religion and customs. In those days most of the women in India and its subcontinents are victims of child marriage and sati. According to men all over the world women is weak and subservient. The similar incident happened in the case of a Muslim girl Zaitoon whose life was completely decided by her adopted father Qasim. Zaitoon lost her parent at four or five during partition. Qasim, a Kohistani tribal man,

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caught glimpse of Munny and changed her name as Zaitoon, in remembrance of his long lost daughter. From then onwards she became his daughter and he took complete care of the girl. He brought her up according to the orthodox Muslim traditions. We are very much aware that, in the patriarchal society everything will be decided by man. Woman has no right to think about her life even. She is only meant to cook, wash, clean and serve the family member just like a servant. Her ideas or opinions are not at all valued. Though she cares for the family she has no right to involve in the important decisions like education and marriage. The same has happened in the case of Zaitoon. She has given minimum education up to third class. Later without her decision she was stopped sending to school. At fifteen, Qasim fixed Zaitoon's marriage with a tribal man from his native place. Miriam, wife of Nikka, a close friend to Qasim, suggested Zaitoon not to marry a tribal man. But Zaitoon says, "It is my father's wish. I must go with him." (144) Zaitoon was innocent about the marriage and the man she is going to marry. Though she was enraptured about the word marriage she did not know anything about the man. After reaching the hills with her father, for the first time she asked about the man. "Abba, the man I am to marry... do you know him?" (148) This was the first time she had asked about him. She could have asked a hundred questions. What did he look like, how did he live, had her father ever seen him? While Zaitoon crossing the bridge she thought with sudden reluctance, "I cross this spot and my life changes" But she didn't realise that the step into her new life had been taken a month ago and she was moving forcefully towards that moment. Yes, marriage in one's life especially in girl's life brings many forceful changes. Upon looking at the people and their life at hills Zaitoon was horrified and came to a conclusion that she cannot lead such a kind of life. She sobbed and told her father, "Abba, take me to the plains when you go. Please, don't leave me here. Take me with you." She also added "I don't want to marry, look how poorly thy live; how they eat! Dirty maize bread and water! My stomach hurts." (157) At last she was bold in expressing her views, and decision to her father. She pleaded her father by telling "If I must marry, marry me to someone from the plains. The jawan at the camp, Abba, I think he likes me. I will die rather than live here." (157) Qasim was upset with her words and he says, a decent girl does not tell her father to whom he should marry her. It is clearly evident that girls have no right of choosing their husbands. They have to obey the words of their parents. When Zaitoon tried to defend her, Qasim's fury was raged and said, "Now understand this...I have given my word. On it depends my honour. It is dearer to me than life. If you besmirch it, I will kill you with my bear hands." (158)

Zaitoon got horrified for his sudden fury and anger and quietly she accepted the marriage. Most of the fathers try to frighten their daughters to accept their decisions. If they listen it is good otherwise they may lose their lives. For that sake girls are unwillingly accepting their destiny. Even in the case of Zaitoon, her father is ready to kill her if she doesn't agree to the marriage which is fixed by him. For man word is more than the life. They think their honour and reputation should not be spoiled. Zaitoon unwillingly accepted the marriage in order to save her father's reputation. After marriage Zaitoon's condition was entirely different. Her husband, Sakhi, expressed his pride, lust, jealous and possessiveness towards Zaitoon. On the first night of their marriage he expressed his brutality. Zaitoon was stupefied for his awkward behaviour. He is very contemptuous yet he likes Zaitoon. When her father leaving to plains Zaitoon cried a lot and Qasim says in despair, "Zaitoon think of the people watching you. You are a married woman now...not a child. Your place is with your husband." (167)

The whole day, after Qasim left, Zaitoon wept. Sakhi and his mother Hamida tried their best to sooth her but she cried and never allowed anybody to comfort her. Sakhi felt defeated. "Routed by centuries of ruthless pride submerged beneath the hard toil buried in a way of life that could afford no sentiment a sport of pity nevertheless fought through." (169)

Though Sakhi was compassionate towards his wife, he was cruelly wounded by his brother's taunt about Zaitoon. His brother says to Sakhi, "You know, she requires a man to control her." Keeping this in his mind he became furious and ruthless when his mother called him. He shouted,



“Can’t you see I am working, you old hag.” It is clearly evident to all that the behaviour of the tribal people towards women. Even in the most civilized areas also people do not pay much respect to their mother. They think that women are worthless. They should not have any right to say anything with the men. Out of anger Sakhi hit the ox pitilessly to shift the rock. But the Ox was unable to shift the rock. He hit it again and again until the flesh gaped open on its spine. When his mother came to rescue the beast and his insane fury glowered. He did not think that Hamida is his mother and started shouting and beating Hamida. “I’ll teach you, he hissed, I’ll teach you meddling women. You think you can make fool of me? Do you?” (172) Meanwhile, Zaitoon came and asked her husband to stop beating Hamida but he ravaged against Zaitoon also by saying, “You are my woman! I’ll teach you to obey me!” (172-173) Always men think that women must be subservient to them. They should not cross their word. Men also think that if they are unable to control their wife or mother at home they will not be given any respect in the society. They believe that the society treats them as weak and subordinate to other men in the society. In order to retain his reputation before his brother and society Sakhi treated his mother and wife cruelly.

Slowly, Zaitoon accustomed to the grim drudgery of the mountain people. She laboured all day chaffing, kneading, washing and tending the animals and the young green rice-shoots and the sprouting maize. She collected animal droppings, firewood and water from the surrounding hills. Apart from these she was also immune to the tyrannical and animal treatment meted out by her husband especially during nights. Within two months of her marriage life all her dreams about marriage were vanished. Only with an instinct of self-preservation she submitted herself physically and mentally to her husband. “She no longer thought of marriage with any sense of Romance. She now lived only to placate him. Keeping her head averted unless it was to listen to a command.” (174) After two months, she strongly decided to go to her people and wanted to live with Qasim, Miriam and Nikka. But, according to her father’s word she has to wait for nine months to visit Lahore to deliver a baby. Out of her two months married life it is clear to her that she might not lived that long time. She was completely destructive and disappointed with her marital life. One day after a careful plan, she left the home without intimating to her husband and in-laws. She knows exactly what will happen if she caught by her husband. Though she knows everything she left the house by mustering courage. Almost for two weeks she travelled through the bundles and mountains without being noticed by her husband and his clansmen. Meanwhile, in her journey to reach the bridge two men raped her, food was almost over and the body was aching with pains; still she did not loose her heart of new life. She knows that if she crosses the bridge once there is no harm to her. Her husband and his clansmen can not kill her. With lot of hope she came to the bridge and saved her life with the help of Major, the military man, and his soldiers. Finally, Sidhwa concludes the novel with an optimistic view that the life of Zaitoon will be taken care by an American woman Carol, who has shown compassion to words the girls life or the jawan will propose her to marry and can hide her secretly in his village. Anything can happen; but her father would never know that the girl was alive and leading a happy life somewhere else. This is how women are treated by men in the society. We are mistaken if we think these things are happening only in tribal areas. In most parts of the world the same treatment is given to women. For men reputation and honour is more important than the life. They think women are weak and they can’t do anything against them. Through her novels, Sidhwa proves that women are courageous and strong willed. If they try definitely they can change their fate. Only thing they have to do is to raise their voice against the discrimination and the humiliation by men and the society. Sidhwa seems to give this message to all women through her novels.

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## 61. The Role of Men in Shashi Deshpande's Fiction: A Study

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In Deshpande's portrayal of male response, men are the objects and not the subjects of study. It is amply clear, that it is her women who will determine the change and the redefinition. It is their lived experience which will form the material, the energy for action and for change. It will deal with the contradictions they discover between their defined roles and the perspective which feminism gives to them, on those roles. Men form part of the analysis, the agents of the structures to be transformed. She makes sure, that attempts to involve them in the change and appropriation which need to be changed. That is why, in the vast time span covered in most of Deshpande's works, till the women are unsure and apprehensive of their own contradictory responses, they can at best elicit hospitality to their confused overtures at selfhood. It is only when they become sure of what they want, that men too are forced to look at the feasibility of the new equations. In other words, it is the controlled reaction of feminism, to what is obviously a complex psychological issue, which according to her can lead to a change in perspective among men. It is from a point of self-assured understanding of the roles they wish to assume, that women can initiate the shift from hostile antagonism, towards willing participation. With a surety that arises out of belief in one's correctness, and the acquisition of competencies which equip one for independence, Deshpande's women use their perceptions to make inroads into male hostility. Implicit in the process, is the stress on the benefits that would accrue to men as well, if they work in tandem with women for implementing the process of change.

It is interesting to note that even when Deshpande portrays hostility among men as they try to safeguard their privileged domain, she does so with the skill and insight of a psychologist. Underlying it is her opinion, "... what is he, but a victim of his own idea of himself?" What comes across is not just the plight of the female trying to stand up to the privileged sex, but also the insecurities of the privileged male. Deshpande understands, that for men, masculinity is the core around which their personality takes shape, and that in compromising with it, they would be playing with their self-esteem. Her approach and understanding is close to the precepts evolving through contemporary gender studies, which explicate that "the gender schema becomes a prescriptive standard or guide and self-esteem becomes its hostage." Therefore, there exists among men, "an honest sense of the wish to save at whatever cost, a sexual polarity, a vital tension, and an essential difference, which they fear might get lost, in too much sameness, equality and equivalence." Feminism threatens not just this polarity, but also the privileged status which it entails. The psychological dislocation it involves, gives rise to knee jerk responses, some of which display the desperation of a person driven to the wall. Among these is the "classification of the disruptive and disturbing information as non-data." Men respond suspiciously to alteration in status arrangements. Deshpande's men too respond with anxiety, resistance, and a loss of a sense of order when they find themselves face-to-face with the inexorable change in gender equations. Mohan in *That Long Silence* and Som in *Small Remedies* repeatedly attempt at establishing their own image as providers with simultaneous attempts at constructing their wives as homemakers, although in both the cases the women involved are intelligent individuals in need of recognition for their abilities. As they find their women attempting to set out of the phallogocentric structures, these men exercise designs of mastery, and try to coerce them back into predefined roles, which they insist are the only true imperative of their gender. While Mohan reacts strongly to Jaya's attempts at establishing herself as a writer, Som reduces Madhu's attempts at writing to nothing more than a hobby. In more aggravated forms; this culminates in patterns of domination which translate into cruelty. Manohar in the *Dark Holds No Terrors* turns to sexual cruelty, as Saru's professional success diminishes his status as the provider.

More interesting are Deshpande's insights, on what she feels could eventually compel men to tide over their egos, to acknowledge the inevitability of change. We find her male characters, returning to retrieve relationships from the brink, because beneath the bravado of their initial hostility lies their need for those relationships. Here again, Deshpande's opinions are validated by studies on gender. Stephen Heath in his book *Male Feminism* (1987) clarifies that men have a socio-sexual stake in feminism." Despite their attempts to dismiss female discontent as non-data, relations cannot be magically free of the given terms of male-female positioning." The growing resentment and the desire for dignified options have made women averse to being used as "a looking glass possessing the magical ... power of reflecting the figure of man at twice his natural size." This in turn has dislocated the falsely magnified identity by which men have existed all these centuries. In other words, "feminism has decentred man-which means that there is no simple position, only a shifting marginalia ... the collective identity of man is no longer available." In such a context, moving close to feminism would provide men with a scope of regaining something of the male/female security. It would give them an opportunity to renegotiate their identity against the crumbling structures of patriarchy. Deshpande's men too seem to be inching closer to this renegotiation. Mohan deserts Jaya when she asserts herself. Yet, he eventually returns to her in full awareness of the impossibility of retrieving the old equation in their relationship. Manohar follows Saru to her father's house faced with her resolute refusal to reply to his letters. Som asks Madhu to return to the relationship she has rejected for its inflexibility. Implicit in all these examples is man's attempt to regenerate a place for himself, once it is clear that the old paradigms have dislocated him from his former secure positioning. It becomes imperative for him as well, to participate in the formulation of new equations.

Looking beyond these surface implications, Deshpande also implies that as resistance loses its full throttled thrust, it might make way for a more integrated personal core for men too. In accepting new equations, they would also be availing the right to dispense away with the inflexible gender codes, which dwarf them in comparison to the image they need to live up to. This in turn would help them reconcile their attributive and optative identities. Male position as the provider might have arisen out of a comparatively greater suitability to the demands of a particular time. However, the consequent economic and social edge it has given to man, has led to an insistence that those particular attributes are the sole constituents of his position of power, but in the process also diminishes the full range of his experience as a human being. He relegates to the background the individual differences, weaknesses and psychological peculiarities which formulate him as a person. This results in an awkward positioning in the prescribed grid, so that notions of masculinity interfere with realistic expectations from the self. For example, Gopal in *A Matter of Time* acknowledges that the responsibility of marriage is not for everyone. He however recognises it too late, thus leaving his wife and three daughters in a lurch. Jaya's brother Ravi in *That Long Silence* does not have that element of responsibility, which is required for living up to the role of a husband and a son. Devious, manipulative behaviour thus becomes his strategy to wriggle out of the expectations others have from him. The most touching portrayal that of Dhruva, Saru's little brother in *The Dark Holds No Terrors* who is made a victim of these role formulations. His mother makes him sleep alone because he is a boy and must live up to his masculine role, notwithstanding the fact that he is morbidly scared of the dark.

Explicating upon the dichotomy which this induces, Patrick Lee says, "males are viewed as competitive, achieving, risk taking, and invested with environmental mastery among other things. All one has to do is to look briefly at random samples ... real men who live longing for love and approval, counting their accomplishments on the fingers of their one hand, and hedging all risks with the preoccupation with security." This gap between the attributive and optative identities makes the male perpetually vulnerable. Deshpande implies that aligning themselves with the changing impulse would give men an opportunity to dispense away this stress. It would give men an opportunity to dispense away with this stress. It would aid in rectifying the larger than life image which they have constructed for themselves. It would also help them in coming to terms with their own limitations without

suffering a loss of self-esteem. In agreeing to participate in the new equations, men might also discover how their attributive identities have, in many social situations, been exploited and utilized by other power structures operating within society. The value judgements, exposing them to ridicule at the slightest deviation from their prescribed roles, might then emerge as part of the covert control tactics used by society in a shrouded reversal of roles, to sustain its own economic agendas. Deshpande portrays this through the unresolved undercurrents of resentment, especially in those male roles, where the surface privileges get translated into responsibilities, with no consideration for desires and aspirations which lie beyond those roles. Among these is Chandu Mama in *That Long Silence*, whose ambition to go abroad to study is thwarted by his mother, who refuses to risk her future security, thus reducing him to a small time doctor, venting his frustration through petty affairs. Jaya's father's Gandhian aspirations are similarly trampled upon by his mother. Those who escape these social constraints to pursue their own aspirations are looked upon with disapproval. Jaya's uncle Makrand is never forgiven by his mother for leaving home to become an actor. There is the underlying authorial sympathy in the portrayal of Dada, Jaya's elder brother, who forgoes his responsibilities as the eldest son, in order to pursue his own ambitions. Shripati in *Moving On* is also an example of a frustrated man whose professional and personal aspirations are sacrificed at the altar of responsibilities and obligations, inherent in the male role. Deshpande seems to be suggesting that the claustrophobia inherent in such situations could find a solution in alternatives, which regard gender as a fluid concept and believe in the possibility of redefining privileges and responsibilities, for both women and men.

Deshpande implies that participation in female empowerment might also reward men in of power equations. Time and again, she shows that the compulsion to maintain a subordinated posture to suit male requirements causes resentment among women. The disparity between their inner experiences and the lives they are forced to live corrodes into commitment. Deshpande's women find other avenues, intellectual and emotional, to cater t their true identities, while the men in their lives continue to revel in the false belief of their ability to control them. Indu's attraction to Naren in *Roots and Shadows*, Saru's bent towards Padma in *The Dark Holds No Terrors*, Jaya's leaning towards Kama in *That Long Silence*, Urmi's attraction to Bhaskar in *The Binding Vine* are all examples of intelligent women veering towards relationships outside marriage, because they do not find recognition of their potential as thinking individuals within it. These are juxtaposed with relationships like those of Joe and Leela, Tony and Rekha, Hari and Lata in *Small Remedies*, where men recognise and respect the woman's individuality and in return get unalloyed loyalty and a love untarnished by secondary considerations. Deshpande thus advocates recognition of women's individuality, a regard for their right to find satisfaction through what best suits their temperament, and an acknowledgement that they are more than the roles society has imposed upon them. In return, men might find themselves participating in relationships tempered with mutual regard, intellectual rapport and companionship, which do not flounder upon the volatile foundations of a power struggle. Once again the writer's views are in congruence with those emerging through gender studies, which draw conclusions based upon empirical evidence. Patrick Lee, for example says, "There are human benefits in not having one's self-esteem dependent upon compulsive assertion of authority, dominance, ambition, initiative and the other ulcer producing prerogatives of traditional masculinity." The freshness and wholeness of the new experience would probably help men in transcending their own misplaced defences.

If Deshpande portrays these benefits for the discerning male, she also depicts changing attitudes among men who see the rigidity of opinions negatively impacting those whom they care for. Her works also showcase a new set of opinions among the younger generation of men, to whom the new, more balanced equation comes quite naturally. Deshpande sees this as an obvious progression and implies that if help comes from quarters which have had the privilege of being in positions of power, it should be availed. In fact, at many places there are sequences and situations in her novels where male contribution to female empowerment is welcomed and willingly accepted. It not only

brings the power of social sanction to the aid of women's issues, but also finally culminates into a joint effort, which works towards a more habitable world. We see this attitude portrayed among men of every generation. Saru's father supports her decision to study medicine, Jaya's father trusts her literary abilities, Urmi's father recognizes her as more competent than her brother. Ever Shripati, the aloof patriarch advises Sumi to focus on her daughter's education rather than their marriage. We also have men like Amrut in *Binding Vine* who is clear about the equal status he wishes to share with his future wife. Raja in *Moving On* displays a large-hearted flexibility in adapting to Jiji's clarity on what she wants.

In a world where boundaries limiting a woman's life to home are fast fading, how men in the outer world react to the female overture at selfhood becomes equally pertinent. Deshpande depicts these as mixed attitudes, undergoing the same slow change, as the familial ones. Indu's employer in *Roots and Shadows* represents the old attitude which expects a woman to toe the line. He takes it for granted that Indu would write what he wanted her to, irrespective of her own sense of right and wrong. The magazine editor in *That Long Silence* slots Jaya's woman oriented work into peripheral literature, fit only for women's magazines. However there are others who respond more positively and show a slow but certain change. In most cases, this change derives from recognition of a woman's right to decide for herself, and in deference to her persistence in doing so. Nagaraj, the property dealer in *A Matter of Time*, begins with disdain for Sumi's decision to look for a separate house. However, he eventually recognizes her resolve and decides to help her. The image of Nagaraj riding the scooter with Sumi on the rear seat becomes representative of male help coming from the most unlikely quarters. After Sumi's death, he comes to have one last look at her and goes back carrying with him the image of a woman, who brings to him an understanding of something beyond his own perceptions. There is also the striking image of the unknown boy who steps in to help, when Aru finds herself literally and metaphorically lost after venting her anger against her father for having deserted the family. Later when she thinks of the figure on the motorcycle riding ahead of her, heedless of the pouring rain, leading her out of confusing lanes, there is something in the image which reflects a new breed of men to whom the role of supporter comes naturally. The ones who continue to use their twisted gender orientations for exploitative ends abound even in the changing times. The property sharks who try to usurp Jiji's father's house in *Moving On* by threatening and playing upon her fears as a single woman, reflect that section of men. But along with them are men like Iqbal in the *Country of Deceit*, who recognizes Devyani's need to pick up the threads of her life after her break-up with Ashok, and invites her to join his law practice. He also ensures that she knows that he is making this offer in recognition of her potential and capability, not out of pity.

Here too Deshpande's views are ratified by sociological findings. Radhika Chopra, an Indian sociologist working on women's issues talks of this "... self- reflexive agency among ordinary men, a reflection that has emerged from engagements with gender." This according to her is different from the earlier men's reform movements, where women were merely objects in the debates among men. The twentieth century sees a different sense of men understands of gender relationships. Perhaps this results from the fact that their lives correspond to autonomous women's movements. Understanding these movements makes enlightened men realize the suffocation of normative strictures, particularly when they relate it to the effect they have upon women for whom they care. Just because certain trends have evolved out of a collective impulse, "... it does not imply that the individual is thoughtless, uncreative, and inflexible ... is blind to contradictions that may be inhering knowledge or acculturation." Issues of personal experience persuade individual men to engage with issues concerning gender. This becomes the motivation for them to "take apart gender identities, which masquerade as cast-iron monolithic formulations." Stephen Heath, in his book *Male Feminism* provides the missing dimension to the concept what it is obviously concerns them; they have to learn to make it their affair." He further adds, "Feminism speaks to me, not primarily, not equally, but too. The definitions and images and stories and laws and institutions oppressive to women that it challenges, ends, involves me, since not only will I find myself playing some part in their

reproduction, but I too am caught up in them, given as a ‘man’ in their reflection, confined in that place which is represented as mine.”

Deshpande’s analysis of male response is thus underlined by a positive belief in its potential to respond. It demonstrates her faith in the reality of a more integrated future for man-woman relationship. It is to this that one could attribute the pattern of growth in her works. Individual works trace how rigid responses become malleable and make way for better relational overtures in subsequent generations. The paper as a whole shows how the dominant theme of resistance of the earlier novels is replaced with a new, dynamic response of the later ones. The anger and insecurities inherent in unequal, claustrophobic relationships stand contrasted to the dignity and honesty generated by attitudes which respond to change.

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## 62. Post-Modern Satirical Perspectives in John Updike's *Rabbit Redux*

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John Updike satirically inquires into the social changes of the Post-Modern times according to theological and political shifts in *Rabbit Redux*. The novel is an intense examination of the American dream in the light of the socio-political events of the Sixties. Updike makes the individual event representative of national history and making particular characters representative of the whole class so that the novel becomes a paradigm of contemporary American history. In *Redux*, Updike outlines man's confinement in a hollow and blank material world, where values have disintegrated and socio-political aspects seem to exist in a vacuum. At the same time, the characters are also obsessed by the invisible entity that makes things happen and is responsible for man's thirst for importance in a world threatened by mortality and transience. They are conscious of the edifying power of this invisible force and believe that it offers a redemptive contact with reality. The whole effort of these characters is, therefore, directed towards a better and purposeful living.

Updike demonstrates how the inner struggle of oneself for a meaningful life and purposive activity involves both pain and loneliness. The painful acts which the protagonist, Rabbit, indulges in are to relieve him from mental agony. His impulsive behavior produces a feeling of hopelessness, depression and frustration. He dreads the solitude as he finds no one to understand his actions well. Pain, suffering and loneliness are factors which cannot be solved by technological sophistication. In the novel, Updike implies that the presence of a divine order or human love ought to solve such problems to some extent. Updike brings out the significance of the institution of family as it is the first socializing agent, and attachment to one's family is crucial for development of all relationships in life. He captures the collapse of the family system in the Sixties. Janice deserts her husband and son. The family of Ollie and Peggy Foschnat is shattered. The novel highlights Updike's deep concern with the family structure that he thinks is being seriously threatened: "Who'll hold families together, if everybody has to live. Living is a compromise, between what you want and doing what *other* people want" (R,Re:109). Rabbit is passive, unreflective and stunned by social pressures in *Redux*. Janice, on the contrary, is no more the "dumb", "stupid" and "unintelligent" girl of *Run*. Certain unprecedented developments in the American society, such as Feminism and the Sexual Revolution, have changed her. She comes out of the narrow domestic walls and takes up a job at her father's office. Charged by the impact of Feminism and driven by the American dream, she ventures out for new avenues. This naturally involves breaking away from conventional norms. Janice decides to revitalize her sense of identity in her affair with Charlie Stravros. But the possibility and thought of marrying him "opens an abyss... A gate she had always assumed gave on to a garden on to emptiness" (R,Re:66). Janice suffers physical blow from Rabbit when she denies her adultery but later both give in to the changing world of moral ennui. Rabbit refuses to encourage or force Janice to return. Ironically, he had fled Janice earlier but with passing time her departure pushes him into an empty world. Rabbit's domestic discord springs from his inability to free himself from the Hamletian dilemma. Janice explains Rabbit's dilemma to Stavros that he thinks he is "missing something" (R,Re:53). In fact, his search for something beyond is replaced by a vague hope generated by American pragmatism. The patriotism among the Americans in the Sixties is reflected in Rabbit. He sticks to his traditional beliefs and has faith in the supremacy of America. His patriotism has replaced his earlier spiritual quest. He defends his country's participation in Vietnam. He believes that his nation's ultimate goal is to "make a happy rich country, full of highways and gas stations" (R,Re:45). He identifies himself with the flag, so that in one argument he holds that the "treachery and ingratitude befouling the flag" is at the same time "befouling him" (R,Re:45). He has a flag decal on his car. He supports his country on every aspect, from Indian massacres of the past to the black riots of the present and he is skeptical of hippies, demonstrators, negroes and all those who negate his

country's supremacy. The established institutions of religion, family have collapsed and the characters in *Redux* become incapable of finding anything of value in the contemporary world. They are devoid of myths and heroes. President Roosevelt is described by Janice's father, as a crazy chap who made a war to bring him out of the Depression. When Nelson mentions watching a movie glamorizing John Kennedy's war experiences, the grandfather spouts, "Pure propaganda. They made that movie because old Joe owned a lot of those studios" (R,Re:82). The old man claims that LBJ went to Vietnam just to "get the coloreds up into the economy." He condemns the events of Chappaquidick, claiming that Kennedy got the girl pregnant and then murdered her. America, he says, "is a police state run by the Kennedys ... That family has been out to buy the country since those Brahmins up in Boston snubbed old Joe" (R,Re:81). Not even Jackie Kennedy is salvaged-"Now they've got the young widow to marry a rich Greek in case they run out of money. Not that she's the goodie gumdrop the papers say ..." (R,Re:81). Rabbit's father calls Nixon "a poor devil" who's trying his best, but confides, "I don't have much use for Tricky Dicky and never have ..." (R,Re:349). The patriotic Rabbit says of Nixon: "Poor old Nixon, even his own commissions beat on him ... He's just a typical flatfooted Chamber of Commerce type who lucked his way into the hot seat and is so dumb he thinks it's good luck. Let the poor bastard alone" (R,Re:225). Mim, Rabbit's sister, is a symbol of the new white generation that "lives on pollution" and is "hard" as "cockroaches" (R,Re:361). She entertains the family by doing humorous take-offs on Disneyland mechanical dummies representing Lincoln and Washington. This is the American scene, where the characters are emotionally done up and devoid of belief in anything.

In *Redux*, Updike investigates into the terrible discord of generations, the drugs and heedlessness of the counter-culture. The upper middle class white radicals were also responsible for the turbulence in the country. They crowded the campuses, led demonstrations and formed new drug cults in several urban areas, dismissed their families and the materialism they practised. This group is represented in the novel by Jill, who comes from a wealthy family and opposes the Establishment: "I ran away from it", she says, "I shit on it"(R,Re:207-208). She has rejected both the "old God" and the "angry old patriotism"(R,Re:228) to which Rabbit and the community members are dedicated. She scorns the material world. Further, she substitutes a vague new God perceived through the hallucination of drugs.

As a Post-Modernist, Updike deals with "politics of racism" (Hooks 627). He considers the plight of blacks in *Redux*. Skeeter is a satirical portrait of the black militant movement of the Sixties which involves protesting all things that are white, particularly the white man's hypocritical religion. Instead they believe in a new religion, in which blackness will be worshipped. They believe that they have a soul as they have religious vision and an inner drive. On the other hand, the whites in the novel have no soul. They lack religious vision as they believe that beyond this world there is nothing but empty space. Skeeter, who rages and calls upon God, is the antithesis of the morally, emotionally dried-up whites. In *Redux*, "the two races are contrasted in terms similar to Eldridge Cleaver's 'primeval mitosis' theory: whites have become all sterile, bodiless intellect (technology), and blacks are the physical - fertile, sexual" (Markle 157). The political and theological aspects are inter-linked in the novel. The white Christianity that Skeeter wishes Rabbit to discard and the white man's faith in the American dream are inextricably connected. For Rabbit, the "Good Samaritan" and the "Statue of Liberty" (R,Re:358) are the same things. So before preaching this new religion, Skeeter tries to demythicize the fantasy of the white American dream: "It was a dream", he tells Rabbit, "it was a state of mind from those poor fool pilgrims on" (R,Re: 242). But it is a dream that Rabbit patriotically trusts. And Skeeter tries to change Rabbit's notion saying, "You say America to you and you still get bugles and stars but say it to any black or yellow man and you get hate, right?" (R,Re:234). Skeeter and Jill try to paint America in black to convince Rabbit that the white industrial worker in this "dollar-crazy"(R,Re:232) democracy is as miserable and enslaved economically, as that of the blacks. In this context, Uphaus reviews: The temporary alliance of the rich white radical youth with the black militant to overthrow the "System" - can be seen in Jill and Skeeter. Events of



the Sixties are the student revolts, the predominantly white, upper-class youth who led the SDS, and the conviction among black militants that this disruption within the white majority could only benefit the black revolution. Stimulated by drugs and sexually liberated, the young white radical (Jill) and the black militant (Skeeter) live off the productiveness of the working class (Rabbit), attempting to change his conservatism while being sustained by his labor. They urge him to endorse the overthrow of the 'System' (Uphaus 86 ). Besides political turbulence, the social fabric collapsed with the freedom movements of the Sixties. Parents who are the key people in the child's life lost their position. The parent's influence got declined by the new aspects of social order over which they had no control. With the changing decade women held on to their sexuality more than to their roles of home maker, adding tension to their burdened domestic lives. The stable values lost permanence in the twentieth century and made the parents more self-absorbent and negligent about their children. Caught in night parties and sexual escapades, the children turn to drugs like the way Nelson did or become vagabonds like Jill. Overwhelmed by frustrations of modern life, the parents produce the most neurotic, disjoined, alienated and drug-addicted generation.

In *Redux*, socio-theological aspects are inter-connected too. Updike depicts the sad state of modern man surrounded by the dread of mortality. He mourns the lack of faith in God in the current society, which resulted in the domestic tragedy of man. To Updike, man's highest goal in life is to seek a way that leads to salvation. He feels that there is no substitute to God that has the capacity to offer man the security which he is in search of all his life. Marriage, family, sensual pleasure, vocation and the community do not resolve the desperate problems of man. He believes that only a firm belief in the divine can provide security. But the revival of this lost faith in man is a complex question. He has grappled with the problem of depicting these stifling and irreparable struggles by evolving a unified thematic pattern that suits his purpose. *Redux* depicts the psychological search for a solution to the puzzling question concerning the purpose of human existence. As Joseph Waldmeir pertinently observes, "Updike's real concern is a critical examination of the temptations, the problems, the questions, and the answers as they conflict both inside and outside the protagonist, alternately promising and denying solutions to the quest" (Waldmeir 16).

As religion also failed to help him escape from the anguish of the Sixties, Rabbit adopts a false faith. He seeks refuge in sensual pleasure. He indulges in free love with Ruth, Jill and Peggy Fosnacht, but does not find eternal happiness or solace. His wife, Janice walks out of him for a Greek, Stavros, in a desperate urge to seek fulfillment and security in her otherwise blighted life. But towards the end of the novel both Rabbit and Janice do not find genuine relief in their affairs, so they return back to the traditional institution of family. Ultimately, Rabbit recognizes that the only security in life that can shield him against loneliness is a "home". "It has been his salvation, to be home again" (R,Re:349-350). This implies that one can find immense pleasure by living within some limitations. Gordon E. Slethav, a reviewer, writes: "Americans, implies Updike, need to learn that unrestricted freedom cannot exist, and that when one is most free, one may paradoxically become the most enslaved and enslaving. Freedom is only valid when hedged with rules and governed by responsibility" (Slethav 252). Further, what Jill brings with her is sex without love which is pure horror as is proved in the end. Thus, Updike implies that human love is the only meaningful source of value in earthly life. And that love can provide one with a basis for existence.

Thus, Updike reinforces his faith in the institution of family as it alone can provide stability to man. After the burning of his house, Rabbit along with his son, Nelson goes to live with his parents. There he is troubled by a new awareness of his ordinariness, his unimportance. His street, for instance, seems "an ordinary street anywhere. Millions of such American streets hold millions of lives and let them sift through, and neither notice nor mourn, and fall into decay, and do not even mourn their own passing" (R,Re:373). He recalls nostalgically a lost time when this street "excited Rabbit with the magic of his own existence ... here the universe had centered" (R,Re:373). His return to the past gives him a relative stability. Rabbit's return to his childhood home marks a return to his

childhood habits. He finds in himself "an appetite for boyish foods"(R,Re:350); he plays basketball. He finds the warmth and security in his childhood home that eluded him for long. In Rabbit's return to the past, love is renewed. He ultimately finds within himself grief for Jill and realizes his former hardness towards her as a part of the "deadness" into which he had retreated. His return is, his mother claims, "worth a hundred doses" (R,Re:350) of the medicine she takes, and her slow death is temporarily delayed by human love. This last section, then, Uphaus writes, "reasserts the value of human love, its power to sustain life, if not to defeat death" (Uphaus 89).

Rabbit matures and his self-centeredness fades away, and finally to Janice's question, "who do you think you are?" Rabbit answers "Nobody"(R,Re:404). This realization in a way eliminates the distance between him and Janice. The dawning sense of casualty and the fear of emptiness unites the pair to a secure place - Safe Heaven Hotel. There is a final sense of acceptance as Janice almost accepts Rabbit's sense of guilt: "Relax, not everything is your fault" (R,Re:406) and he is led back to Janice as the title of the novel announces. Every return provides new psychological, mental and spiritual restoration. While Rabbit's flight to Ruth and Janice to Stravros prove disastrous and short-lived, their return becomes a triumph of social and moral values, as they both emerge stronger and competent enough to share their mutual responsibility. In this context, Uphaus notes: In describing a wistful retreat into the past, we can see reflected the popularity, in the seventies, of nostalgic films, old-fashioned clothing styles, handicrafts, and natural foods. Moreover, like Rabbit, the middle class early in the seventies seemed to regain its equilibrium as the violence of the sixties dissipated. The "silent majority", reeling from a decade of destruction and disorder, retreated to what seemed to be a reaffirmation of family life and democratic ideals (Uphaus 89). Thus, Updike reflects on the quest for human stature, importance and responsibility. He observes that without the supernatural the natural is a pit of horror. He also believes that all problems are basically insoluble and that faith is a leap out of total despair and misery. He finds that materialism has stripped man of his faith in higher values. Man cannot make genuine advancement by having his belief in blind forces and dead matter. Man's actions are good and bad only if there is a divine force to judge. Without belief in the supernatural, people tend to grope in darkness, despair and misery. He recognizes that man cannot be isolated from society. He cannot be his own provider, the ultimate source of his own well-being. In this context, Tanvir Fatima comments: ... in Updike's fiction the human reality is composed of loss of faith, anxiety, loneliness, and nostalgia. He believes that a divinely ordained milieu and set up is vital for saving the individual from becoming a victim of his own crippling desires. In other words, such maladies can be cured through a participation in certain sets of beliefs that guarantee redemption and deliverance. The Christian faith with its emphasis on penance and atonement is cathartic and expiatory. But the self has to be directed towards such a penitential path. The search for the path that redeems a soul - that is Updike's quest (Fatima 90-91).

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### 63. The Spate of Customs and the Fate of Women in Raja Rao's Short Stories – 'Akkayya,' 'Javni' & 'The Little Gram Shop'

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Raja Rao, a towering personality in Indo-Anglian fiction, had five famous novels and many short stories to his credit. Being one among the trio along with M.R. Anand and R.K. Narayan, he contributed a lot, especially in the philosophical and metaphysical planes, for the enrichment of Indian English literature. Though spent half of his life time in foreign countries like France and America, he had not been without Indian thought and culture which he fostered and preserved till he breathed his last. His careful observation of the baleful customs prevailing in Hindu Society which sapped the very strength of Indian culture is worthy of notice and interest. His short stories are the outcome of the philosophical musings of a master craftsman. In this paper I would like to present the gloomy scenario prevailing in the lives of the women in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century With reference to Raja Rao's never fading short stories 'Akkayya', 'Javni' and 'The Little Gram Shop.' Though Raja Rao's book 'The Cow of the Barricades and Other Stories' was published in 1947, most of the stories were first written in nineteen thirties, 'Javni' and 'Akkayya' in 1933 and 'The Little Gram Shop' in 1937. These three stories mainly focus on the prevailing social conditions, customs and traditions. According to M. K. Naik, "The fate of the Indian women in these stories is one of passive suffering. They all suffer and continue to exist though hardly to live."<sup>1</sup> The short stories, according to C.D. Narasimhaiah, are "the products of an inevitable stage in the growth of a mind, in the evolution of a major novelist who was cultivating his craft with the utmost care."<sup>2</sup> Raja Rao's short stories contain thumbnail sketches of the remarkably patient and doomed Indian womanhood which he later expanded in his novels.

*Akkayya* is a highly pathetic story of a high born woman who is denied of natural fulfilment of her desires as wife and mother in life and who finds in ceaseless sacrifice a meaning to her own existence. The story is narrated by Kittu who loved her so much from his childhood. A cook-cum-grandmother to a host of orphaned children in the joint family, Akkayya treated them all alike as a gentle cow. "She had always enough children to take care of and kind when they were good and severe when they were mischievous. When these children left her, she forgot them as the cow forgets her young ones. But God always supplied her with orphan children, and it was they who stood around her when she breathed her last. That was her karma." (COB-49)<sup>3</sup> Her story is highly pathetic as humanistic interest predominates. Akkayya was born of rich parents in Brahman community. But misfortune dogged her throughout her life. At the age of eight her father married her off to minister Ramakrishnayya of Gagana state. He was more than sixty, yet ready for a third marriage with Akkayya who was eight years old and too young to know what marriage was. Unfortunately her old husband died leaving her a widow. Since then, she became the mistress of the kitchen. Her job is "cleaning of vessels and the sweeping of the floor as though she were born with a vessel at her waist and broom in her hand." (COB-48) As she began to quarrel with her step-grand daughter, she was driven away branded as an evil lady. In fact Akkayya was the eldest of the eight children, three girls and five boys. Yet no one was ready to give her shelter. At last she was invited by her sister, the narrator's own grandmother, to be with her family to look after the children and attend to the household duties. The original queen was degraded to kitchen queen by losing all dignity and decorum. She had no joy, no enjoyment, nothing in her life. As she is a widow now, she looks in shaven head with her sari fringe over her head always, She does not oppose societal customs but accepts and suffers herself silently. Her inherent passion for children which was strong but not fulfilled due to her widowhood solidifies and lies in her sub-conscious and bursts out in the form of

rumbblings when she falls ill. As K.R.Rao points out that “Akkayya’s loneliness is the product of conventional femininity which cuts her off from a shared life. The hardening of the human heart within her results in indifference and hostility and a neurotic self-hatred.”<sup>4</sup> The last days of Akkayya were highly pathetic. When she fell sick, she could not draw sympathy from her relatives. She lost her balance over body and mind and hardly recognized the services of the children who came to serve her. She was unbearable as she launched a tirade of abuses over the small children who came to help her. After a long period of suffering, she passed away giving peace and relief to everybody. The saddest thing is that none of her brothers or relatives came forward to take up Akkayya’s obsequies. A Brahmin was given some money to perform the necessary rites. That’s the fate of Akkayya. Srinivasa Iyengar comments that “Like Javni, Akkayya is a peculiar feature in many Indian homes, the silent benefactor, ‘good like a cow’ of proliferating joint families. *Akkayya* is a deeply moving story commemorating the life of an obscure but heroic figure.”<sup>5</sup> Thus the social realism of the curse of widowhood and the support of a widow in a joint Hindu family as well as the emotional realism of her love for all have been welded together to produce the intended effect of profound pity.

“*Javni*” is the story of a loyal domestic servant who accepts uncomplainingly her humble situation in life and serves her employers with devotion and love. Javni is a low-caste, innocent widow who, neglected and ill-treated by her in-laws’ family and by her own family, leads a life of a despicable woman. Being illiterate and ignorant, she believes in superstitions and fills her mind with the stories of ghosts and devils and tries to make others do so. She works in the house of the Revenue inspector, a Brahmin whose wife Sita has close resemblance with Javni in beliefs and superstitions. But Sita’s educated brother Ramu who grows fondness towards Javni, condemns their blind beliefs and unnecessary fears. But Javni says, “Don’t laugh Ramappa, with these very eyes I have seen the ghosts of more than a hundred young men and women...all killed by magic. My learned Ramappa, never go out after sunset for there are spirits of all sorts walking in the dark.”(COB-83) Sita who had a horror of devils makes herself move close with Javni as she says, “I should have died of fright had not Javni been with me. She understands my fears, my beliefs.”(COB-84) She says that she loves Javni as her own sister. Yet, she is too religious and sentimental to let Javni sit and eat with her. So when her brother quarrels with her over Javni’s eating in the byre in darkness and in unhygienic conditions, Sita blurts out saying, “They are of the lower class and you cannot ask them to sit and eat with you. Eating with a woman of lower caste is irreligious.” (COB-88). When Ramu reminds her of love towards Javni, she says angrily, “But affection does not ask you to be irreligious.”(COB-88) For her own part, Javni doesn’t feel hurt or insulted to eat in the byre in darkness as she says, “But there is no necessity to see what you eat. I know where my rice is, and I can feel where the pickle is and that is enough.” (COB-88) The mechanical mastication of rice truly represents her cycle of existence. Javni’s poverty coupled with her lonely life is highly pathetic and heart rending. She earns one rupee each month. She doesn’t apply oil to her hair as she says, “Oil is too expensive. It costs an anna a bottle and it lasts only a week. It is what I earn in two days.”(COB-89) Javni had four sisters and one living brother. At eighteen she was married to a good young man from Malkad who was affectionate to her. Unfortunately he died of snake bite leaving her a widow. Now her life is in doldrums. She was branded as a witch by her in-laws family and driven off. Her hen-pecked brother was not ready to receive her. As she was weeping, he says, “weep till your tears flood the Cauvery. But you will not get a morsel of rice from me.”(COB-93) She was not allowed to touch the four year old son of her brother by her sister-in-law because she was believed to be a witch and an evil spirit. Javni was so much steeped in superstitions that she was even ready to offer a lamb, which she takes for her child, to the Goddess Talakamma as she firmly believes that “Should I live if that Goddess did not protect me? Would mother(Sita) be so good to me if the Goddess did not bless me? Ramappa, everything is hers.”(COB-92). When all routes are closed for Javni to barely exist, she felt desperate and decided to commit suicide but her faith and fear in the Goddess Talakamma pulled her back. She remarks, “I wept and sobbed and often wanted to go and fall into the river but I knew Goddess Talakamma would be angry with me and I stopped each time I wanted to kill myself.”(COB-92). Thus a widow’s life is a long chronicle of austerity, self-denial, drudgery and misery. In the words of Sri Vatsava, “*The Little*

*Gram Shop*” is a powerful domestic tragedy with none of the family members having lived a full life of joy and peace even when there was prosperity enough for the common delights of a happy family life.”<sup>6</sup> The story presents a unique characterization of Moti Lal, a wretch or ‘That swine of a bania’ as people called him, who with his wife Beti Bai has dreams of affluence and glory. He was highly ambitious and boasted of his glorious past when his great grand- father Bhata Tata Lal of Khodi had been fabulously rich. His over ambitious nature to re-establish his ancient status made him mad and caused sleepless nights. With his wife’s co-operation, he tries to rise from rags to riches. By begging in the streets they hoarded enough money to buy an old dilapidated house in Hyderpur and settled down there. Now they started a little gram shop and also maintained a cow to have earnings in both the ways. The hard earned money by cheating people had been lent to many a person at high rates of interest. He reminds us of ‘Bhatta’ the priest in ‘Kanthapura’ who by lending money to the villagers becomes very rich. Moti Lal’s mind is always preoccupied with the thought of quick earning of money. This made him addict to hookah that spoiled his health. “But for his hookah, he would have been intolerable.”(COB-67) In spite of Beti’s nagging ,he continued his habit so wildly that if she touched it or if he could not find it, “he thrust his fists at Beti and swore he could damn well skin her to death.”(COB-67) The fate of Beti hangs in the balance as she could neither stop him from using the hookah nor keep herself silently watching him go to ruins. She is the most ill-fated woman as she failed to get due honour and respect from her most irritable and hot-tempered husband who beats her relentlessly. Once when Beti hid the hookah, he flew into rage and thrashed her black and blue. “He jumped and swore; in a mighty fury he flung Beti to the ground and beat her with a piece of prickly firewood he had snatched from the kitchen. She shrieked and she wept, her big breasts pressed wildly against the floor, and her long, graying hair all scattered about.”(COB-67) Moti Lal was such a dirty rogue that he could not treat his wife as a woman at all. He always used abusive language at her calling her as wench, whore, witch, devil, dog, go to hell, dirty dragon, prostitute etc. She has to cower down before him lest he should beat her. Chota, the horrible son of Moti Lal, who was maintaining a concubine called Venku and had eloped with her, came back only to make the situation worse. He married Rati, a beautiful girl from a dignified family who had brought Rs.30,000 as dowry. Her life here is highly despicable and no better than dog’s. Chota always mistreated and manhandled her without respect for her family or prestige. Once he kicked his wife for a silly reason that the soup was not hot saying, “You bloody whore! You daughter of a witch!” and “kicked her so badly on the stomach that she fell on the floor moaning. This is the second time. The first time when he had kicked, she was pregnant, the child had died of it. No police, nothing.” (COB-78) Rati who had spent her pre-marital life happily and carefreely, now has to lead a miserable life after marriage. So horrible was her life that she once thought of committing suicide. But her faith in God pulled her back. In spite of this domestic torture, Rati patiently suffered with a hope against hope that her husband would change. “She had even hung a coconut in Maruthi’s temple with vows and prayers that her husband might turn kinder to her.”(79) Moti Lal who ran after filthy lucre became mad when he failed to recover his lendings. He died in an accident leaving Beti, a widow. Rati, an unwanted wife of Chota died of plague freeing herself from the clutches of these earthly bonds. Thus the three stories depict the most pitiable and unstable lives of the women who have to work under the beck and call of others.

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#### 64. Portrayal of Feminine Spaces & Sensibilities in the Short-Fiction of Alice Munro

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From times immemorial, the faculty of thinking has been a rare virtue of the chosen few, that is, men. It's they who have given a rosy picture of their deeds. But there too has been a muffled, unheard symphony, a latent tremor of knowledge of the fair sex that is ever thirsty to articulate their thoughts and emotions. They yearn to express their emotions through the art of writing, and they also want to vent their feelings with a maximum creative endeavour, that has endowed literature with a new facet. In *Towards a Feminist Poetics*, Elaine Showalter says: "Feminist criticism can be divided into two distinct varieties. The first type is concerned with woman as reader; with woman as the consumer of male produced literature ... the second type of feminist criticism is concerned with woman as writer -with woman as the producer of textual meaning with the history, themes, genres, and structures of literature by women."

In many of Munro's stories, we have narrators who are themselves writers and artists. The double bind of being a woman and a writer can be seen in many of Munro's protagonists' divided attitude towards writing. Although they love language, they are apprehensive about writing. This is, undoubtedly a positive move on the part of women but there are so many ups and downs that the women are confronting each day, not only in their personal life but also in the field of writing. For instance, the writer -protagonist in *The Office* offers a set of reasons for procuring an office of her own outside her house. This story echoes Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own* in which she says that a woman must have money and a room of one's own if she wants to write. Same is the case with the protagonist of the story, *The Office*. She, like most other women writers yearns to ascertain for her own space, where in she would feel at home to pen down her thoughts. But she becomes a victim to the malicious house owner's undue care for her. The protagonist once thinks that she ought to have an office, which is a simple but an audacious decision, for she is a fiction writer, who finds it difficult to prosecute her passion staying at home. She, while ironing a shirt, informs her husband of her enterprising idea of owning an office who is watching television sitting in the living room. Though she has a pleasant house at the brow of a sea shore, she is unable to continue her writing because of the frequent visits of her friends. It does not matter however I put it. The words create their presence of silence, the delicate moment of exposure. But the people are very kind (*Office* 59). The silence of her house is quickly absorbed by the solicitude of the friendly voices crying variously, who disturb her with their incessant questions and leave the house exhaust with their shock of consolatory phrases. That is why she says, "I want an office for" (*Office* 60). Even though she has a typewriter, a little pencil, some paper, a table and a chair in the corner of her bedroom, she says she wants an office, for it sounds dignity, peace and purposefulness and importance to her. She emphatically asserts that a house is alright for a man to work in. "He brings his work into the house. A place is cleared for it. It rearranges as best as it can around him. Everybody recognises that his work exists. He is not expected to attend a phone call, to find out the lost things, to know why children are crying and to feed the cat. He can shut his door (*Office* 60)."

Supposing, the same is done by a woman and the children know that their mother is behind that door, the very thought of it outrages them. This act of hers would be considered an offence against the nature. "A house is not same to a woman. She is not someone who walks into the house, to make use of it, and will walk out again. She is the house; there is no separation possible (*Office*

60).” But for the story, *The Office*, house plays an important role in Munro's stories. Many of her characters are seen safeguarding their houses, for they believe that a house is their private domain and wish to have a complete control over it. Michel Foucault, in his essay, *Of Other Spaces* says: “*The present epoch will perhaps be above all the epoch of space. Space which today appears to form the horizon of our concerns, our theory, our systems, is not an innovation; space itself has a history in Western experience and it is not possible to disregard the fatal intersection of time with space.*” The image of the house plays a significant part in women's writing. Women's writing enacts the drama of enclosure and escape. In *The Poetics of Space*, Gaston Bachelard said, “The house image would appear to have become the topography of our inmost being”. For Virginia Woolf, too, the image of the house has great significance. In *The Years*, the Pargiter House seems large enough while the family is still living there. The house symbolises permanence and stability although elegance is missing. But after the family has broken up, the house becomes a symbol of decay. When Eleanor puts the house for sale, she realises why there are no takers. When she visits the basement where their old servant had stayed for forty years, she feels ashamed: “No wonder the house would not let. It had one bathroom and a basement and there all those different people had lived boxed up together telling lies (216).” In the second section *Time Passes* with Mrs. Ramsay's death, the house falls into decay. Only when some family members return to the house searching for their dead mother is the house partially restored.

The house, as Susan Jackel says, “Is a recurrent motif as it is a necessity of life”. Alice Munro makes an obsessive use of ‘house’ in her stories. In Munro's stories the house is used as a focus of various values' for instance, in *The Time of Death* the kitchen in Leona Parry's house stinks. When Patricia, her daughter, goes into the kitchen, she finds the whole place dirty and messed up: “She kicked at a crust of porridge that had dried on the linoleum . . . What's it always a mess around here for?” and she determines to clean this place up . . . It never gets cleaned up like other houses (*Time* 94).” whereas Mrs. McGee's house where the children have to stay overnight may not be: “As nice as some of the houses uptown but it was covered on the outside with imitation brick and inside it had an imitation fireplace as well as a fern in a basket; it was not like the other houses along the highway (*Time* 95).” Similarly, Mrs. Fullerton in *The Shining Houses* also protects her place of living and asserts that “Husbands maybe come and go, but a place you've lived fifty years is something else (*Shining* 21).”

*Boys and Girls* is another story which documents the idea of self-esteem and self-actualisation that screw up a person's level of confidence and not to leave it perfectly voices the female psyche of her space and territories. All through the story, the narrator's father-a fox farmer, is seen with his bloody overalls on, who pulls through his life in blood, for he raised silver foxes in Peru; and in the fall and early winter, when their fur was prime, he killed them and skinned them and sold their pelts to the Hudson's Bay Company or the Montreal Fur Traders. Munro passes a scathing remark on the whole pelting operation of killing, skinning, and preparation of the fur, because the strong primitive odour of which keeps saturating all parts of the house even long after the pelting is over making it reassuringly seasonal like the oranges and the pine needles. The line: “These companies supplied us with heroic calendars to hang, one on each side of the kitchen door (*Boys* 111).” has a latent suggestion that people are wild enough to prosecute any atrocious activity caring little about propriety to make their both ends meet, as a matter-of-fact, they callously proclaim their heroism by pluming the hang-outs in their houses. Not to leave, it also alludes to the point, how women are limited just to their kitchens and are made oblivious of the world beyond them, whereas to the men the whole vista seems to be unfolding before them, to proudly exhibit their heroism, forgetting the fact that, both kitchen and the people in it are equally important in sourcing and propping their heroism to shoot up without any hampers. In spite of everything, a woman is no other than the house; there is no possible separation. To any woman, her house is the place of comfort and solace, because it is the sole thing that befits her imagination. Indeed, Munro's women are very careful about safeguarding their little space of privacy from being trampled upon. They are so resolute in this issue that they

hardly bear any intruder, daring to encroach their premises. Be their own kith and kin, they would swiftly be bumped out. That is why, the narrator's mother scorns at her own little son, Laird, who comes to her dining table with a streak of blood: "Well I don't want to hear about it, and don't come to my table like that (*Boys* 127)." To append a bit more, the girl narrator too endorses the view of having an elbow room, purely consecrated in their name who voices her mother's words in affirmation: "In fact she (her mother) disliked the whole pelting operation that was what the killing, skinning, and preparation of the furs was called--and wished it did not have to take place in the house (*Boys* 111)." Hence, Munro, through her primal women, comes down heavily upon the world and successfully establishes the identity of the marginalized.

The writer protagonist of *The Office*, finally, resolves to gratify her wish that is at the bottom of her heart. So, she gets a house for twenty dollars a month, and sets up her office for her private use at the weekends and sometimes in the evenings. To an extent she is glad of owning an office for her personal use, and wants to be free from all kinds of responsibilities, and says: "I did not look at him. I had not planned in taking an office to take responsibilities of knowing any more human beings (*Office* 64)." However precautious and proactive she is in foreseeing her future, she becomes a victim to Mr. Malley, the owner of the office, who deceptively says: "Then we'll do our best to see you're comfortable here (*Office* 63)" which, as a matter-of-fact, is an ironical affirmation, for it is he who becomes a sole cause of her leaving the rented house for good. The word "him", referred to in the above quote, is no other than Mr. Malley, who is an uninvited and unwanted invitee who takes undue advantage of her and becomes a major hamper in her pursuit of becoming a successful writer. She comes to her office for the first time the following weekend with all her bag and baggage – a type writer, yellow jug etc. She starts brooding over with satisfaction. Soon the impregnable shadow of intervention comes in her way; Mr. Malley starts explaining to her about the things that in no way affect her. To quote him: "*What you want is a nice easy chair to sit in while you are waiting the inspiration to hit.... There is a bit of carpet rolled in the corner down there (Office 64).*" She, moreover, has a tendency to placate people who she dislikes for no good reason or simply does not want to know, hoping foolishly that he would go away. She soon gets tired of him and urges him to not to disturb her or bother her any more. When he has gone she feels better, even a little exhilarated at her victory and tells herself that: "*He would have had to be discouraged sooner or later, it was better to have it over with at the beginning (Office 65).*" However, self-directed and potential the women may be, they are often sacrificed to the masculine passions. The next weekend, he sneaks into her office with an exaggerated humiliation and tries to compensate his previous intervention with a tea pot and a home plant but the narrator is not interested in them. Mr. Malley doesn't stop his ridiculous behaviour towards her. He actually desires to have his life story written, he continues to offer her a gift after a gift. This is akin to the flying serpent that seduced the Eve of Eden. Unlike the first mother, the protagonist of the story is so clever and mature in her dealings with him; however, she finds it very difficult to turn herself away from his obsequious hunger. One day she foolishly comes on her toes and opens the lock of her room fearing Mr. Malley would hear the clinging noise of the keys but he soon appears before her with a nonsensical excuse. Besides this, she even finds him in her office when she has finished her work there which really outrages her. It becomes very hard for her to get him out of her sight; hence she literally shuns him. When Mr. Malley comes to her office and finds the office to be locked from within, she doesn't pay any heed to his chummy cajoling knocks and keeps on typing fast, biting her lips tight. She tries not to look at his face either. She takes the manuscripts home. Foaming with rage, Mr. Malley writes notes on her door and accuses her, saying that her presence at the office has been causing a lot of disturbance to his ailing wife. One afternoon he knocks on her door when she has just got in and taken her coat off. This is another kind of assault towards her. He asks her to follow him to the wash room that she has been using it since her arrival. Taking this as an advantage, he vicariously starts accusing her, stating that she has spoiled the walls of the washroom by the marks of her lipstick for which she holds no accountability. She tries her best to explain to him that the washroom doesn't have any key and there



is a possibility of some boys coming over there after her departure and might have done this mischief. Mr. Malley who is hostile with her gives a deaf ear to her explanations. Being helpless she can only run back to her room and packs all her belongings up and leaves the place at once. Nevertheless, she belongs to tough willed maternity of the grandmother in *A Trip to the Coast* and the unflinching courage of Leona Parie in *The Time of Death*, for she too is prepared to hire another office to have a reconnaissance in the sexist paradigms who says: “*I have not yet found another office. I think that I will try one day . . . (Office 73).*”

Eventually, it is he who gets defeated at the end in his attempts to follow the errand ways to accomplish his selfish motifs. In effect, the story portrays Mr. Malley's betrayal of trust. This is the plight of the women across the globe, despite the women being oppressed for ages; they have come out to voice their agonies that have long been suppressed. The woman who wants to ascertain that she wants to have a private space, where in she can talk to herself though not to others, is also being deprived of. Any woman who desires to have a private room may not be free and happy even after having it. To put the same in other words, whether a woman is in or out, she doesn't have freedom to proclaim that she is intellectually free to speak her mind. The same is seen all through the story *The Office*. Though her desire of owning an office for herself is materialized, soon she is forced to leave it for good.

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## 65. Gwendolyn Brooks: A Phoenix of African-American Cultural Dialogue

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Gwendolyn Elizabeth Brooks, the distinguished Black woman poet of the twentieth century America is known for her sensitive portrayal of the lives of ordinary urban Blacks<sup>2</sup> and their encounter with racism, classism<sup>3</sup> and poverty. From the very beginning of her poetic career she has shown acute consciousness of and responsibility towards her community through her representation. But the duality of the Black writer need not be reiterated that among those poets Gwendolyn Brooks like W.E.B. DuBois is caught between the Black and white worlds in the early days of her poetic career. While DuBois wrote in the beautiful impressionistic style of world's literary masters, Brooks's complex and rhythmic verse reflects the telling influence of the metaphysical complexities of John Donne and the word magic of T.S.Eliot, E.E.Cummings and Ezra Pound. But afterwards many critics believed that her penchant for emulating the white literary canon ran counter to her interests in asserting difficulties faced by a Black urban community.<sup>4</sup> DuBois and Brooks made use of the traditional white style to explicate the living conditions of Black Americans who are suffering in the clutches of racial discrimination. Houston A. Baker, Jr. explains the duality of Gwendolyn Brooks as "what one seems to have is white style and black content—two warring ideals in one dark body."<sup>5</sup>

When Gwendolyn Brooks published her first book A Street in Bronzeville in 1945 her racial identity and gender were ignored by reviewers. Though some reviewers like Louis Simpson<sup>6</sup> and Dan Jaffe<sup>7</sup> refute her poetry as Black poetry and prefer to call it American poetry ignoring her race and sex, her poetry has displayed the characteristics of ghetto experience from the beginning of her career. She responds as a poet to the circumstances of her life and that too differently from whites as well as from Blacks and many other Black poets of her time and before. Don L. Lee in his "Preface" to her autobiography, Report from Part One carefully narrates Brooks's growth of Black consciousness and her corresponding changes in voice and form in keeping with a publicly proclaimed Black identity. He succinctly defines the stance of Black poet more so of Gwendolyn Brooks thus: ...he is an African in America who expresses himself, his blackness with the written word and that the creativity that he possesses is a gift that should be shared with his people and developed to the highest level humanly possible. And that this "art" form in some way should be used in the liberation of his people.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Brooks has deliberately adopted the all inclusive term 'Blacks' instead of Negro or coloured or African-Americans and hence it is adopted.

<sup>3</sup> B.J.Bolden uses the term.

<sup>4</sup> Aimee LaBrie. "Gwendolyn Brooks: Poetic Justice." Bloom's BioCritiques. 64.

<sup>5</sup> Houston A. Baker Jr. BLC.250

<sup>6</sup> Louis Simpson.?

<sup>7</sup> Dan Jaffe.?

<sup>8</sup> RPO.26

No poet can afford to escape his or her racial identity as it goes into one's making as a poet. Though the subject matter of Brooks's early poetry is Black experience and Black lives, her style has been in the tradition of English literature which Lee calls "European." Though the content is Black, the language was not Black English but of the whites which Houston A. Baker sums up as "Black content and white style."<sup>9</sup> That's why her Pulitzer Prize winning Annie Allen was not appealing to the Black readers and critics and Lee hence says: This poem is probably earth-shaking to some, but leaves me completely dry.<sup>10</sup> In her later years Brooks acknowledges her own form as: "It's European."<sup>11</sup> The white style of Brooks has bestowed her with praise from the white critics and also the distinction as the first Black to be honoured with Pulitzer Prize. But her reception in her own Black community is not as warm as it is in the white critical community. Often her 'essential blackness' and her commitment to the cause of representing Black lives have been questioned. During her visit to Russia in one of her conversations she explains 'essential Blacks' as those who do not try to desperately to be white but are "happy to have you notice that they do not look like you."<sup>12</sup> The major reason behind this confusing situation is that her early poetry seems to be fitting in the white, middle-class patterns. However, it cannot be true as her premise has been from the beginning is to represent the Black life as she finds it. From the very beginning Brooks worried both how Blacks should be represented in literature, and how whites misread the Black experience. Don L. Lee feels: "Gwendolyn Brooks at this time, the late Forties, was concerned with the "Universal fact."<sup>13</sup> Hence in her early period she was considered an exception among Black poets—a poet who happens to be a Black than as a Black woman poet. Though she did not express her approval of the titles, she could do little. Don L. Lee justifies her condition as: "We must note that she received major encouragement from *all* quarters to accept, participate and to be grateful for whatever recognition she received."<sup>14</sup> For the white audience her Black identity was secondary. Her Pulitzer Prize brought fame not just as the first African American poet but as the best among the American poets writing at the times. The prize also fetched her following from her own people whereas normally she would not have had access to them. Don L. Lee says: "She attracted those "negro" Blacks who didn't believe that one is legitimate unless one is sanctioned by whites first. The Pulitzer did this."<sup>15</sup>

Actually Brooks had never seen herself in the context of Euro-American poetry but she was being defined in the context of contradictory Euro-American standards. Though Brooks was writing about the Blacks it was for the whites and hence in the white style. In those early years she could not consider herself as an African or an African-American rather merely an American. Though often accused of being Euro-centric in her style and goal, there was strong self-awareness in her early years too than most of her contemporaries with the possible exception of Margaret Walker. However, despite her awareness of her own people, she was trying to accommodate her work and her person to the definitions imposed on her from outside. Her spontaneous reactions to her surroundings could not protect her from the impact of the definitions and poetic directions of the Euro-American world. Her first volume A Street in Bronzeville demonstrates her deep involvement with Black life, Black

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<sup>9</sup> Houston A. Baker Jr.?

<sup>10</sup> Don L. Lee. "Gwendolyn Brooks: Beyond the Wordmaker—The Making of an African Poet." Report from Part One by Gwendolyn Brooks P.?

<sup>11</sup> RPT.97

<sup>12</sup> RPT.59

<sup>13</sup> RPO.16

<sup>14</sup> RPO.16

<sup>15</sup> RPO.16

experiences and hopes. Though most of the Black writers were craving for white approval, Brooks maintained self-restraint at least to write about her own people, if not write for them. The poetry of her pre-Nineteen Sixty Seven period is only a process of becoming a conscious African poet or a conscious African woman in America who chose poetry as her major craft. However, Gwendolyn Brooks defines her pre-1967 poetry as “conditioned to the times and the people.”<sup>16</sup> Her poetry of the period is only a reaction to the American reality which has always been a battle for the Black Americans. Don L. Lee feels that “the medium she worked in was that of the unexpected”<sup>17</sup> in those times when the Blacks were writing to accommodate themselves in white definitions. He says: Her movement into poetry is a profound comment on her self-confidence and speaks to the poetic-vision she possessed. The fact that she chose to be a poet denotes that her view of the “whirlwind” was serious and challenging –yet conditioned.<sup>18</sup> Annie Allen shows Brooks’s manifold concern about how Blackness is constructed and perceived from outside. The form and language of the poem are not Black but of the white European tradition. Sujanne Juhasz feels: “The white language is being used to legitimize a black heroine.”<sup>19</sup> The “heightened diction” of the blank verse is employed to ‘validate the black girl as true heroine of this poem.’<sup>20</sup> Though, often her post-1967 period is credited with her awakening into Black consciousness, Brooks in her multi faceted roles as a woman, Black, teacher, and poet gave her voice to a solidarity that begins to resolve the triple bind of a Black woman poet who would be heard as a poet rather than a victim of the racial oppression.

The decade of 1960s has been a period of turbulence and transformation for America, for Blacks as well as for Brooks in which she became more aware of and entwined in politics and social movements. A moment of new vision in the career of Brooks occurred in the spring of 1967 when she attended Black Writers’ Second Conference at Fisk University in Nashville, Tennessee. Gwendolyn Brooks’s first encounter with the New Blackness of the young Black poets and playwrights as LeRoi Jones (Amiri Baraka) and Ron Milner at the Black writers’ conference at Fisk University in 1967 brought about a “full public transformation from Negro to a Black.”<sup>21</sup> All presenters in the conference were active in the Black revolution and they stirred the audience with their zeal and commitment to both literature and social change. The conference was presenting a new phenomenon of Black nationhood and Black revolution rather than the popular notions of Black white unity. Rather than despairing about her distance and irrelevance from the young who would just barely respect anyone’s mainstream credentials, she listened and began to bridge the “generation gap.” The vigorous provocative speeches and poetry readings of the young Black writers had awakened her into a new Black consciousness and she reflects as:

...until 1967 I had sturdy ideas about writing and about writers which I enunciated sturdily...until 1967 my own blackness did not confront me with a shrill spelling itself.<sup>22</sup>

Her association with the young Blacks after sixties made her conscious of herself. They were the catalysts in creating the new insights into herself and in turn they were hope for her mission of fighting for freedom. Brooks left the gathering with a new political consciousness and artistic

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<sup>16</sup> ?

<sup>17</sup> RPO.15

<sup>18</sup> RPO.15

<sup>19</sup> Sujanne Juhasz.152

<sup>20</sup> Sujanne Juhasz.152

<sup>21</sup> Kathryn V. Lindberg CLC.125. 109.

<sup>22</sup> RPO.73, 84

direction shaped by the tenets of Black cultural nationalism. The impact of the conference has awakened her into a new consciousness and vision about which she modestly comments:

If I hadn't been for these young people, these young writers who influenced me, I wouldn't know what I know about this society. By associating with them I know who I am.<sup>23</sup>

She was so startled at the anger and the proud bearing of the young writers whom she calls "tall walkers" was due to the fact that during 1940s and 1950s she innocently believed that integration was the solution for the Black man's problems. As Harry B. Shaw feels that her new awareness prompts her to denounce integration in which she had before placed so much hope<sup>24</sup> and speaks about Black solidarity for which her grandfather sowed seed before he had died. She describes the transformation that the conference has brought in as:

I — who have 'gone the gamut' from an almost angry rejection of my dark skin by some of my brainwashed brothers and sisters to a surprised queenhood in the new black sun — am qualified to enter at least the kindergarten of new consciousness now. New consciousness had trudge-toward—progress. I have new hopes for myself.<sup>25</sup>

The 'New consciousness' of Gwendolyn Brooks awakened at the Fisk University Black Writers' Conference brought in a new dimension to her poetry. She began to focus more on writing for Blacks than writing about them for white audiences. Explaining the intensity of newly awakened consciousness she says: "It frightens me to realize that, if I had died before the age of fifty, I would have died a 'Negro' fraction."<sup>26</sup> However, whatever be the transformation that had taken place in Brooks "the source of her poetry would never change"<sup>27</sup> because for Brooks poetry was not defined by just form and language but "Poetry is life distilled."<sup>28</sup>

Brooks did not remain idle enjoying her high position and as a poet of high respect but chose to transform a Black audience into poets or the spokesperson's of the race. She started revising the conventional role of a poet. In her poetry she critiqued the old while celebrating her new position. Returning to Chicago from Fisk University, Brooks began a poetry workshop in her home that included members of a Chicago street gang called the Blackstone Rangers and younger poets like Sonia Sanchez, Don L. Lee and Nikki Giovanni. Nikki Giovanni and Don L. Lee are among those young Blacks who inherited her political consciousness. Having inherited Brooks's later political consciousness Giovanni spoke for her people in their own language. The poet and person of Brooks seamlessly coincide as she associates herself with the life of the common man. She feels: "A long life has taught me that many of the Lit-tul (sic) people are large enough to merit my salute, my practical gratitude."<sup>29</sup> Regarding the Young men of the Blackstone Rangers group she says: "They taught me many things that I had not known before." (Conversations.75)

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<sup>23</sup> RPO.?

<sup>24</sup> HBS.31

<sup>25</sup> RPO.86

<sup>26</sup> ?

<sup>27</sup> Amy Sickles. "Biography of Gwendolyn Brooks." Bloom's BioCritiques: Gwendolyn Brooks by Harold Bloom, Chelsea House Publishers, Philadelphia.2005

<sup>28</sup> Interview 1984.

<sup>29</sup> RPT.140

After 1967 her poetry would not have become so forceful if she had not convinced herself to proceed for self-construction on the path of the New Black confronted her in the Fisk University conference and in the line she began working with groups of younger and exclusively Black young people. The anthology Jump Bad: A New Chicago Anthology (1971) edited by Brooks is a result of her community poetry workshops conducted in Chicago from 1967 onwards. Her post-1967 work characterizes the changes from supplication to self-assertion because the Black literature before the influence of Baraka was addressed to the white people and seemed to be crying for material help from the white people. She announces a new prophetic writing in terms of the new Black consciousness and the affirmation of the beauty of her own dark skin. Another technical development in the poet's bolder movement is her initiative into free verse which is appropriate to the situation. The technique is more noticeable and surer in achievement in the next volume In the Mecca. However rhymes dot some of the poems like "A Bronzeville Mother Loiters..." and "To Be in Love" in Selected Poems. She became a part of her society and gradually she has matured into a re-directing voice of her people which is evident in In the Mecca, her epic of Black humanity. The book exhibits various facets of the Black society for which she makes use of all her technical skills.

The immediate product of her 'new consciousness,' In the Mecca a long poem based on Black life in Chicago's old Mecca building was published in 1968. Acknowledging the grandeur of the subject of the poem Don L. Lee says: "This was to be her epic of black humanity."<sup>30</sup> The volume was considered a transitional work because she abandoned the traditional poetic forms which she employed in her earlier work and turned to free verse and increased her use of vernacular to make her poetry more accessible to the common Black readers. Her community consciousness comes to foreground in the volume In the Mecca and it requires a language which expresses the developments of common bonds of the Blacks. Her target audience are those who are not trained to understand poetry yet she has to write for them by conviction and hence the language in the volume extends from the realistic to the expressionistic. It also unites the disinherited of the Mecca building with the disinherited across the universe. Though the poem contains rage, its central emotion is compassion, and Mrs. Sallie a character in In the Mecca is bound within a traditional mode of responding and does not undergo a change of consciousness. Largely the poems in the volume In the Mecca are about the new consciousness and the raw experiences of the Black community. In the two sermon poems the poet moves to the centre of the Black struggle and urges them to build solid foundations for Black unity and to bear the pains of the struggle.

The poem contains a wide range of Black characters and themes. The poem is based on the experiences of Brooks when she worked in the Chicago tenement building known as the Mecca. Poverty, unfulfilled dreams, and violence figure prominently as themes of In the Mecca. The locale of the poem, Mecca building is a microcosm in which we find a galore of representative Black characters. The title poem describes a mother's frantic search for her missing daughter, whom, to her dismay, discovers murdered by a fellow resident of the sprawling Mecca building. To raise the Black consciousness and to strengthen it she mythicizes by writing poems on the Black heroes like Medgar Evers, Malcolm X and Martin Luther King Jr. The galore of individual characters presented throughout the three parts of the poem are many facets of the Black community. Hence the murders are juxtaposed along with Black heroes like Malcolm X and Medgar Evers. She has employed all her technical tools like blank verse, free verse, 'prose verse,' off-rhyme, random rhyme, long-swinging free verse, the couplet, the sonnet and the ballad. The volume was nominated for National Book Award. When critics enquired if the change in her work signalled her emergence as a 'protest poet,' Brooks said: No matter what the theme is, I still want the poem to be a poem, not just a piece of propaganda.<sup>31</sup> After the publication of In the Mecca Brooks succeeded Carl Sandburg upon his death as Poet Laureate of Illinois in 1968 and she continued in the position until 2000.

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<sup>30</sup> RPO.22

<sup>31</sup> ?

Next in Riot the poems effectively address the communal concerns of the Black community and the white upper class is satirized in the character of John Cabot. In the subsequent poetry the poet becomes a member of the group. As part of her mission to help inspire the bonding of Blacks to each other, she wished to write poetry which could be appreciated by the people in the taverns who ordinarily do not read poetry. This ambition required some additional emphasis on simplicity. After the publication of In the Mecca, as a gesture of her commitment to Black solidarity she wanted to support Black publishers. Her commitment to Black solidarity had led her to a shift away from a major publishing house, Harper and Row which gave her a secure position to a smaller Detroit based company Broadside Press owned by the Black poet Dudley Randall which gave her no financial guarantees. The new turn of socio-political consciousness initiated in In the Mecca of Gwendolyn Brooks has become explicit and conspicuous in Riot, her first book from the Broadside Press in 1969. Her real successor Don L. Lee really explains what has happened to Brooks in the 1967 Fisk University Conference. It is Brooks the individual who dies and resurrects like a phoenix into the community. Hence then onwards Brooks always portrays the community as a whole rather than the individual portraits. In the Mecca is the Black microcosm, Riot is the picture of the enraged community, In Montgomery is the picture of the community during the post-Civil Rights era and Winnie is the ultimate Pan Africanism of Brooks. Thus Brooks the individual dissolves into the community to regenerate as the face of the community. In the words of Lee: “the *only* thing that an individual can do individually is die. Nobody ever built anything individually.”<sup>32</sup>

Before she started her publications with Broadside Press, other young writers began leaving Broadside Press in the interest of their personal growth on the assumption that the Black Arts Movement was dead. But the death of the Black Arts Movement as some young Black writers were professing was only an excuse to go after green pastures. Like the Black nationalist writers who believe in their racial identity and try to explicate their racial pride in their writings Gwendolyn Brooks also defined herself as a Black poet and resolved to use her art for the sake of her people and gave the same direction to the young generation towards intellectual and cultural liberation. Brooks says: “My name is Gwendolyn Brooks. I’m a Black poet – you can see that.”<sup>33</sup> Black women by straightening their hair and bleaching their complexions and narrow their noses and spell their eyes light gray or green or cerulean they seem to be announcing that what nature has “afforded is poor, is sub-standard, is inferior to Caucasian glory. But Brooks never betrays her Blackness more over sacrifices her privileges to protect the same which she knows best. She has achieved her goal by inculcating the same spirit in her successors like Sonia Sanchez and Don L. Lee to name a few.

Riot is a long poem in three parts demonstrates her commitment for the Black community by associating herself with the newest of Black publishing companies, Broadside Press of Dudley Randall. The book is mainly based on the riots that occurred in American cities especially in Chicago after the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr. in 1968. The assassination of the American prophet of non-violence unleashed violence in North America and hence Gwendolyn Brooks chooses the statement of Martin Luther King: “A riot is the language of the unheard” as the epigraph of the poem which suggests that for her the violence caused by the Blacks is not an act of destruction but an act of giving vent to their spiritual hunger.

The first part of the poem “Riot” describes John Cabot an imaginary character as symbolic of white affluent America. The Blacks assault John Cabot and shock him to death. The killing of John Cabot is a symbolic action of the poets’ departure from the ‘European-derived aesthetic assumptions.’ The second part of the poem “The Third Sermon on the Warpland” deals with the new message of

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<sup>32</sup> RPO.25

<sup>33</sup> RPT.66

violence as an act of redemption. The epigraph ‘Phoenix’ reminds the readers that fiery destruction and death are a prelude to a renewal. The treatment of violence in the poem is more positive and considered an act of redemption for Blacks. The third section of the poem “An Aspect of Love, Alive in Ice and Fire” suggests Brooks’s optimism. She hopes for a utopia where the lovers can meet after the riot is over and the silence is once again reinstated. It is not the characters alone who undergo the change but also the poet who merges into the community and the readers who while reading her poetry shed their self-identity and mature into group identity. Her instructive poems with the titles ‘Sermon,’ ‘Dedication,’ or ‘Preachment’ bear witness to her group consciousness. Her preachment poems suggest her inclusiveness as well as her strategic separatism.

Though she was not received in Africa as one among the natives, she had a come home feeling in Africa and established her feelings that all Blacks are one family. These crystallized feelings gave resulted in her next volume Family Pictures. It is a collection of eight varied poems was published in 1970. The title of the volume is suggestive of Brooks’s new consciousness of Black community as an extended family. She uses the term “Family” in the place of “Blackness.”<sup>34</sup> The volume depicts the vignettes of various characters of various stages of life and society like children, youngsters, artists, preachers, lovers, parents, politicians and others. The lead-off poem “The Life of Lincoln West” which deals with the life of a young Black boy who attains self realization, signifies the intimate relationship between the observer-writer and the community. Lincoln West was ill-treated at school. Though his innocent childhood endeared him to all, his dark complexion repelled everybody from him. But at the end of the poem the comments of a white man that Lincoln is ‘the real thing’ comforts and gives him confidence that ‘Black is Beautiful.’ The book ends with the small instructive poem “Speech to the Young.” The volume makes clear her bonds with the Black community and bonds within the community. Her style in the volume moves close to her future verse journalism found in “In Montgomery.” As the poems in Riot and Family Pictures testify, Gwendolyn Brooks was not only asking critical questions but seeking substantive answers. She resolves the puzzle of Black poet’s American identity in the simplest way possible as follows: “On Being An American: In America you feel a little or a lot disoriented, so far as “being Black-and-being-an-American” goes! In the last few decades many citizens have adopted a resistance to adoration of country. And true, a country that for so long endorsed slavery, endorsed lynching, endorsed official segregation, and could be capable of judging scholarly rejection acceptable is not to be blue-ribboned across the board.<sup>35</sup> “But traveling to other countries helps you italicize American positives. Once you get out of the country, whatever your woes, your wobbliness’s, your confusions, your furies, you understand that you are operationally an American. Her American identity nor her Black consciousness do not deprive of her vision for the whole humanity. She says: “OF COURSE I am “concerned,” tightly, “with human welfare and the reduction of suffering...” And I want the people of the world to anticipate ultimate unity, active interest in empathy. I commend a unity of distinct proud pieces.”<sup>36</sup> She continues about her human interest says: “None of this – this interest in and subscription to ALL – can ever turn me from my healthy concern for my Black Extension.”<sup>37</sup> She was very conscious of the contradictions in her own personal life, and as best as possible—living in a contradictory situation in America—began to systematically deal with those contradictions. Every Black individual has to move towards “definition, clarification, connection” of Blackness. (RPT.143)

On surface level Brooks appears to have unchanged but a close study of her work and person will reveal that throughout her she moved from one stage to another towards a more heightened racial

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<sup>34</sup> RPT.127

<sup>35</sup> RPT.129

<sup>36</sup> RPT.131

<sup>37</sup> RPT.131



consciousness. In the early period of career she used to write about the individuals from descriptive point of view. Whereas in her later work after 1967 there is an expression controlled anger. Her world changed, and to some extent, her aesthetics as well. Prior to the Black Arts Movement of the sixties, she considered the polishing of technique to be “the most urgent duty of the Negro poet.” She does not waver in her belief that “a poet has a duty to words and that words can do wonderful things. Some critics believe that she became the most visible and hard working nationally celebrated poet in American literary history.

In the recent writings by Black women there is a shift from confrontation with social forces to intimate male-female encounters. But Brooks feels that the problems the Black women have with the Black men are just family matters and they need to be worked out within the family. These problems must not give chance to white to convince the Blacks that they should split. She feels: “It’s another divisive tactic dragging us from each other, and it’s going to lead to a lot more racial grief. The women are not going to be winners on account of leaving their black men and going to white men, to themselves, or to nobody.”<sup>38</sup> She feels it is the poets’ responsibility to write poems in that direction which Brooks also doing. She feels that her poem in its final form will be a “vehicle by which means life has reached some order, or perhaps it suggests there can be an arrival at some kind or degree of order. May not. It’s not mechanical.”<sup>39</sup>

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- <http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/callaloo/v029/29.2books/brmalewitz.pdf>
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- “Appreciating Gwendolyn Brooks” <http://www.riverdeep.net> July 28th 2005

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<sup>38</sup> Gwendolyn Brooks’ Interview with Claudia Tate (1983) *Conversations*.110

<sup>39</sup> Gwendolyn Brooks’ Interview with Claudia Tate (1983) *Conversations*.110

## 66. Alienation, Exile & Assimilation as Paradigms of Plurality - Yasmine Gooneratne's *A Change of Skies*

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*"He who crosses the ocean may change the skies above him, but not the colour of his soul."*

Yasmine Gooneratne's *A Change of Skies* (1991) dealing as it were with the lives of the displaced migrants is a sparkling debut novel. Gooneratne introduces Bharat a solemn young Asian Professor of English who reluctantly migrates to Australia with his wife, Navaranjani for a five-year visit. The couple subsequently become Barry and Jean. The novel explores the tensions between migrant feelings for the old country and the new. Bharat discovers one day that he is identifying himself as Australia. His response is to travel with his wife to Sri Lanka "to get under the skin of his society again but he finds he doesn't fit in any more." Those who have lived in a place other than the one in which they were born will recognize their experience in parts of the book. The novelist transplants her characters to a new place and shows them trying to strike roots there. One leaves one's country for good, the novelist believes which may in fact be a profoundly liberating experience. Of course, there are those who do not adjust to the unfamiliar, being confident that it has nothing to offer their superior intelligence and culture to which they belong. The novel traces the expatriate experience of Bharat and his wife Navaranjani in Australia, after Bharat accepts the teaching position in Southern Cross University in New South Wales. Running parallel to their experience are the experiences of grand father Edward who reached the Australian shores on the S.S. Devonshire in 1982. Fleeing from a strict father, the rich and respected Mudaliyar of Walanwa and an unsuccessful love affair with his cousin Emily, Edward travels incognito-in fact, as the younger brother of the servant boy Devith. In the cramped conditions of the ship, he works to pay for his passage. In editing the diary maintained by Edward throughout the journey to and stay in Australia, Bharat and his wife discover the common threads that underline all expatriate experience.

*A Change of Skies* attempts to exploit the immigrants problems from their perspective focusing at it were on expatriate experience of the Asians, especially. As an expatriate writer Gooneratne also has to face racial discriminations. She has been living in Australia for the last twenty years and her personal experiences as an immigrant have coloured the protagonist. She is able to project the cultural confusion and confrontation of a multi-racial society. The clash of culture and the need for adaptation is a part of all expatriate experience. An attempt to depict the synthesis of the diversity of cultures into a homogenous mode of living, the novel shows how smooth the process of assimilation can be if one is not fanatically reluctant to embrace the new ideas. Culture clash seems to dominate the minds of people trying to evolve a solution to one's moorings in a new land. There are three possibilities-delink yourself from your past traditions and cling to the new ones; hold your hands or be on the fence. The novel explores all the three options. Bharat and Baba opt for the first. Mr. And Mrs. Koyako opt for the second, whereas Edwina is still undecided and is critical of both Australia as well as Srilanka. The dominant image in the novel is the change of skies. Despite the distance in time and space both Bharat and Navaranjani bring to Australia the same cultural attachments from their anticipation of a racial hostility that will prevent them taking their proper place in the Country. Both the hostility and the superiority provide themes for the extracts from the diaries of Edward Manga-Davasintha, the grandfather of Bharat who, in the last century, ran away from his family home in matara, Ceylon, and enlisted himself with a cargo of Sinhalese labourers being recruited to work in the Queensland cane fields. Through the novel these diaries provide a counter point to the leaves of Bharat and Navaranjani in their new land. Edward is thoroughly

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Anglicized, as is described in the volume of his journals edited by his grandson, and finds the Australian settlers uncouth. He thus discovers the bleak side of the Australian dream, going as a stockman to Western Australia, a dry and desolate place, where he discovers that a score or more of his countrymen had died of heat and thirst only a generation earlier. Although the Sinhalese had taken pains to learn of the country from the Aborigines before embarking on their attempt at settlement, they suffered the consequences of attempting to impose a foreign culture of husbandry on an alien land. Edward has already changed, and although he returns to Sri Lanka, the liberal breadth he acquires from his colonial experience is, as Bharat acknowledges, the foundation of a family tradition that enables them to explain one culture to another. Even though grandfather Edward's travels are important as precedent and counter part experience of Bharat and Navaranjani provides the main theme of the novel. Bharat is an intellectual who reflects on his wife's clarity of understanding to cope with his daily vicissitudes. He realizes that he lacks the easy acceptance of another culture that characterized both Navaranjani and Edward. Instead he chooses his own way of acculturation and responds to his alienation by strenuous endeavours to become an insider. Central to this effort is his decision to change his name, so that he and Navaranjani become Barry and Jean Mundy. Yet it is Jean, the more adaptable who resists this assimilation most violently and effectively accepting her new name while asserting her native identity. The final section of the novel focuses on the quest for identity. Earlier both Bharat and Navaranjani have been involved in the clash of cultures as newcomers in a strange land. In this section, which looks back on the first five years of their residence, they confront the consequences of their choice. As Barry, he decides that the real moment of his decision to leave Sri Lanka was when he decided that he finds an opportunity to make his own choice and adopts the role of cultural communicator. Jean, on the other hand, remains deeply rooted in her native culture and moves with great practicality into the life of the new country. Jean, still, Navaranjani declares the Australians, deep down are really Asians. Their appearance of insensitivity merely conceals their true nature. By acting on this assumption, she breaks through the superficial conviviality of her husband's colleagues to reveal their deeper prejudices and in doing so discloses her own. The admiration she earns for discomfiting the complacent unrighteous is compounded by her triumph at the university open day, where her exhibition of rare books and manuscripts not only earns a profit for the English Department but also confirms her opinion that a common humanity unites Asians and Australians. The mark of this common humanity is the similar and salacious curiosity shown by both parties in a particularly detailed illustrated edition of Kamasutra. Encouraged by these successes Jean accepts the role of supporting her husband while recognizing that she is the one who brings into the new land the old stories that can make sense of the common experience of people of different origins. Similarly at the end of the novel when Barry chooses to set up a school to teach English to other newcomers, Jean provides the true meeting point of cultures by establishing a restaurant and school of cuisine. The change of her own skies has changed her soul and she is now ready to change the skies, or at least the horizons of her new compatriots.

Gooneratne is an ironist whose principal characters become observers as well as actors in their own stories. Her irony is as much a historical reality as a personal stance. Her achievement is to convert this inevitability of perspective into a declaration of human possibility. Her awareness of the contradictions of culture and individual ambition is contemporary but her discovery of potential within the contradiction is post colonial. In recognizing the complex sources of the present she realized the hope that these can generate a future, free of the limitations of the past, but not free of the universal absurdities of the human conditions. People do, she suggests change their souls when they change their skies. More importantly when they change their skies they do not abandon their past but produce a new future and new possibilities. One can observe thus how Gooneratne's novel reaches a comic resolution and becomes a comedy, in which the displaced characters, by entering into the lives of others, produce a community which is located within their new state but represent a nation that goes beyond any boundaries. This conception of a nation as a place of meeting rather than an enclosure provides the basis for a new conception of nationhood appropriate to contemporary interdependent internationalism. Immigration thus becomes a two-way process in which both the

whites and non-whites grow by the interchange and experience. No one is sure as to: How much time does it take for an unfamiliar landscape to invade an individual's mind, take possession of his imagination and change the colour not only of his words but of his soul? In very expatriate's experience "there must rarely have been a moment, a small space in time.....when the anchor was let down, the sail's folded, the landing made" (p.151). As it were acculturation; or 'adoption' of changes in external behaviour begins early enough but 'assimilation' or the ability to react instinctively and emotionally to a culture is a far slower process. Breaking away from one's ethnicity and absorbing the new culture is the only way for survival, suggests the novel. A genetic transformation makes it possible for Jane to decide to reposition stress (p.240). For Jean and Barry's daughter is allowed to grow up in a new country, free of the burdens of the past "(p.321). The experience of exile thus opens beyond the limits of education"(p.285).

Gooneratne's novel is a post-modernist work comprising biography, autobiography, newspaper reports and similar techniques employed to suit the narrator or the occasion. She follows the techniques and jargons of deconstruction and post modernism. Journey or Voyage motives along with filed notes are mentioned. The narrator herself is a write, writing becoming a spring board for narration. Edward wrote a diary, Bharat a guide, Baba a book on cookery, Edwina her field notes. The past and present and similarly Australia and Srilanka are juxtaposed. There is shuttle cock like movement of narrators. Gooneratne herself admits elsewhere: the study of Srilanka's past helped me to come to terms with the inherited conventions and inhibitions that effects all writers of poetry and fiction such as myself. Who work in the English language. It led me to a new awareness of literary developments in cultures other than my own that had been similarly affected by an intensive colonial and imperial experience. One may wonder how does Srilanka's literature fit into the general scheme of Post-Colonial literature? Certain themes recur persistently enough in the work of a large number of writers to make references possible to them in them in general and comparative terms. The rearrangement of ideas concerning modernity, nationalism, politics and the concept of a motherland bring together Indian, Srilanka, and Australian writers. The trauma of exile and emigration links together many others. In the words of Helen Tiffin "a recognizably comparable decolonization pattern in the commonwealth literature especially that of the journey of the former representative of white destiny through the vast new landscape with native of that place could be traced. In the course of the journey the historical colonial pattern of distinction and division is usually reversed. Gooneratne returns to the same image with which she began the novel, the image of the explorer. The world of new and post-colonial literatures is according to her: "a world to be entered, felt and tasted. Our task and our pleasure is to do what we can to make others free citizens of that world by patient and our pleasure is to do what we can to make others free citizens of that world by patient and loving attention to its lineaments.

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## 67. From Silence to Speech: An Assessment of Indian English Fiction by Women

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We have to know where women are, why women have to write the novel, the story of their own domesticity, the story of their own seclusion within the home and the possibilities and impossibilities provided by that. Women write to celebrate their womanhood; they sing women's dream and speak their bodies. For as long as women did not write they were not heard. Women's writing then, is like a raising consciousness. Their writing impacts their very existence in the socio-cultural milieu as it expedites their shift from a marginal position to a central one. Literature is impacted by reality, but its corollary, that reality is molded by literature, is also true. The Indian literary scene, dominated by men as active forces, always had a gap—it told the story of half of humanity through the voice of the other half. In a country where even the political power in the hands of rural and urban uneducated women is used by their men, it becomes very significant to explore the changes brought about in the literary scene by women writers. The shift from women as seen and projected by men, to women as lived and experienced by women was most welcome. This essay proposes to take stock of the ways in which the fiction scene is impacted by the Indian women writers of English.

In its nascent stage, Indian English Fiction had men writers who focused on a man's world where the presence of women was only incidental. Women appear in this fiction only as a necessary tool to be used by men. There were few writers like R.K. Narayan or M.R. Anand who bothered to take up some secondary women characters, but the depiction was not authentic because: (a) men in did not have access to the insides of a house which was the only space women moved in; (b) only the wearer knows where the shoe pinches and these shoes were certainly not worn by men; and, (c) howsoever sensitive these writers may have been they still did not consider women's lives as exciting enough to become apt material for fiction. There were writers who chose women protagonists, but their portrayal of them was too romanticized to compare with the real women. The suffering wife, the weeping widow, or the sacrificing mother were the only images found in fiction. In these novels the sita , pativrata image of women found acceptance, and submissiveness was still considered a virtue. There was no room for a woman who was not virtuous. Women either upheld conservative ideals or they were labeled immoral. Traditional moral aesthetics dominated these narratives.

Women's entry into the writing arena made way for the shattering of the sita and pativrata image. Suddenly there was a shift in the traditional virtue syndrome. Instead of extolling the so called virtues of the sacrificing, submissive woman with tears in her eyes but not a word of complaint on her lips, these writers started presenting the fighter spirit of women in their novels. The suffering wife now gave way to the demanding one. Female perspective made it easier to articulate many an emotion not acknowledged in the body of literature hitherto.

A close look at the women novelists of Indian English Fiction (IEF) may draw one's attention towards certain interesting facts. Almost all women novelists write from their personal experience; almost all of them end up in one or the other form of feminism. Some of them give us their autobiography in fiction, and virtually all of them identify with their female characters. It is not surprising, then, that their female characters tend to overshadow all other characters. How could the writer remain indifferent to what the woman experienced? Even T.S. Eliot would not blame her for presenting a record of her own experiences through her novels.

The beginning in IEF saw a spurt of writings where women characters, on the one hand, are more conservative than their men in terms of their strict observance of religion and caste norms; and on the other hand, they are more modern than their men inasmuch as they are more inspired and motivated by the supreme religion known as humanity. The flexibility and adaptability of these women to their surroundings derives from this belief. These Indian English writers had their inspiration in regional writers like Subhadra Kumari Chauhan, Shivani, Mahashweta Devi, Manjul Bhagat. It is important to trace the evolution of fictional women and their creators just as it is important to see the factors responsible for the “irruption of the feminine.” The credit for writing the first English novel in India goes to Krupabai Sathianadhan whose *Kamala: The Story of a Hindu Child-Wife* was published in 1894. The protagonist, though apparently an apostle of sacrifice and docility, grows into an independent woman strong enough to stand her grounds as also to protect other women from being crushed by the parochial norms. Published in the wake of the famous Rukhmabai case the novel took up the reformist agenda of its time. It was certainly a good beginning for the Indian English novel with feminist agenda. Sathianadhan also published *Saguna* which gave a realistic account of the life of a Christian woman. Both the novels together established women’s solidarity cutting across the lines religion.

“It is fair to say that the silence female postcolonial writers manifest in their works is actually a sound “silence”, their pens make such a sound of “silence” resound in the world of letters. Thence, “silence” is no longer “silent” the colonial females seen in the “silence” in postcolonial texts are in fact crying revolt against the mainstream society from the periphery where they subsist.”

Shashi Deshpande occupies quite a unique place in the history of IEF inasmuch as it was for the first time in her novels that the middle class urban Indian woman became the subject matter of fiction. She is one of the few indigenous writers IEF has seen who retain the Indian sensibility in their plots and characters. The quest plot operates in Deshpande’s novels at various levels. There is Sarita in *The Dark Holds No Terrors* who lives nightmares after nightmares when her husband chooses to vent his frustrations on her by indulging in a sadist pleasure. Even before marriage Sarita’s plight may be compared with the privileged position of her brother Dhruv. While Dhruv is the apple of all eyes, Sarita does not exist as a person in her own right; she is merely a playmate and a governess to Dhruv. So complete is the discrimination that even in his death, Sarita does not find any respite. The simple rule is that as a girl she had no right to survive the ordeal that claimed her brother. This rule applies even after marriage when she becomes more successful than her husband; she is punished because she has no right to supersede a man.

The writer uses the metaphor of silence in many of her novels to justify the circular movement of her women who move on only to come back from where they started. Deshpande’s Sarita and Desai’s Sita are one inasmuch as both find a voice of their own only to realize there are no listeners. Their initial will to move on is counteracted upon by their passivity to patriarchal construction of space for women. In embracing this space they adhere to the feminine aesthetics. Homecoming runs through the entire corpus of Deshpande’s fiction. The ambivalent stance of women writers can be seen in the construction of all protagonists of Deshpande. Sarita wonders: “Why do we travel, not in straight lines but in circles? Do we come to the same point again and again” Deshpande’s uniqueness comes from her women’s belief in the message of Bhagvadgita : *Yathechhasi tatha kuru*, which gives them the right ‘to do as they wish.’ Freedom of choice is the most important freedom and it is this that makes truly emancipated beings.

What many Deshpande like writers in India have aspired to do may be evaluated in the light of Raman Seldon’s clarion call: “Write yourself. Your body must be heard. Only then all the immense resources of the unconscious spring forth [...] Since writing is the place where subversive thought can germinate. Women must uncensor herself, recover her goods, her organs, her immense bodily territories which have been kept under seal. She must throw off her guilt.” Female perspective

made it easier to articulate many an emotions not acknowledged hitherto. The growth from childhood into adolescence, the first awareness of a feminine body at puberty—are situations that Deshpande depicts verily and beautifully. She also gives mother-daughter relationship a new dimension in her portrayal of the same in *Kamala-Sarita (The Dark Holds No Terrors)* and *Inni-Urmi-Vanaa-Mandira / Sakutai-Kalpana (The Binding Vine)*.

In Desai's *Fasting, Feasting* we had Uma who was practically disowned by her mother in terms of her exploitation of the daughter as a domestic servant; in Deshpande's *The Dark Holds No Terrors* we have a mother praying for her daughter's unhappiness and the daughter saying, "If you are a woman I don't want to be one." Judith Kegan Gardiner's "mother villain" comes to the mind while studying Deshpande's mother characters. Deshpande's characters are ensconced in the entwining interpersonal relationships. Her latest novel *Moving On* however goes a step ahead where Manjari the protagonist happens to break all relationships and move ahead alone and independent refusing to take the crutches of re-marriage that Raja offers. Manjari's moving on in another search sums up the contemporary women's unending search for selfhood. In the words of Manjari: "The search is doomed to failure. We will continue to be incomplete, ampersands all of us. Yet, the search is what it's all about...the search is the thing." Mother-daughter relationship which had been shorn of its glory since women started telling their own stories, now starts taking an ugly turn where the gender-identity is crushed because of the masculine pattern of separation entering into the feminine pattern of connection.

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## 68. New Wave Feminist Writers: A New Perspective in Portrayal of Women in Myth and History: A Study on Chitra Divakaruni Benarjee's 'Palace of Illusions' and Indu Sundaresan's 'Feast of Roses'

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The novels *Palace of Illusions* written by Chitra Divakaruni and *Feast of Roses* of Indu Sundaresan depict women protagonists. They are disparate in time, place and culture. In *Palace of Illusions* Chitra Divakaruni narrates the story of Draupadi from her birth when she comes out of the sacrificial fire holding the hand of her brother. The story continues with her Swyamvar where Arjuna wins the contest and wins her hand but with a quirk of fate she becomes the wife of all the brothers. The writer introduces the character of Karna as a warrior who could have won the contest but was not allowed to do so. Draupadi's secret passion for Karna continues throughout the novel and she wonders how her life would have been had Karna succeeded. Her friendship with Krishna is her anchor to hang on to the realities in this mundane world. It appears to be the story of a divine woman who took the form of human being but her emotions reflect the story of a woman caught in the trajectories of a man's world. Her entire life is directed by the decisions taken by her father and later by her five husbands. She is a spectator of her life. On the other hand in *Feast of Roses* Indu Sundaresan portrays the character of Nurjahan, the twentieth wife of Jehangir. In this novel her role is not limited to the role of a wife. She is ambitious and uses her intelligence and takes over the reins of the vast Mughal kingdom into her hands. In the end with the death of Jehangir, she loses her power and dies in exile. In this novel the author weaves a love story where the woman, in spite of her limitation of living in a Harem behind the veil, could aspire and achieve the power of ruling the entire country.

Both the novels, in their perception and approach are the examples of feminist ideology. The term feminism is originated from the Latin word 'Femina' meaning woman. Feminist movement started in 18th century. Initially it is a political movement with women struggling for their political rights. Marxist ideology has given an impetus to this movement, and this socio-political movement gathered momentum to accelerate into a struggle against patriarchal oppressions. Women challenging sexism in art, literature and even in language led to a radical change in their approach in scrutinizing and analyzing literature, history and even myth, legends and fables. Virginia Woolfe's book *A room of one's own* is recognized as one of the first important feminist document. She questioned the idea of ideal womanhood and threw light on the state of women in male dominated society. In the post war period Simone de Beauvoir's *Le deuxieme Sexe* (1949) can be considered as an important step in the development of feminist theory. She examined and questioned social, economic, cultural, political and intellectual status and condition of women in the patriarchal society. Her remark 'One is not born but rather becomes woman. No biological, psychological or economic fate determines the figure that the female presents in the society. It is the civilization as a whole that produces this creature ... which is described as feminine.' (1) This book which was translated into English as *Second sex* set a definite methodology and theory to feminism. In 1960's feminism soon became a subject of debate in academic and literary circles. Many writers like Betty Friedan in her *The Feminine Mystique* (1965), Mary Ellman *Thinking about women* (1968), Kate Millet's *Sexual Position* (1969) questioned and criticized gender differentiation and the needs of women. Among many critics of that era, Elaine Showalter in the treatise *The New Feminist Criticism: Essays on Women Literature and Theory* (1985) and in her later essays coined a new word 'gynocriticism'. She divides the theory into two - feminist critic where woman as reader and gynocritics with women as writers. Thus both aspects of

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interpretation and writing have been taken into consideration in critical evaluation of a text. N.Krishnaswamy, John Varghese and Sunita Mishra summarizes the theory in the following words: *“There is a conscious and concentrated attempt towards presenting biological differences and their implications, valuating women’s experience, thinking the canons of text, discourse and language reading the presentations of conscious and the unconscious, and recognizing the socio-cultural, economic and political conditions in the society. The content includes various fields like ‘the history, styles, themes, genres, and the structures of writing by women, the psychoanalysis of female creativity, the trajectory of the individual or collective female career and the evolution of laws of female tradition.’”(2)*

The above analysis helps us to focus on the women writers’ choice of the story, their method of narration and their approach towards the characters. It is very interesting to note that both the writers have expressed their reasons for portraying the characters with a gender perspective. In the introduction to the novel *Chitra* Divakaruni says that while reading Mahabharatha or reading the stories of Mahabharatha she was not satisfied with the portrayal of woman characters like Kunti, Gandhari and Draupadi. *“They remained shadowy figures, their thoughts and motives mysterious, their emotions portrayed only when they affected the lives of male heroes, their roles ultimately subservient to those of their father, or husband, brothers or sons.”(3)* Indu Sundaresan in an afterword to her novel *Twentieth wife*, which is the first book in the trilogy, says, *“Although alluded to her(Nurjahan) only briefly in his(Jehangir’s) memoirs she was most important person in his life till his death. My interest piqued. Who was the woman hidden behind the veil around whom legend swirled wraith like? Why was she so firmly placed in his affections? Why did she get so much power?”(4)* It is very interesting to note that both the authors have chosen women who influenced the course of history or epic.

Both the writers have developed the characters to present them as strong determined and intelligent human beings. In *Palace of Illusions* Chitra Divakaruni sticks to the epic to a large extent but adds a twist to the story by adding an imaginative question – Which man does Draupadi really love? Another major question which troubles her was who truly loves her. The epic is told by Draupadi as she sees the events unfold before her eyes. Hence there is highly feminist voice questioning the decisions of her father and brother. Dhri, her brother, tells her the story of how Karna became a king and he doesn’t want him to win in the swayamvar. Draupadi asks him why Krishna was afraid to tell her this story. Dhri says that Krishna is afraid that Draupadi might become too sympathetic towards Karna. This incident tells us that Chitra Divakaruni wants to present a woman who can form her own opinions and might act accordingly. During the swayamvar when she steps on to the dais the writer writes, *“I went, but all the way loyalty and desire dueled inside me. If Arjun wasn’t here, what right had Krishna and Dhri have to insist that I not choose Karna?”(5)* This is an interesting imaginative episode which tells us that the writer visualizes Draupadi as a woman who knew what was right but had to suppress to the idea of honour of the family. Among all the images, her image as a woman who was hurt and yearns for revenge is poignant. Using this incident the writer comments on the differences in men and women and differences in their priorities. *“For men, the softer emotions are always intertwined with power and pride. That was why Karna waited for me to plead with him though he could have stopped my suffering with a single word. That was why he turned on me when I refused to ask for his pity. That was why he incited Dussasan to an action that was against the code of honor by which he lived his life. He knew he would regret it—in his fierce smile there had already been a glint of pain. But was a woman’s heart any purer, in the end? That was the final truth I learned. All this time I’d thought myself better than my father, better than all those men who inflicted harm on a thousand innocents in order to punish the one man who had wronged them. I’d thought myself above the cravings that drove him. But I, too, was tainted with them, vengeance encoded into my blood. When the moment came I couldn’t resist it, no more than a dog can resist chewing a bone that, splintering, makes his mouth bleed. Already I was storing these lessons inside me. I would use them over the long years of exile to gain what I wanted, no matter what its price.”(6)*

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Here the writer clearly brings out two aspects in her character. The first aspect is her sense of dignity in adverse circumstances. She never pleads. This makes Karna to incite Dussasan to insult her. The second aspect is her human reaction to the adversity. She never forgives. Vengeance encoded into her blood. She realises that she is no different. She thought she was better than her father, better than all the men who are weak and inflict harm on many to take revenge on one. She indirectly comments on the futility of war and dislikes the injustice meted out in war. But she could not resist it and prepares to pay a price. ChitraDivakaruini thus seamlessly moves from the divine aspects of her character to the more earthly nature of Draupadi. She makes her more human. Using her character she comments on the status of women in the family, in the society and their relationship with men. She presents her as a strong woman who is to rewrite the history of her times. Draupadi's turmoil is expressed in external images. The title *Palace of Illusions* symbolises the illusory status of life in general and her life in particular.

On the other hand, InduSundaresan's portrayal of woman is not clearly etched and defined. Her protagonist never questions her status. She accepts and cleverly navigates through the circumstances through her husband and later through her junta-her father, brother and son of the emperor. Her accession to power is through her husband. Sundaresan in her novel never questions the status of women or their demand for independence through her characters. They more or less accept their situation. But this does not stop them from being ingenious or conniving to realise their ambitions. However the writer does not portray them as nefarious but empathise with their situation. Her portrayal of Nurjahan is of a strong, decisive, ambitious, intelligent and loving woman. Here she weaves a story where Nurjahan and Jehangir are in love with each other and totally dependent on each other. In her story the writer also narrates the tremendous influence the Mughal women have on their male counter- part. Women seem to be confined to the four walls of Harem but they are aware of the happenings outside. In this novel Sundaresan talks about the royal queens having their own ships, doing business and amassing a lot of wealth. Sundaresan also talks about Nurjahan building tombs, sarais and mosques, learning languages, designing jewellery, writing poetry. To the reader the intrigues of the court and the women who play a role in it is very interesting. InduSundaresan's novel is an easy read and transports the reader to the days of Mughal period. The reader watches Nurjahan accession to power and sympathises her when she is betrayed by her own brother and family. The immense power she enjoys is with immense heart ache and sacrifice of the life of her own daughter's life and a violent split in the imperial family. InduSundaresan's work is a result of immaculate research, as admitted by the author, blended with vivid imagination. She believed in her characters and relived these characters. Nurjahan had a vision of what she wanted from life and had to achieve it. Thus both the novels have taken woman as their protagonist. Diana Wallace, a critic and research scholar on women's historical novels observed, "For women historical fiction has been a way of writing about taboo subjects or offering a critique of the present through the past. It has allowed women to reinvent the recorded lives." (7) In the present novels the writers have incorporated female experiences in their work. To summarise in the words of critics and scholars Mrs. Harleen Kaur Ruprah and Dr. Shibani Basu Dubey, "They describe the whole world of women with simply stunning frankness. Their write ups give a glimpse of the unexposed female psyche which has no accessibility" (8). To conclude modern women writers have moved away from the presenting the traditional women in their novels. They try to bring forth the conflict in the women, defying the institution of marriage and even questioning the sacrificial status of motherhood. We find them trying to search for their identity. Thus the modern women writers have rewritten the myths and histories in pursuit of self expression.

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## 69. Social and Cultural Barriers in Doris Lessing's *The Grass is Singing*

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This study presents Doris Lessing as a writer who prefers shedding light upon the cruelty of the real world instead of creating something imaginary which cannot be felt by people around the world. One can perceive this fact through analysing her first work *The Grass is Singing* (1950). This study analyzes this work from four viewpoints: psychoanalytical, feministic, racial and autobiographical. Through these viewpoints, one can glean the fact that this novel is a multi-thematic one. Moreover, this study can be used in order to make readers familiar with Doris Lessing as a writer who does not belong to a univocal culture or mentality. She addresses issues which concern all people around the world; therefore, it can be an example of a work which focuses on the achievements of any creative writer irrespective of her background. *The Grass is Singing* can have many readings which is a sign of Lessing's stability to write a comprehensive work covering the situation of woman, the contribution of the psychic analysis in the understanding of what is going on, reflecting the problem of racism in southern Rhodesia, and finally integrating the events from her real life into a fictive construct. At the same time she succeeds to be neutral in reflecting her life by adopting a point of view opposite to the one she has adopted in her actual life which rejects the cruel treatment toward blacks. Doris Lessing is capable of presenting several interpretations depending on the perspective adopted. These interpretations are related to different approaches, such as autobiographical, psychoanalytical, feministic and racial viewpoints. The diversity of implications is the major characteristic of this novel. It is hoped that the researcher will disclose elements in the novel which support this hypothesis.

### Objectives of the Study

This study aims at discussing four issues related to Lessing's novel *The Grass*  
These aims are:

1. Finding some similarities and differences between the events in the novel and Lessing's real life.
2. Analyzing Mary's psychic life in order to show the factors that contributed to her psychological decline.
3. Examining Mary as a female who is sometimes the victim and at others the oppressor.
4. Investigating the natives' situation in the Rhodesian racist society where they were treated roughly

The importance of this study lies in showing the uniqueness of Doris Lessing as a realist. She is a bold writer who prefers to reflect the cruelty of the real world rather than creating fanciful things. She tackles issues that are important to people around the world. For instance, she tackles two important issues: women's place in life and black people's suffering. She breaks the silence of her society which was filled with these images of cruelty. Through *The Grass is Singing*, she tries to demonstrate the effect of this treatment on both women and black people. Since her childhood, she has been fond of reading books difficult for children to understand. Reading books was the motive behind her wish to be a writer because reading books helps with widening the imagination of the writer. Her imagination as a writer developed since childhood when she used to tell her brother stories from her own imagination. She also wrote poems and her mother published them in *Rhodesia Herald*. In addition, she said, about her writing process, that she first listens to what is going on, then,

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she selects the events that she would write about and finally she recognizes the aspects and aims behind these events imagination as a writer developed since childhood when she used to tell her brother stories from her own imagination. She also wrote poems and her mother published them in Rhodesia Herald. In addition, she said, about her writing process, that she first listens to what is going on, then, she selects the events that she would write about and finally she recognizes the aspects and aims behind these events. She was interested in the psychology and inner thoughts of her characters rather than their physical presence in society. Moreover, through her novel *The Grass is Singing*, she supports the class she loathes, not the class she stands for in her real life. In actuality, she stands beside the Rhodesian people who suffer from poverty and inequality while in the novel she stands with the white master instead of the weak black servants. Furthermore, her multicultural backgrounds make her unique as a writer, in terms of themes, techniques and style. She discusses different issues through her work. These themes are related to women's position in life, colonialism and its impact upon the colonizer, the color-bar in Africa and the social life of people in certain areas, such as London in *London Observed: Stories and Sketches* and Africa in *The Grass is Singing*.

Doris Lessing was the Noble Prize winner in Literature in even consider appropriate or even incompatible with their own wishes and desires. The ego is the referee between the obligation of the society and Mary's wishes. This makes the ego sink in many psychological problems which finally lead to her breakdown. The people around her notice her breakdown especially Dick and Tony. Dick notices how she becomes nervy and he is afraid of her psychic status. Moreover, Tony also tells Dick that Mary needs to see a psychiatrist.

Mary believes that a woman would normally suffer from the male power in society, even though she admits that she herself does not face this oppression. Mary sees her mother's suffering as a woman by the male power which is represented by her father. Conversely, she confesses that she never felt this oppression in the traditional Rhodesian society since she has been living freely until she got married to Dick. The narrator states this situation about the male authority and female suffering or living freely. She is living in a patriarchal society, she is obliged to get married. In any society, the presence of any woman is associated with the presence of a man in her life. This is an obvious example of the sexism of the societies where unmarried women are criticized for being single and they are accused of being ugly or undesired by men. In contrast, it is normal for males in a society to be single because they can marry at any age while women should marry while they are young and beautiful.

The society which is governed by the male authority affects her females' opinions about Mary's marriage. Her relatives and friends acted like male by criticizing her for being a single woman. At the same time, she depends on her male friends, a thing which shows her contradictory feelings. She feels that she should live her life the way she wants and at the same time she depends on her male friends. According to this view, each gender is associated with certain roles which should be fulfilled; otherwise, the society will criticize even condemn the one who does not fulfill his\he role. Furthermore, women have to stay at home and take care of their husbands, children and homes while men have to fulfill their family's needs by working outside. Lessing illustrates women's traditional role through the basis on which Dick has chosen Mary.

Mary, at the beginning of her marriage, wants to run the house the way she wants. Dick's feelings of weakness and guilt of getting married make him surrender to her by avoiding their arguments because he sees he has no right to do so. the male's control over woman is how men tell women what to do with the money and the objects around them. Dick is of this kind of men who controls woman's way of dealing with the objects around her. Dick controls her usage of water because the water costs him money. The way he controls small things in Mary's life shows how women do not have many choices in life and should follow what they are being told to do. Her

reaction toward his control over her usage of money and objects inside the house is an example of women's sense of secondariness suffering around the world.

Dick and Mary appear to be victimizing each other by ignoring each other's need for having a child. At the beginning of her marriage, Mary tells Dick that she does not want a child because she is not happy in her marriage. He obeys her because of his feelings of guilt of his inability to fulfill her needs. Later, Mary asks Dick if they can have a child but he refuses. He pays no attention to her need to have a child since she is getting old and her chances of having a baby become fewer as time passes. They both impose their opinions on each other; therefore, sometimes Mary is the victim and in other incidents she is the oppressor. Mary sees that her right is to determine when they can have a child and Dick also believes that this is his own right. Mary and Dick always confront each other in any subject they discuss about their life. For instance, they discuss what they should plant in the farm to gain more profits. Dick wants to plant mealies, while Mary wants to plant tobacco because they can gain more money. Although her idea could have brought them more money, he opposes her and starts making fun of her. The reason is that he believes she knows nothing about farming. Dick is more powerful than Mary; he accuses and blames her for losing the servants in the farm because of cruel treatment toward them. He says that the workers do not come back and other workers will not work in the farm because Dick gains a bad reputation because of the bad treatment the natives have faced. Moreover, whites are not allowed to treat their servants humanely, otherwise they will be criticized from other people in society. Sometimes Dick is talking to his servants in a good way which makes Mary unsatisfied with his way of treating them. The master wants to treat his/her servants in a good way, other people will disapprove of this because that would affect their stereotyped image in society. Since one is a member in a racist society, he/she will be rejected and criticized if he/she treat the servants humanely by breaching the common norm or practice. For instance, Charlie, a land owner, has protested the way Moses speaks to Mary and the tone Mary has used while speaking to him. His objection is that she is to Moses as a white man which makes him equal to Charlie. The servant also does not obey his masters since Moses has a close relationship with Mary. Mary used to treat her servants in an inhumane way because she is totally sure that they will commit these crimes. Mary believes that her servants are used to lying to get some of their rights or even to take some rest. This shows how severe her psychological state is and how worry-inspiring are its effects on those surrounding her.

Another situation which shows how an oppressed man could turn into a monster especially if he is the victim of a woman is Moses' revenge of Mary. Moses decides to take revenge from Mary because she humiliates him and takes his male pride by controlling his life. He decides to kill her without fearing the consequences of his act; therefore, he turns himself in when he has killed her. This situation shows how a man would act if he loses his sense of authority since he used to it from the beginning of his life.

## Conclusion

Doris Lessing is a writer who is interested in the psychological probing of her characters which is obvious through her creation of Mary's character. She believes that any character should have a psychological dimension since our psychic life is the stimulus that moves us to do and react in a certain way. In *The Grass is Singing*, she succeeds in depicting Mary's psychological life and relating her feelings and reactions minutely.

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## 70. The Good Terrorist: A Political Novel

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Political fiction is a subgenre of fiction that deals with political affairs. Political fiction has often used narrative to provide commentary on political events, systems and theories. Works of political fiction often “directly criticize an existing society or present an alternative, sometimes fantastic, reality.” The post first world war emergence of communism has its huge impact on the political map of the world. One of the features of politics based on communism was terrorism. A kind of a battle in which the victim is targeted through an ambush, targeting crowded places like malls, markets and schools etc all this is a fall out of this terrorism. Some extremists adapted to such methods of violence and tried to demoralize people and the government through acts of terror. And any novel that depicts these aspects of politics and political fall outs comes under a category of a political novel. Doris Lessing was a convert to communism through her first marriage and believed in the ideology as a possible curative for the evils that infested South Africa particularly racial discrimination. In the second novel itself Mrs. Lessing depicts the emergence of the communist ideology in all this varieties. And the fourth novel *The Good Terrorist* she amplifies on a making of a terrorist and the implication of such an activity. Since by now Miss. Lessing has been known as a novelist of note for over 30 yrs , the critical reception of the book is quite enthusiastic, if a little more critical. Her novels and short stories have established Doris Lessing as one deeply concerned with Africa, the race question, women loving and men monopolizing, and psychic problems attendant on the war and post- war civilization in the west. But this novel does not touch upon the colonial question, not the Black-white relationship, except partially with reference to the fate of Jim, the African young man. It is 80’s, surely post –war , and no longer obsessed with the war or its aftermath. Europe has returned to a kind of normalcy, and has learned to live with the menace of Cold War and Armament and Communism itself has been going through its own ups and downs one of the many bothering side issues- as far as the British government is concerned is also the time when ‘The Iron Lady’ Margaret Thatcher has been countering the philosophy of the welfare state and trade unionism. With her privatization and taxation measures Mrs. Thatcher was to say, later that people should stop depending on the government for every small thing: *“I think we have gone through a period when to many children and people have been given to understand. ‘I have a problem, it is the government’s job to cope with it!’ or ‘I have problem I will go and get a grand to cope with it’, ‘I am homeless and the government must house me!’ and so they are casting their problems on society and who is society? There is no such thing! There are individual men and women and there are families and no government can do anything except through people and people look to themselves first. It is our duty to look after ourselves and then also to help look after our neighbor and life is a reciprocal business and people have got the entitlements too much in mind without the obligations.”* (Margaret Thatcher to Douglas Keave, Women’s own magazine, Sep 1987) This is the period when trade unions and left wing parties are being greatly disturbed and ‘housing’ in general is receiving a beating because of Thatcher’s policies. The Irish tangle calls for portrayal of terrorist activities in the name of, or on behalf of, IRA. Even if they are not in league with the IRA and are not acceptable to them, the disaffected individuals come together, in the name of some Leftist ideology, because anything against establishment becomes a part of their agenda, and conceive, plan and perpetrate actions which they fondly hope would destabilize the establishment.

Jane Rogers, writing in *The Guardian* (3rd Dec 2005, seen how terrorists who are driven by one obsession so much that they could sacrifice everything, ‘even love of life itself, to that single idea, or diluted in the novel by the fact of being ‘human’- of wanting to take care of others, of having physical desires and an over arching need for recognition. Bob Corbett; writing about the book (Comments by Corbett; August 2012- internet, says it is in reality ‘about the person Alice.’ more than about revolution or terrorism. Looking at *The Golden Notebook* and *The Good Terrorist*, one critical



evaluation concludes that the former book is about woman's bondage- bondage to loneliness disillusionment with communism, about love- a recordation of unfulfilled love; and that the latter novel (*The Good Terrorist*) is an analysis of political immaturity, it is about hatred, it's a recordation of human failure. Doris Lessing herself had said: 'Something is very wrong with the human race', and, 'I was rejecting the human condition, which is to be trapped by the circumstances' (*British Literary Desperadoes at the Turn of the Millennium* published in Lidia Vianu, All publishing house, Bucharest, 1999)

The novel is about the rejection of middle class family values and about inept and immature terrorism: most of the members of this group 'seem makeshift, sharp edged and unfinished' (Alison Lurie). It is also about one person Alice Melling, 'strong, emotionally intuitive, and sympathetic, brave, warm hearted, hard working and generous. (Alison Lurie), undertaking the task of mothering a group of desperate people organizing them into a 'group' after giving them a home- giving them a place first to live and then to plot. Thus she, in the final reckoning, become the voice of the writer, and possibly 'a personification of England itself'? (Alison Lurie) or does she end up a failure as a daughter, a mother figure, as an organizer, and even as a terrorist – good or otherwise) This novel has no chapterization. The narrative runs through with a few flashbacks. Like *A Proper Marriage* this novel also is open-ended; it may be said that it has an end that is no end. After the act of terrorism is perpetrated, all these involved scatter in different directions. Roberta feels abandoned and at a loose end with the death of Faye. She remembers her hospitalized mother, and goes to attend upon her. Jocelin and Caroline leave, Jasper and Bert too leave to different places. Mary and Reggie, disturbed by what they suspect is going on, leave even before the bomb incident. Alice is left; she sits alone in the 'betrayed' (392) house, getting ready to leave for the restaurant where she is due to have lunch with Peter Cecil, an unknown factor because Alice has no knowledge whether he comes from the CIA, KGB, IRA or MIS, or what new problems or experiences she would be drawn into, and she could not altogether ignore o' leavy's threat that he would call upon her later. These leads do not seem to lead to another novel, as it happened with '*A Proper Marriage*', where the book is the second book in a five book sequence.

This novel does not deal with South Africa or black –white question. The presence of Jim is not significant in terms of race relation. He is given a job by Cedric Mellings, and is kicked out of the job under the belief that he had stolen a huge amount of money. When Alice explains to Cedric how she had stolen it, he relents and is ready to take Jim back. But, frustrated at the middle class attitude, Jim runs off into the jungle of London, no one knows where. His being a black does not play any part in this episode. Even the revolutionary aspect, an outgrowth of communism, does not constitute the central theme, though it colours the background as much as the foreground: all the characters who collect in the house, - all except Mary and Reggie, who claim to be socialists,- are self- styled communists, of whatever brand, disaffected characters, rejecting middle class values, refusing to take up any employment, condemning the government for its anti- labour policies, as they would call them refusing to get up and help anyone needing assistance voluntarily unless asked; they would sit and comment, drink cups of tea, shout slogans at demonstration, and that is about it. In order to convince themselves about their own serious intentions and involvement in revolutionary activities, they visit Ireland and Russia, call for conference and indulge in acts of terrorism. Perhaps this reflects Doris Lessing's disenchantment with the ideology which is now so diluted that it hardly bites.

There are four features in Alice's character that catch the reader's attention. Alice as daughter; her relationship to her parents-makes an interesting study. Alice as lover: her relationship with Jasper is one- sided and disturbing. Alice as den mother: her innate mothering instinct, concern for others, coupled with her organizational qualities, her love of order and her moral sensibility, appear as emerging traits in the Doris Lessing protagonists. And, Alice as a revolutionary: the feature of the "good terrorist" manifests in a passive more than in any active way, and does not catch the lime light, in spite of the title. While Alice both hates and loves her mother- loving her as mother and hating her for her middleclassness, as an angry and bitter person associated with revolution and moving among

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revolutionaries, her mother Dorothy is clearly unhappy about her daughter's career, and about her association with laggardly and dishonest Jasper. She comes down critically on their political and revolutionary ideologies: 'oh you, running about playing at revolution, playing little games, thinking you're important... you'll never do anything' (354), and she dismisses her daughter without any emotional involvement: "you are not my favorite person, Alice. I don't particularly want to see you" (349). The mother of Mary Turner and of Martha Quest clings to the daughters, demanding to be taken seriously and trying to impose their values on the daughters. But here, Dorothy is not interested in Alice pursuing a particular career, or cherishes certain systems of values. Theirs is a colonial background, where as in the case of Dorothy – Alice no such inhibition operates, and they are into post-war European situation. Again, the rebellion of Mary and Martha against their mother's values is a personal revolt, based upon the revulsion they had felt as girls, where as the rebellion of Alice is more general and generational. One cannot always say that conviction is involved. In a sense they are all shallow, as Dorothy points out.

Alice "was a good girl, a good daughter"(49) at home, and she receives an unexpected accolade from a totally unlikely quarter: Comrade Andrew calls her " a very pure good women" (244). And she is filled with motherly instincts and motherly sentiments towards those who are vulnerable. She feels guilty getting obsessed with and involved in making a home of the house no 43, and has to remind herself that she too is a revolutionary. Her rebellion seems more of the generational kind rejecting the values of the parents, than a rebellion of a political nature, though peer pressure might have deluded her into believing that she too is a political rebel. Her rejection of middleclass values, though on the surface level, may seem more acute or serious in view of the times, the general discontent that affected the generation of the 60's and 70's. Thirty six years old at the time of the action of the novel, Alice indeed belongs to the 70's generation and her development is not surprising. Her obsession with things of the kind not cherished by the contemporaries and her marginal involvement with terrorism, as she is a part of terrorist groups, and her imbecile and meaningless love for an unworthy fellow, show her as immature , as incompetent in certain fields, and amateurish in general. But Doris Lessing gives to this character a certain solidity, and makes her convincing: " I know several people like Alice – this mixture of very maternal caring, worrying about whales and seals and the environment, but at the same time saying , ' you can't make an omelet without breaking eggs'" (Interview with Paris Review).

The entire spirit of the novel is epitomized in the feelings of Alice has, as she sits waiting for the tune she would have to go for her luncheon appointment with Peter Cecil: "*She sat on quietly ... in the betrayed house... she allowed her mind to move from room to room in it, praising her achievements, as if someone else had accomplished all that, but all the work had not been properly acknowledged, and so she was doing it as something due to justice. The house might have been wounded animal whose many hurts she had one by one cleaned and bandaged ... she felt that she could pull the walls of this house, her house, around her like a blanket, where she could snuggle, where she could feel safe... ordinary people simply didn't understand, and it was no good expecting them to ... here the tenderness that had been washing around the place, inside and outside her, not knowing where it belonged, fastened itself on these ordinary people and Alice sat with tears in her eyes, thinking, poor things, poor things, they simply don't understand! – as if she had her arms around all the poor silly people in the world.(392-93)*" so in the final analysis she emerges as a very good mother figure, though she not he a very effective terrorist. Hence the assessment that mothering is central to this novel is quite appropriate. As for the title of the book, the irony there of is self-evident: Alice is good undoubtedly and she is not cut out to be a terrorist- a Jocelin or even a Faye. She can only be poor, ineffectual terrorist only in name, by virtue of her association with the group all that is implied in the term terrorist could take away not a whit of goodness, love and motherliness which are native to Alice. Hence *The Good Terrorist!*

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## 71. Emergence of a New Woman: A Study of Shashi Deshpande's *The Dark Holds No Terrors*

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Woman is an essential part of human civilization, yet she has been given a secondary status in society. She is considered inferior to man. Her role is restricted within family. In Hindu religion, Manu constantly stresses the inferiority of woman to man and her dependence on man. "In childhood, a female should be dependent on her father, and in youth on her husband and after the death of her husband, on her children. If she has no sons or the near kinsmen of her husband... a woman must never seek independence."<sup>1</sup> "In Indian society and culture women are not regarded as individuals in their own right but are treated as objects to satiate and please the menfolk. As Vern Bullough observes: "The very word woman... emphasized [a] passive anonymous position. It derives from the Anglo-Saxon wifman literally 'wife-man' and the implication seems to be that there is no such thing as woman separate from wifehood. As individuals, with few exceptions, woman did not count. They were mothers, wives, daughters, sisters."<sup>2</sup>

During the recent past a number of Indian women novelists have begun writing about Indian women, their dilemmas, their tribulations and predicament. Amongst them, Shashi Deshpande is one of the most widely read post-independence Indian English writer. She writes consciously on issues that concern the educated middle class woman in Indian society. She began her literary career as a short story writer and then established herself as a prominent novelist. Out of the many novels written by her, *The Dark Holds No Terrors* and *That Long Silence*, have won for her the Sahitya Akademi Award. Her novel, *The Dark Holds No Terrors* has been translated into German and Russian languages. Shashi Deshpande brilliantly articulates the suppressed voice of the middle class woman trapped between the conflicting demands of traditional expectation of a woman's role and the search for fulfillment and identity.<sup>3</sup> G.S. Amur has aptly remarked, "Women's struggle in the context of contemporary Indian society, to find and preserve her identity as wife, mother, and most important of all, as human being, is Shashi Deshpande's major concern as a creative writer and this appears in all her important stories."<sup>4</sup> The protagonists of her novels raise their voice against the roles allocated to them by the male dominated society. In her works, the novelist focuses on certain issues that are a pre-requisite for the freedom of woman namely education, financial independence, control over her sexuality and the moral choice. She has written about the problems of woman in society and her place in marital relationship. Further Deshpande insists upon a 'space' for woman. If her 'self' is disregarded then she would record her protest. Her female characters are "in-between women" who fight for their own identity in urban contexts and who explore the female psyche.<sup>5</sup> All her novels and especially *The Dark Holds No Terrors* focus on gender sensitivity. She feels that women have a tremendous inner strength but much of that strength is used up in merely enduring.<sup>6</sup> She herself claims that she is not an avowed feminist, but occupies a significant place among the contemporary women novelist, who concern themselves with the problem of women and their quest for identity.

The present paper is an attempt to study the modern well educated middle class, Sarita's (Saru) emergence as a new woman, by establishing her identity as an individual in a male dominated society. *The Dark Holds No Terrors* is a story of introspection in which the heroine, Saru progresses through different phases in her life. At the beginning, she is an angry young woman protesting and defying any form of domination at home. After marriage she becomes docile and follows the rules of society. Lastly she attains a kind of selfhood that leads to a more meaningful secure and independent life for her.<sup>7</sup> The novel studies the fractured psyche of Saru, a career woman and her marital constraints. It is also her quest for self exploration and to free herself from the restrictions imposed by society, culture and nature.

Deshpande's women are anti-matriarchal. Saru is discriminated against none other than by her mother. When Geetha Viswanath interviewed the novelist, she remarked – “In *The Dark Holds No Terrors* sits the relationship of the daughter with the mother which is equally critical, though it is in the past.<sup>8</sup> In the novel, *Kamalatai*, the mother from a traditional Brahmin family represents tradition whereas Saru who acquires education symbolises modernity. Since her childhood Saru had to encounter gender discrimination. She was neglected and ignored. Her mother tried to impress upon Saru's mind that being a girl, she was inferior to her brother, Dhruva. She recollects : “There was always a puja on Dhruva's birthday. A festive lunch in the afternoon and an arti in the evening.... my birthdays were almost the same..... but there was no puja.”(168-169) The mother even disallows Saru to play in the sun. The conversation between the mother and daughter points out to the discrimination shown by her:

*“Don't go out in the sun. You'll get even darker.  
Who cares ?  
We have to care if you don't. We have to get you married.  
I don't want to get married.  
Will you live with us all your life ?  
Why not ?  
You can't  
And Dhruva ?  
He's different. He's a boy (45)*

Kamalatai rears up Saru in an orthodox way. She admonishes her daughter and warns her not to come out in her petticoat. She should also be ashamed of herself even in the presence of her own father, as she is growing up. In the family, Saru's identity was non-existent. Further she is blamed for the death of her brother. She is not allowed to escape from this sense of guilt. The mother never forgave Saru for being alive even after Dhruva's death. “You did it. You did this. You killed him... why didn't you die? Why are you alive and he dead?”(191). Her parents did not realize that Saru had lost her brother and needed emotional support but she had to live with the guilt that she was her brother's murderer. When Saru expresses her desire to study medicine, her mother retorts to her father : “And don't forget, medicine or no medicine, doctor or no doctor, You still have to get her married, spend money on her wedding... Let her go for a B.Sc... You can get her married in two years and our responsibility will be over”(144). The mother regards Saru's marriage as a burden for them, but for the daughter just getting married and doing nothing seemed not only terrible but damnable. This indifferent attitude develops inferiority complex in Saru. She experiences insecurity in her parental house. For the heroines of Deshpande, house is a symbol of confinement, gender discrimination and boredom. Her fictional women try to escape the boundaries of their middle class houses.<sup>9</sup> Her mother hates Saru because she is a daughter. It can be observed that Deshpande's heroines are confronted with the problem of what the mother stands for and the only way out for her, is to seek a new environment where the mother cannot exercise her will.<sup>10</sup> Further Saru prevails upon her father to get admission in a medical college. Shashi Deshpande is of the view that education is a tool that can help in breaking the pattern of gender discrimination and bring lasting change for women in developing countries.<sup>11</sup> It is the first step in independence for Saru. It gives her economic freedom. Kamalatai's refusal to send her daughter to study medicine deeply hurts Saru. She laments : “You don't want me to have anything. You don't want me to do anything. You don't even want me to live”(142). Living in a house where she is constantly tortured mentally, Saru needs someone to love her and provide security. Deshpande's heroines in order to achieve their freedom, seek marriage as an alternative to the bondage created by parents. They look forward to the role of wives with the hope that it will help them in winning freedom. Saru falls in love with Manohar (Manu) a young writer, a boy of low caste. “His height, good looks, fashionable manners, floppy hair and his poetry charm Saru”(70). Kamalatai reveals disgust for Saru's choice. But Saru is firm in her decision and marries Manu. Unlike her mother, Saru is modern in her thoughts, actions and in

relations with others. By marrying Manu she has asserted herself and secured independence for herself<sup>12</sup>. Saru feels secure in Manu's company. He satisfies her hunger for love. "I was unsatiable, not for sex, but for love. Each act of sex was a triumphant assertion of our love, of my being loved, of my being wanted.(40) Saru was satisfied with her choice and life was going smoothly for the couple. Manu was the master of the house before Saru got recognition as a doctor. Thereafter he is known as the husband of a renowned doctor. Her steady rise up the ladder of social status becomes the cause of discord in their family life. It disturbs the traditional equilibrium of a superior husband and an inferior wife. He gets jealous of her popularity. The economic and social power that Saru wields as a successful doctor paradoxically causes her marriage to a college lecturer husband go to pieces. Manu's male ego is hurt and he refuses to accept a secondary position in society. He develops inferiority complex. Saru gives vent to her condition thus: "...that human personality has an infinite capacity for growth. And so the esteem with which I was surrounded made me inches taller. But perhaps, the same thing made me inches taller, made him inches shorter. He had been the young man and I his bride. Now I was the lady doctor and he was my husband"(42). Shashi Deshpande describes the trauma of Saru's victimization of her husband's frustration which manifest itself in the form of sexual sadism Saru an ambitious and highly self willed girl treats her patients during the day time but at night lives as a 'terrified and trapped animal' at the hands of her husband. Sushila Singh comments that a woman does not have an identity of her own. She may rise professionally but in her marital status she remains a subdued partner. Further she states that "Human experience for centuries has been synonymous with the masculine experience, with the result that the collective image of humanity has been one-sided and incomplete. Woman has not been defined as a subject in her own right but merely as an entity that concerns man either in his real life or his fantasy life."<sup>13</sup> The rift in their relationship increases and when the reporter of a woman's magazine interviews Saru and asks Manohar. "How does it feel when your wife earns not only the butter but most of the bread as well?"(200) turns Manu into a sadist who literally rapes his wife every night. Saru has violated the essentially patriarchal code of the middle class Hindu marriage by putting the woman above the man. This reversal forces the latter to seek compensation by brutalising his wife every night in bed with his physical male power.<sup>14</sup>

Saru's pathetic cry: "He attacked me like an animal that night. I was sleeping and I woke up and there was this... this man hurting me with his hands, his teeth, his whole body(201). This occurred with her every night. Saru gets so scared that she turns speechless. The remarks of Atrey and Kripal are significant in this matter: "His purpose, though repressed in the subconscious, is to punish her taking on the 'male' role, and to assert his superiority and power through physical violence."<sup>15</sup> She starts hating man woman relationship based on sex not love. The love and attachment she had for Manu vanishes. The very word 'love' appears loathsome for her. "love... how she scorned the word now. There was no such thing between man and woman ... It's only a word, she thought. Take away the word, the idea, and the concept will wither away"(72). Here Deshpande depicts Saru as a courageous woman who by saying 'no' to her husband expresses her individuality and voice.<sup>16</sup> Saru fed up by the subordinate treatment meted out to her, at her parental home earlier and now at her marital home, takes up a bold step. She had left her parents home to seek career and then her love. Now she leaves her husband's home in search of her identity.<sup>17</sup> Saru's introspection into her marriage makes her realize that her professional success has killed Manu's spirit.<sup>18</sup> She comes away to her father's place on hearing about her mother's death This provides her with a chance to review her own past, her own inner self and her relation to others in society. With this self realization comes the decision to confront the problem. Saru learns that her life is her own. Terror is not enforced from outside but rather it comes from within. The darkness exists in the mind and one may come out of this terror and face the problems boldly with courage.<sup>19</sup> She has undertaken an arduous journey into herself and liberated herself from shame, guilt and humiliation to emerge in full control of her life. She has asserted her individuality and rejected the traditional concept that the sole purpose of a wife's existence is to please her husband. Saru becomes fully aware of her potential as a human being. Shashi Deshpande has not imported the concept of freedom of her female protagonist from the

West. To retain domestic harmony her heroines believe in conformity and compromise rather than revolt which might result in disruption of family relationships. Deshpande's woman characters generally seek to come out – from the inherited pattern of thought and action in favour of new modes arrived at independently after much consideration of the various aspects of the problems keeping in view the kind of society she lives in.<sup>20</sup> Saru has overcome the darkness of tradition by her struggle against it and has made an attempt to search for her own identity within a patriarchal society.

When Saru gets news of Manu's arrival, she thinks that tired of knocking he might go back. Her career as a doctor has instilled courage in her to face reality. She tells her father, "Baba, if Manu comes, tell him to wait ..." (221). These words point out that Saru's quest for her identity is complete. She represents a middle class working woman who rebels against tradition but ultimately tries to compromise with the existing reality. Saru at the end, is ready to have a life outside the family and face the hard realities of life.<sup>21</sup> To conclude in the words of S P Swain: "Saru's journey is a journey from self-alienation to self-identification, from negation to assertion, from diffidence to confidence. She learns to trust her feminine self."<sup>22</sup>

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## 72. A Study of Diasporic Sensibility in Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's *The Mistress of Spices*

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Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni is one of the new authors of Indian American life, and an Asian American with ancestral roots in Bengal in India. Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni was born in Kolkotta and spent the first 19 years of her life in India. She was a devout Hindu, who studied in a convent school in Kolkotta, attended the college at Loveto hou at the University of Calcutta and immigrated to the United States of America in 1976. She received her master's degree from Wright State University in Dayton, Ohio and a PhD, in the University of California, Berkeley in 1984. Since 1991, she has been a president of Maitri, a South Asian Women's service, which brought out her into contact with women who are victims of domestic violence. So Divakaruni has a thorough knowledge about Indian culture, customs and habits as well as the life of immigrants. Divakaruni is the author of four collection of poetry, ten novels, four short collection of short stories and two books for young adults. At present she lives in San Francisco with her husband and two children. Divakaruni began her career as a poet and the Writer Workshop, Culcutta published her first book of poems, *Dark Like the River* in 1987. All her subsequent work, *The Reasons For Nasturitiiums* (1990) after a couple of years, she opted for fiction and first novel was *Arranged Marriage Stories* (1995) for which she was awarded and greatly increased her visibility.

In the age of technological advancement where travelling is made easier and the distance shorter, the term Diaspora has lost its original connotation; yet simultaneously it has also emerged in another form healthier than the former. At first it is concerned with human beings attached to the homelands. Their sense of yearning for the homeland, curious attachment to its tradition, religions and language give birth to Diasporic literature which is primarily concerned with the individuals or community's attachment to the homeland. The painful experience of isolation, sense of exile, crisis of identity and efforts to bond with adopted lands equips English Literature with cross cultural narratives. These narratives are brought together into a unified whole, generally referred into "Diaspora Writings". The narratives of cross-cultural clashes have established "Diaspora Structures" in an academic field in the late of 20<sup>th</sup> century. In literature the term "Diaspora Studies" is allied with works produced by globally dispersed community of writers inexorably writings by Indians is being produced in the diapora by such people as Salman Rushdie, Kamala Markandaya, Bharati Mukherjee, Vikram Seth, Amitav Gosh, Anita Desai, V.S. Naipul, Jhump Lahiri and Hanif Kureishi. This nuanced history is believed by some critics to be overlooked in the current appropriations of the term "Diaspora" that render it is a loose equivalent for a range of other words, bordering and conflicting with exile, migration, immigration, expatriation, transnationalism, minority or refugee status and social or ethnic difference. The genealogy of the term in the Jewish intellectual traction might mislead us to take Jewish diaspora as an "ideal type". "Diaspora" is first of all a translation, a foreign word adopted in the Jewish intellectual discourse on community. As such it may be noted that there is never a "first" single dispersion of a single people, but instead there has been a complex historical overlay of a variety of kinds of population movement.

In all cases, the term "diaspora" carries a sense of displacement and the population so described finds itself separated from its national territory. Its people have a hope or a desire to return to their homeland at some point. Some writers have noted that diaspora may result in a loss of nostalgia for a single home as people "re-root" in series of meaningful displacements. In this sense, they may have multiple homes and maintain some kind of attachment to each. Disporic cultural development often assumes a different course from that of the population in the original homeland. With the passage of time, these separated communities tend to vary in culture, traditions, language and other factors. Diaspora's original connotations of dispersion and exile now encompass a larger semantic field. It is sometimes used to refer to a range of ethnic communities and to a variety of categories of people like political and war refugees, immigrants, ethnic and racial minorities etc.



Definition and understanding of Diaspora get modified “in translation” as they are applied to new groups of people.

The concern of the writers of the Diaspora is not only with memory and nostalgia but also with place and displacement, where place is signified not only as a geographical, physical space but also as the mentally conjured psychological cultural space. The writers of the diaspora go life of those times, that is, their history as they lived it and as they saw it, because they want to document how they have lived in the times that are in the past and will never return again. The immigrant writer has the need to voice his presence and to bring his history and identity to the fore front for recognition. Since that gives them validity. Women writers have carved niche among diasporic writers. They belong to different countries like India, Pakistan, Srilanka, Bangladesh and so on. The major diasporic women writers are Meena Alexander, Moniza Alvi, Anjana Apachana, Anita Desai, Kiran Desai, Bharati Mukherjee, Jhumpa Lahiri, Bapsi Sidhwa etc.... Women face, everyday problems of survival and continuance of life. They are the ones who have to quickly learn to adopt and function in new surroundings. They exhibit extraordinary power of endurance, optimism and survival even under the most turbulent and arduous, testing conditions. It is an interesting paradox that a great deal of Indian writing in English is produced not in India but widely distributed diapora in the South Pacific, the Caribbean, South Africa, Mauritius and the contemporary Indian diasporas in the united states of America. The writing of diasporic Indians is not new, and it has attained very high standards are literature in all its forms not just in general prose and poetry but in the genres of drama, oratory, philosophy, literary history and criticism.

According to V S Naipaul the Indians are well aware of that their journey to Trinidad had been final but these tensions remain a recurring theme in diaporic literature. *The Mistress of Spices* (1997), when the novel begins, Tilo, an immigrant from India, and a magical figure is running a spice bazaar in Oakland, California, is not the elderly woman she appears to be trainid as a mistress of species, she evokes the magical powers of the spices of her homeland to help her customers. Due to her diverse experience and transnational existence, Tilo keeps changing throughout the novel, “making clear how complex is the problem of identity crisis that Indians try to cope with in a foreign land.”(Mitra). Throughout the novel Tilo is joined by a host of other people that share aspects of life as immigrants, but each also has their own individual story. An older woman born with supernatural shaman-like abilities in a small village in India, Tilo’s gift is her ability to elicit specific powers inherent in spices and use them to cure the maladies of those around her. Soon her parents find out that she is specia powerl, her parents consider her as the burden but she has the power to predict the future. Her magical powers and fame spread and bring wealth to her parents. She has no real home in India nor does she have one at sea. In Tilo’s preteen years, pirates storm into her home, murder her entire family and abduct Tilo, taking her on board their ship as a prisoner. Eventually, Tilo overthrows the pirate captain to become the pirate “queen, leading (her) pirates to fame and glory, so that bards sang their fearless exploits.” But Tilo abandons this exalted position when mystical sea serpants tell her about the existence of an island upon them for a greater good. This isolated island is a haven for these women, who call themselves the “Mistress of Spices” and are under the care of the first mother, the eldest and wisest teacher of all the women. The women are trained in the art of listening and controlling the spices, and are then sent forth into the greater world to aid humanity. After Tilo learns all that she can, she is sent to Oakland, California, to a tiny Indian spice shop where she must begin her duties of healing the masses. Thus, she is thrust into the chaos of American life and the newness of a culture to which she must adapt. Although Tilo has already began her diasporic journey, she does not feel the loss of a home, but rather a finding of many. Tilo sails upon a ship to the island of the Mistress a reference to the Kalipani or “dark water”. The term used in order to describe the journey made by indentured labourers and immigrants from the motherland of India to other foreign lands, creating what we today refer to as the “diasporic”

When Tilo arrives on the Island, she and the other young girls like her are given new identities, indicating that the past is being relegated to memory and new personas are being forged.

Tilo meets the first mother, a figure who foreshadows the paradoxical identity that Tilo will soon find herself grappling with. The first mother is elderly and maternal, representing the traditionalist notion of the South Asian woman in the domestic sphere upon their arrival, the first mother tells the girls, “daughters it is time for me to give you, you new names. For when you came to this island you left your old names behind, and have remained nameless since.” (42) Tilo receives a new name and identity, leaving her childhood in a village in India behind her, and assuming a temporary persona that is of the uncertain present rather than the definitive and historical past. Tilo spends decades learning the delicate art of the spices, but the moment arrives when she must leave the island and continue the diasporic journey she has begun. Tilo has entered a state of liminality, a space between the past and the future and without a precise knowledge of where the present. Tilo receives a new name and identity, leaving her childhood in a village in India behind her, and assuming a temporary persona that is of the uncertain present rather than the definitive and historical past. Tilo spends decades learning the delicate art of the spices, but the moment arrives when she must leave the island and continue the diasporic journey she has begun. Tilo has entered a state of liminality, a space between the past and the future and without a precise knowledge of where the present. The island is the first diasporic space that we encounter, and while it exhibits the same liminality and ambiguity as America does, the island nurtures Tilo, educating and preparing her for the next stage of life she will encounter when she leaves, and also imbuing Tilo with a sense of singularity of identity. Tilo is transported to America by means of “shampati’s fire”, a giant bonfire into which she steps and disappears, Divakaruni foreshadows the process of Tilo’s identity formation, using the fire as a metaphor for the recreation of the self and presenting identity as erratic rather than permanent. Tilo’s journey to America is a form of rebirth; it is a literal recreation of the self. She emerges from the fire on a bed of ash, in a small spice store in Oakland that she will make her own. Once in America, Tilo is immediately placed in yet another interstitial space, unable to forget her history but still wanting to move forward with life. She lives “in between”, for the island of the past is no longer her home, while America is still too unfamiliar to describe as such. When in America, Tilo interacts with all genders, identifying with both her male and female customers and friends alike. She experiences the sadness and anger of the young and confused adolescent Indian boy who is tormented for his accent and turban. He was assaulted at school for not knowing English. He responds to his sense of alienation and racial abuse by resorting to gang wars as he is initiated into a group which makes him feel protected. At the same time, Lalita’s trapped of arranged marriage. She did not want to get married to a man for she had seen him only three days before the wedding. The wedding has been arranged. So, she had to marry him. She came to America with her husband. She had a dream of setting up her own tailor’s shop in India. She was sad in an alien land. Her life was devoid of any real pleasure, so Tilo administers turmeric to her with the words of healing whispered into it. At last Lalitha decided to manage her life to suit her heart and pursue happiness in her own sweet way.

Geeta, the Bengali girl whose affair with an American friend, she is part of a paradigmatic diasporic family where there is a clash between the first generation and second generation. Her parents were not ready to accept her boy friend. Geeta is shocked by the elements of racism for the second generation Indians like Geeta, the question about identity are differently poised. Tilo’s consciousness, like America, is in between genders, possessing the characteristics of both so she never has to “choose” one or the other. Even though she now lives in California, Tilo finds that she cannot let go of her time on the Island with the first mother and the other Mistresses. The memories are with her night and day, reminders and warnings of the past stream into her thoughts, creating conflict in her present life. She has to make an urgent decision about her true identity, her struggle brings her closer to the domain of truth, “the truth that her space has been invaded by an alien intruder Raven because she changes her role and her name often, she is presented with a moment in and out of time. Tilo also feels unmoored spatially, for America is only a temporary place for her it is her home only insofar as she is fulfilling her duty as a Mistress of Spice. The first time that Tilo exists the comfort of her store, she experiences an intense wave of longing for a place to call home. “I run my hand over the door, which looks so alien in outdoor light, and I am struck by the sudden vertigo of homelessness” (137).

Tilo does not have a home in the traditional and permanent sense, and America is simply one point in between her geographical migration. Tilo has left the island but knows that she will someday return to it, to that place that is still “in between” worlds, yet remains the only location in which she feels the comfort of belongingness. Tilo’s emotions are separated not by miles but by universes, where home does not exist except in the space of idealizing memory. Tilo’s has the deepest vision for the innermost selves of all others, yet is still incapable of actually perceiving herself. In fact, Tilo is expressly forbidden to look in a mirror . she lives in Oakland and fulfils her duties as a Mistress of spice, for “ once a Mistress has taken on her magic Mistress – body, she is never to look on her reflection” (p.61). The strict prohibition of mirrors is a metaphor for Tilo’s inability to perceive herself through her own eyes; instead, she formulates her identity upon the vision of others, based upon the differing perceptions of herself through as soon by friends, patrons and lovers. Tilo has observed what it means to be a south Asian living in America in terms of race relations, and the moment arrives when she herself experiences what it is like to be an American. Tilo embraces the idea that she can blend in with America and be a part of it; as she waits at the bus stop, she relishes the fact that her difference is no longer the marker of her racial identity, for she can stand amongst a group of true Americans and exist as one herself, with no one being able to tell “who is who”.

In her role as a Mistress of the supernatural skills when working with the spices and using their power can be perceived in terms of recognition of her higher than natural, or usual and thus she realises her space, a marginal space. Which weaves through her inner true self, sense of passion and her ability after the arrival of a person into her shop who she also identifies interms of loneliness, she thinks of him as of a “lonely, American and he becomes, in course of time, “my American for her”. She needs to get feminine identity as she desired to launch herself in her new life with Raven. Raven meets Tilo in her shop consider her a most beautiful of the apsaras created to be desired but forbidden to desire herself. During their first conversation, Tilo thinks to herself, “There is a lurching inside me, like something stitched up tearing lose. O danger”(p.71). Even Tilo feels something burning inside her and she knows that being a Mistress of spices, she should not feel to have him but when she leaves the store, she feels as if she has lost something. She falls in love with Raven and decides to leave the arthritic body of an old woman to be young with her desires. When they finally consummate their love, Tilo appears as a highly knowledgeable and sensual lover, and her sexuality is in stark contrast to the older asexual woman from the spice store. Strangely, there is a sense that this sexual knowledge was already there for Tilo, existing (though hidden) while she perceived herself as the asexual woman from the spice store. Raven believes that Tilo posses an intangible “essence” that makes her an “authentic” Indian as compared to the offer young Indian women in the store. Tilo begins to view Raven as a representative of American culture. From the moment she meets him, she refers to him not by name, but rather as ‘my American’ and ‘the American’, While Raven views her as her token American lover. Tilo realizes that the relationship must end it was a love that “would never have lasted, for it was based upon fantasy....of what it is to be Indian. To be American.”(311)

As Tilo moves through the maze of American culture, she desires even more to see herself, to view her life through her own eyes rather than the perspectives of others. Tilo’s moment of “self-perception” occurs after she questions the prohibition of mirrors for mistresses. Before she looks at her reflection, Tilo decides to drink a special potion, a concoction. The potion will transtorm Tilo’s body from that of the “old woman disguise”. She has been wearing since she arrived in America, to a body of youthful beauty. Tilo gazes into the mirror, but does not see some great truth about identity revealed to her, the frailty and humanity of Tilo’s eyes mirror her reading of this moment, for when Tilo looks for unity, all she sees is the reality of human condition reflected in her eyes. But Tilo’s happiness is soon diminished, for she has a dream in which the first mother tells her that she only has three more days in America, and on the third day she will have to enter once again into Shampati’s fire like casting magic spells on her, but it fails spices fail to transform her which Tilo originally intended to be a revenge for the damage and injustice suffered by the exiled from the outer world. “Earthquake”. Rather, she is transformed back into the body of the old woman, wrinkled with age and bereft of her youthful beauty. Raven saves her from earthquake and she accepts his love and

understands that the past life is over. Thus she got the emancipation to live a free and happy life with Raven. Tilo's new name as Raven suggests that as she belongs to both India and America, and names her Maya, Tilo accepts the names it means man "things-illusion, spell, enchantment, the power that keeps this imperfect world going day after day." (338)

Interestingly, "Maya" is also an ancient Sanskrit name, and the juxtaposition of name so representative of cultural past with Tilo's present power suggest that Tilo stills lives in between spheres with contradictory spaces and times, composing the rather ambiguous landscape of her existence. But it is journey which confronts; and challenges the lives of the expatriate in their manifestations. Through Tilo Chitra Banarjee Divakaruni comments on the lives of immigrants from third world countries and their attempt to adjust to a fast paced American society.

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### 73. Indian Women Autobiographies in English as a Means to Create Gender Sensitivity among Students

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The inscription “Medicine for the Soul” adorns the library door at Thebes. Good books have always had an edifying influence on the readers across the world and educationalists over the years have underlined the significant role of good reading material in widening the horizons of the students. Personality building, knowledge enrichment, right mental make-up are undisputedly some of the virtues that accrue from good reading. Students’ learning curve can be ramped up if they get the exposure to the right kind of reading. I have made an earnest attempt in this article about the need to introduce the students to Indian women autobiographies while highlighting the motivational aspects in select autobiographies.

Indian women autobiographers of the twentieth century reflect in their writings a firm commitment to move away from the margins that they were relegated to in society. Armed with education and endowed with a fiery spirit to stand up to any discrimination, Indian women autobiographers like their counterparts in any part of the world, give a graphic account of the kind of wars they had to wage to claim their rightful place under the sky. Their life narratives stand up to portray the socio economic mores of the day and given the excellent raconteur skills, the women autobiographers weave the warp and woof of the cultural fabric of the day in their writings. What K.R. Srinivas Iyengar opines about Indo-Anglian literature while assessing its place and significance in the vast body of English literature, holds good to women autobiographers too in the general context of literature... He emphatically claims that “What makes Indo-Anglian literature an Indian literature, and not just a ramshackle outhouse of English literature, is the quality of Indianness – in the choice of subject, in the texture of thought and play of sentiment, in the organization of material and in the creative use of language,” (1.). Similarly Indian women autobiographies or autogynographies, as they are referred to, are not just a ramshackle outhouse of Indian literature, but a compass to show a direction to the social mindset of the day. The autobiographies mark the graph of the Indian women’s attempts to wriggle out of the society and culture imposed cocoons. The metaphor of their attempts for freedom can be summed up as from a caged bird to a free bird, from pan to pen, from the bored rooms of the home to the board rooms. Their dexterous handling of home and career, needle and pen, skillet and smartphone have earned them a soubriquet of a multi tasker. William Walsh (2) aptly extols the contribution of women writers of India in the following glowing terms: *Women writings have brought a nimbler modern spirit, new traits of experience and new subject matter. Indian Literature in English has an Indian soul and expresses a sensibility drawn from the same sources as the embodiments of the Indian spirit and the Indian traditions.....*” (p.1) Like Indian culture, Indian women too have shown a “genius for absorption and persistence” in spite of several incursions from the masculine bastions.—Women autobiographers offered glimpses into the interiors of femininity and provided authentic answers to the questions raised by women. (3) The autobiographies of women provide graphic accounts of the longing for freedom with the help of education. Whether it is Rasa sundari Devi, the first Indian woman autobiographer in , or the later day Suneeti Devi of the royal clan, or Savitri Devi Nanda, these self narratives showcase an attempt to carve out their identity. Between Rasa Sundari Devi and Shobha De, there are scores of women autobiographers whose different strokes of pen bring about different social frames they had lived and experienced across different time zones and cultures.

The autobiographies of women hailing from different regions of India., belong to different cultural hues and educational background and their life stories pass through a common prism of challenges that a woman faces and issue out a distinct solution for empowerment. The autobiographies can well be chosen for instilling the right set of values to the students. The life

stories are invigorating with the right mix of inspiration, optimism and steely determination hidden behind the fragile façade and can guide the students through the right values. An attempt to go through these self narratives drives home the value-quotient that they offer to students at different levels of education. Roy Pascal, (4) sums up the method in which the personality of the writer is chiseled by circumstances both adverse and helpful: *“The best autobiographies seem to suggest a certain power of the personality over circumstance, not in the arrogant sense that circumstance can be bent to the will of the individual, that the individual can extract, nurture out of disparate incidents and ultimately bind them together in his own way; disregarding all that was unusable. Painful as well as advantageous experiences can thus be transformed into the substance of the personality.”*

The ‘power of the personality over circumstance’ needs to be ingrained in students and especially among girl students if they have to arm themselves against the odds that stare into their lives. Though any good book leaves its positive imprint on the young student’s mind, a book seeped in one’s own life memoirs has an extra appeal. As teachers we have all experienced how interestingly students take the task of introducing themselves, a norm we practice to warm up the students to the communication skills. Just as the ice breaking session of students’ self introduction brings out to surface a clear understanding of their selves with their goals, role models and self-worth, the autobiographies also open up the windows of understanding as to what life has been to a woman writer whether in the present or in the distant past. With the study of autobiographies, the students not only gain access to the individual mindset with its roller coaster moves of success and failure, but they also get acquainted with a patina of thought processes and students, especially girl students can brace themselves up to the world they are going to step in after their education. It is a case of forewarned is forearmed. Women studies in general foster a sense of self confidence and autobiographies fit the bill in more than one sense.

A sense of history and social mores can be instilled in students when they are taught about Cornelia Sorabjee’s bold struggle against the social, professional and gender odds that stared into her face, when, she, as the first woman lawyer from Maharashtra, began to offer legal help with a missionary zeal to the illiterate rich women who lived behind purdah consigned to a life of segregation. The first hand narration of her battles and bouquets, flowing from her poetic pen provide a sterling account in her autobiography, INDIA CALLING (5) of what a woman, despite her docile demeanour, could do to bring about change in the men and women of her day. She narrates how the young widow from Kathiawar, who approached her mother for legal help, was instrumental in making her choose the legal profession. In her own words, *“....a lesson learnt also from my mother, since childhood days, vis-a vis every hazard, whether of unseen ‘dragons’ to be fought, or of very real and visible plague and pestilence, was that--- “there’s nothing to fear-but fear”* There is nothing to fear but fear is what her life demonstrates as she traversed through the dense forests, remote villages, impregnable havelis to help the purdahed women of the day. As a topper of the Deccan College, Pune and London-educated lawyer, she could have chosen a cushioned life seeped in luxury. But she became the face of the zenana and brought a glimmer of education to the ‘veiled’ women. Reading such a brave account of an emboldened Christian lawyer would definitely breathe confidence in students. If such accounts create confidence among girls they provide gender sensitivity to boys as well, Students need an opportunity to ponder over the huge responsibility, great sacrifice, unflinching commitment and many compromises that a woman’s life is composed of in order not to take her and her contribution for granted.. Though a family is the best place for a child to get a taste of values in life, educational institution stands second to none in providing the right platform for molding the students mindset. If the students are given the task of reading a few autobiographies and are asked to discuss the poignancy of the narratives, they do begin to jerk the kaleidoscope of their understanding of women and gain a new and valuable insight about women. Life narratives of women autobiographers allow the students to appreciate the feminine resilience in its true colors. A good teacher and good books are effective enough to make the young mind think beyond the class room and examination results. Notwithstanding the inherent limitations, we can still carve a healthy mindset with the help of good books.

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*Contemporary Literary Perspectives*

Everyone who misbehaves with a woman carries within himself a pile of impressions that family, school and society have created. If in the classroom, we can infuse the students with a sense of treating others with respect that they deserve through the select autobiographies, it would not be difficult to swing the pendulum in the right direction. Student minds are like molten wax and the imprint we create in them is instrumental in their choice of life direction. No individual is basically bad and it is the lack of guidance that sometimes throws one into a dangerous mindset. As language teachers, we enjoy a better bandwidth than others in bringing the world into the classroom using language tools. Good books stand tall as mentors and autobiographies are no exception. When students get to read that a woman in a traditional family with just a gentle nudge from her father can become a doctor in spite of the opposition from the conservative family members will be all appreciation for Savitri Devi Nanda who went to England to pursue medicine and penned her life in *The City of Two Gates*. Her take on life is a guiding light to the readers when she echoes her grandfather's words towards the end of her narrative.

On the Road of Life the moments of decision stand like great gateways, and they will be many. Some will lead you to green valleys of serene happiness; others to the heights of wisdom, and still others to unhappiness.....Sometimes pleasure will dance before your eyes, like a mirage on the face of the desert....Be on your guard at the Gateways of Decision, and you will be blessed and happy. When the students get to read the first hand accounts in the light of bare truth, they gain a new perspective on everything and it helps them in bettering their outlook.. Most of the women autobiographers like Kamala Das, Amritha Pritham, Ishvani Pseud, Shoilabala Das or Laxmi Bai Tilak and a host of others faced problems of unprecedented magnitude with an amazing level of confidence with neither social nor familial support. It is possible that after reading the issues that those women had to encounter, the present day students feel motivated to take on life with a gush of fresh energy and optimism that these books would provide. It would be a case of seeing a one-legged man, and stopping to complain about the bad shoe that one has.

The autobiographies are not only effective narratives of the self, but also social documentaries of the times. When the present day student reads about the social mores of the day, he/she will be able to make a comparison with the present and feel blessed to be a part of a different social milieu where gender equality is a politically accepted reality. Women empowerment ambled its way over the years to the present and has proved time and again that it is the individual who has to fight his way to the freedom and be prepared to pay the price for it. The Indian women autobiographies are replete with incidents where the woman's initial steps towards freedom and equality either in the choice of education, profession or life partner or simply the way of life that she would like to lead have been ruthlessly criticized and yet she stuck to her ground till she saw a glimmer of hope coming her way. Such incidents would surely be eye openers to the students who would regard the stirring self narratives with a sense of respect they deserve.

Not to stop with motivation, which is a great energy drive, the autobiographies also provide an insider view to observe a successful person and that would help in setting the role models. Students tend to develop a taste for both life and literature from the memoirs and that would double up the educative value of the autobiographies. When the students learn to read that the autobiographers, though acclaimed by the world as great writers are but flesh and blood human beings prone to the foibles and faults of ordinary mortals but steered their way clear because of their power of intent, they too will begin to see the possibility of raising the bar in their lives. For girl students, the autobiographies are a means to fortify themselves against social and professional vulnerabilities. For boys, they provide an effective means to develop gender sensitivity. When in the formative years the boys get to know the genuine attempts of women to secure her rightful place under the sky, their perspective towards women gains a touch of respect and that would mean a beginning of cultivating a healthy mindset not only towards women but also towards mankind at large. It is said that learning is a treasure and it follows its owner everywhere. If students are given a

scope to read the women autobiographies, we as teachers will not be creating a better world for the children but will definitely create better children for the world.

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## 74. The Power of Women in R.K Narayan's Novels

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This study explores the situations in which the women characters of Narayan's *Waiting For Mahatma* (1955) and *The Painter Of Signs* (1977) exercise power through Foucault's Theory of Power. It also illustrates the notion of 'power-over' and 'power to' through which these women characters gain empowerment in the microlevel power relations that circulate in the local level of the society they live in. This paper is an attempt to define R.K.Narayan's presentation of female characters and classify them in terms of their relations of power to men and to explore the reasons for those relations. This study exposes the productive dimension of power that creates possibilities of freedom and social change in women's lives. Foucault's theory of power reveals that Narayan's women characters are not entirely repressive as suggested by the contemporary theory of power sought by feminists. Instead, it evidences women empowerment, where Narayan's Daisy, Laxmi, Bharathi and Sri Ram's Grandmother who are directly involved in the micro level power relations appear assertive, bold, strong and involved in bringing changes in themselves and also in the culture they live in. In a world dominated by men, women strove to attain power over their life and living. It took great effort for women to confirm their existence as more than homemakers and caregivers. In such a situation, women and power are two elements that gained association after great battles of rights. The feminist movement in the past was a social and political movement. Then, women fought for their rights to vote. Later, World War Two involved the enrolment of women into the workplace to provide labour. As they joined the workforce, they became aware of their unequal economic and social status beside men. Dissatisfaction increased and they began to demand for their rights over their personal fulfilment. Since then, the women's movement never stopped. This study will explore how and when Narayan's women characters exercise power in *The Painter of Signs* (1977) and *Waiting for the Mahatma* (1955). The aim of this study is to explore the situations in which these women characters exercise power at the microlevel power relations and to investigate the notion of 'power-over' and 'power to' through which they gain empowerment in the selected novels. Thus, the researcher will use Foucault's (1978) theory of power to study Narayan's women characters in relation to power.

### **The Creator of *Malgudi***

Rasikpuram Krishnaswamy Iyer Narayanaswamy in short is also known as R.K.Narayan as Graham Greene, Narayan's discoverer and literary promoter addressed him. According to Raman (2001), Narayan was born in Chennai, formally known as Madras, South India in the year 1906 and earned his education at Maharaja's College in Mysore (Raman, 2001). He first started his career as a writer of short stories and essays for newspapers to eke out a living. Later, after his first novel *Swami and Friends* that was first published in 1935, he became a successful writer of many dazzling short stories and novels in English. Narayan gave birth to the city of Malgudi through his writings, which is known as India's best-loved fictional city. Malgudi, a fictitious stereotypical small town, where the standard norms of superstition and tradition apply is the interesting element in Narayan's writing. Narayan's novels are extensively read, especially *Waiting for the Mahatma* (1955) and *The Painter of Signs* (1977). His novels are widely researched by researchers around the world. Normally, the past researches on Narayan's *Waiting for the Mahatma* (1955) and *The Painter of Signs* (1977) focused on the aspects of symbolism, illusion, sex, reality, humour, religion and even on his language, specifically the sentence structures.

Narayan's women characters are neither oppressed nor subordinated. Hence, to address this problem, there is a need to study Narayan's novels in order to learn the truth. As mentioned earlier the researcher will use Foucault's Theory of Power (1978), in order to explore the operation of power among Narayan's women characters through the microlevel power relations and the notion of

„power-over“ and „power-to“ through which the author’s women characters gain empowerment in *Waiting for the Mahatma* (1955) and *The Painter of Signs* (1977). Lastly, it is worth studying Narayan’s women characters in relation to power because it will portray women in the light of power and reinforce women empowerment. Besides that, this study also acknowledges a significant shift taken by a male author who was born and bred in a country where women are considered inferior and infanticide of female babies was a common occurrence. Rather than being presented as powerless, repressed, and passive, the women in Narayan’s *Waiting for the Mahatma* (1955) and *The Painter of Signs* (1977) are active, independent. This study gives insight to the readers on how Indian women in India undergo and exercise.

Power is not an institution, and not a structure; neither is it a certain strength we are endowed with; it is the name that one attributes to a complex strategical situation in a particular society. (Foucault, 1978, p.92-93) Michel Foucault was a well-known French philosopher, historian, and social critic figure who influenced a wide range of disciplines including medicine, literature, and literary theory. Nevertheless, the status of women in India by reality does not resemble the equivalent honour. In the past, the inheritance of the Indian women is dependent on the religion, region, caste, and class in which they are born. However, in present days, the conditions have not changed much. Indian women being the majority population of India still cry for single justice under the prevailing patriarchal traditions. Women in India live entirely a different world historically, socially, economically and politically. However, the state they share in as Indian women was and is rather pathetic.

The role of power in women’s the methodology used to analyze women and microlevel power in Narayan’s *Waiting for the Mahatma* (1955) and *The Painter of Signs*. Narayan’s *Waiting for the Mahatma* (1955) and *The Painter of Signs* (1977) and attempts to answer research question one, that is, in what circumstances do the women characters in Narayan’s *Waiting for the Mahatma* (1955) and *The Painter of Signs* (1977) exercise power. His thoughts hovered around the person who commissioned him this work. Daisy, a new entrant to Malgudi is a social servant bent on bringing India’s population down. She is a woman who pays Raman to design a signboard for her clinic. Daisy, an Indian woman who belongs to a society that looks down on women at work is involved in social work. She has the freedom to enforce the notion of bringing India’s population down. At such, Daisy pays Raman to get her mission on the move. She is not bound under any types of power. She exercises power and has freedom to move towards her aims. By paying Raman, Daisy exercises power through the power relation of painter-customer. She exercises power without any constraint at the microlevels of the society. Daisy and Raman are also found to be in a woman-man power relation. In this relation of power, Daisy has the freedom to exercise power: There seem to be no one else in her house- courageous of her to admit a fellow in Raman and Daisy are strangers to each other. In the woman-man power relation, Daisy exercises power by letting Raman into her house bravely. She is not shown as a woman who is bound to let Raman into the house. Instead, she herself invites him in, thus allowing Raman to enter her house. In Indian society, it is seen as a crime if a man enters a woman’s house when she is home alone. However, Daisy is courageous enough to overlook their culture by giving Raman permission to enter her house. Thus, Daisy has the freedom to let Raman into her house through woman-man power relationship. In another circumstance, Daisy exercises power through the relation of customer-painter again: He stood at the door paused for a moment, and said, „I can come later if you please. „Yes,“ said the lady drily, and noticing the board he was carrying, „Is that our board?“ „Yes, it’s only a trial writing, not final.“ Leave it there and come back“- she glanced at her watch- „in thirty minutes. “Here, Daisy exercises power as a person who orders Raman to work on the signboard for her clinic. She requests him to come later, and due to the reason that she is paying him, Raman has to obey her demand. She asks him to come back later at her convenience. Narayan presented Daisy, as a woman who is not under control but who controls herself. She is free to do, as she desires. The author did not present anyone in the mode of being ultimately powerful. They are all in a neutral mode and only exercise power when they are in a free

power relation. Although Raman was paid to work on her signboard, it does not put him under any repressing mode of power. Raman could have said that he can't wait for 30 minutes, but he did not. Thus, he was also in the mode to exercise power but he did not choose to do so and this means, both Daisy and Raman were in a free power relation to exercise power. As Foucault (1978) says, power relation will only occur when both parties involved in the power relation are free to act and react. Hence, there should not be any restriction in the power relation. Therefore, in this circumstance, Daisy has the freedom to exercise power and Raman does not resist although he has the freedom to do so. In another scene, Daisy exercises power in the midst of their communication through man-woman power relation.

### **In Waiting for the Mahatma**

Sriram's grandmother and Bharathi exercise power. The following are the analyses on the excerpts from the novel. In *Waiting for the Mahatma* (1955), Sriram's grandmother in the power relation of grandmother-grandson exercises power freely without any constraint, especially, when she stops Sriram from withdrawing the sum of money he intends to: "Granny cried: „Correct to fifty. You need only fifty rupees now and not two hundred and fifty..." Although Sriram's grandmother does not allow him to withdraw the amount of money that he desires, she however does not put him under a compulsory constraint. There is always freedom for him to ignore her and move on with his decision, Sriram could have done it, if he has insisted, which he does not chose to do. Although there is, a space for him to resist by not obeying his grandmother, Sriram did not react in such a way: Sriram obeyed, muttering, "See! This is just what I suspected! I'm supposed to be the master of this money, but I cannot draw what I want! A nice situation!". This does not mean that he is being repressed by his grandmother and has to follow her instructions strictly; Sriram is all the way on a free ground to react. Instead of doing so, he just chose to complain about it and leaves the choice to be hers. Suppose Sriram, disobeyed his grandmother, he could have withdrawn the sum of money he wanted to and there is nothing much that the grandmother could have done instead of taking Sriram's place in complaining about his actions, in just the same way Sriram chose to do. Thus, as Foucault (1978) claims, Sriram's grandmother exercises power in a circumstance where she does not put an end to Sriram's freedom to resist but Sriram in the other way around chose to act the way his grandmother demands him to. Besides Sriram's grandmother, Bharathi is also another woman character in this novel who exercises power. Bharathi is the woman Sriram is attracted to, she appears as a liberated woman who has power in the sense she is able to involve herself into the freedom movement called by the famous freedom fighter Mahatma Gandhi. In such a position, Narayan presents Bharathi as a woman to strengthen the movement's aim for the people in India. This shows that power is circulating in the microlevel dimension where ordinary people of normal social class live. As Foucault (1978) proposed, power relations are network like function and power is found everywhere and it does not necessarily flow from the top to bottom but can also be analysed coming from the bottom up. Thus, the freedom movement that Bharathi is involved in starts from the bottom up, in other words from the microlevel dimension. It is from there that one should start to see the pattern of power practices and discourses and their interrelations and how they become inert and seemingly fixed at the macro level as Foucault (1978), claims. Bharathi is a liberated Indian woman who is involved in politics and exercises power freely, she is not bound to any form of force, nor does she control anyone under restrictions while exercising power. Narayan presents Bharathi as an independent woman who takes responsibility for her life and aims to make a difference in the society she lives in. Narayan presents Bharathi moving freely around the network of relation suggested by Foucault (1978), at the microlevel of the society. Yet another excerpt showing Bharathi exercising power is when Sriram asks to meet her: „She replied with equal resolution, „If you wish to meet me come to Babuji, the only place where you may see me. Of course, if you don't want to see me anymore, go away. As promised Sriram waits for Bharathi the next morning. His attraction to her made him follow whatever she says. Bharathi does not possess any authority or power, yet Sriram

does things as she mentions and he does so willingly. As such, she exercises power freely and Sriram is not under any form of repression.

In a nutshell, Narayan's women characters exercise power in situations where they do not subject anyone to repression. that Narayan's women characters gain empowerment through the notion of „power-to“ by being able to control their feelings, thoughts, and behaviours. The researcher means to say that Daisy and Laxmi of *The Painter of Signs* (1977), and Sriram's grandmother and Bharathi of *Waiting for the Mahatma* (1955), are constantly in a position to materialize their will according to their needs, passions and desires despite the resistance that they face. On the other hand, Narayan's women characters gain empowerment through the notion of „power-over“ by having control over another person to the extent that that person allows himself or herself to be controlled willingly and unwillingly. However, Narayan's women characters do not block the possibilities for the person under their control to resist by any means in his *Waiting for the Mahatma* (1955), and *The Painter of Signs* (1977). Thus, the way Narayan's women characters exercise „power-to“ and „power-over“ applies to Foucault's (1978), theory of power that states, power relations are dynamics of mutual influence whereby the possibilities to act and react should always be present. In other words, in order for a power relation to take place there should always be possibilities for the individuals involved to accept or resist the power acted upon them. In Narayan's *Waiting for the Mahatma* (1955) and *The Painter of Signs* (1977), Bharathi and Daisy are no common women prescribed by the traditional theory of power. Instead, they are new women who empower their lives. Additionally they also show strong involvement in politics and never subject themselves under any form of oppression knowingly or unknowingly. They are women who extensively exercise power throughout the novels of Narayan. They portray strong control over their emotions and desires when their decisions are not supportive to others, for instance, Bharathi has strong control over her emotions and desires when Sriram, her lover, does not agree with her decision to follow the Mahatma Gandhi's suggestion to surrender themselves to the police. She was very upset, however she had strong power-to to control her feelings and thoughts and thus, empower her life by proceeding with her decision and leaving Sriram to his. Meanwhile, Narayan's sophisticated Daisy portrays in many occasions where she exercises power-over. She is empowered by Narayan in many ways. She was able to influence Raman to agree to her condition for their marriage despite Raman's uncomfortable feeling at the beginning and somehow he agrees with Daisy in the end. Thus, in this situation, Daisy exercises power-over Raman and Raman undergoes it willingly without resistance. Therefore, Daisy empowers her life with her decisions unlike Raman who depends on her for decisions in his life. At such, Daisy appears a modern woman who has control-over her life and she is very practical in whatever she does. Besides that, Narayan presented Daisy as a woman who influences Raman to join her mission to fight against the growing population of India. Raman is not in any way interested with the mission, but he agrees with her suggestion because he loves .Daisy, thus he willingly gives in to Daisy's demand although he was not involved in it by heart. Overall, Daisy's empowerment in Narayan's *The Painter of Signs* (1977), is illustrated by her empowerment over her life. As suggested by Foucault (1979), Daisy and Bharathi of Narayan's selected novels are independent women with practical minds. They live their lives the way they intend to, and do not by any chance let themselves be influenced by others. Narayan's women characters sustain empowerment in his novels. Thus, power liberates Narayan's women characters from the contemporary male dominance. With this, the researcher successfully answers Research Questions One and Two. This study is significant because it provides ways to analyse power from an angle that empowers women. Although Narayan had presented his women characters as sophisticated modern women who are liberated and powerful in leading their lives, the reality in the world still maintains that women are at the secondary position in comparison to men. By altering the presentation of women in literature, the researcher delivers the importance of power in women's lives as it enables women empower their own lives to a certain extent if not entirely. Hence, the researcher discovers that the knowledge of power is as important as the power of knowledge in women's lives.

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## 75. Theme of Sisterhood in Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's *Sister of My Heart*

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### Introduction

*“Sisterhood is a metaphor, denoting a collectivity, and it operates at a more abstract and generalized level than the terms “sister” and “brother” most often used on a personalized, one-to-one basis (Oyewumi, 2001).”*

In fact, the concept of “sisterhood” suggest family ties, unconditional love and loyalty, a kinship term that dominates over ‘comrade’ and ‘friend’ which signifies only an outside relationship but not a blood-knot. The term essentially encapsulates a wholesome relationship between two women that is founded on trust and an expectation of mutual support, exchange of material and otherwise. *“Eighteenth-and-early nineteenth-century fiction encloses some of literature’s most splendid creations of friendship and because, as the first era of the modern novel, it witnesses the rooting of fictional conventions” (Todd, 1980:5).* Emotional needs are more fulfilled in female friendship rather than in men’s. Sentimental friendship between women is predominantly created by women writers which emphasizes on the relative importance of women to the other women either within the household or within the society. The “sisterhood” relationship seems privileged and sentimental in Divakaruni’s novels because Anjali and Basudha found such a friend in each other within the family, the tie which became “deliciously sentimental, combining the joys of friendship and sisterhood” (Todd, 1980:307). In *A Room of One’s Own* Virginia Woolf writes:

*“I tried to remember any case in the course of my reading where two women are represented as friends... They are confidantes, of course, in Racine and the Greek tragedies. They are now and then mothers and daughters. But almost without exception they are shown in their relation to men. It was strange to think that all the great women of fiction were, until Jane Austen’s day, not only seen by the other sex, but seen only in relation to the other sex.”* Fiction in the eighteenth century is rich in presenting female friendship, by both men and women writers. According to Janet Todd, who investigated the literary phenomenon of female friendship, its form and ideology in her book *Women’s Friendship in Literature*, says thus: *“Female friendship is the only social relationship we actually enter in the novel and the only one the heroine actively constructs.....In female friendship, however, there can be cooperation as well as conflict, and the persistent self-concern which the heterosexual tie seems to demand need not be primary (Todd, 1980:2).”*

Anjali and Basudha in *Sister of My Heart* and its sequel *The Vine of Desire*, provide emotional support to each other. Their sentimental friendship as stated by Janet Todd, “becomes a means of befriending the female reader; through her relationship with her friend, the heroine can display her exemplary state, and under her mask of sentiment, stand as a model for other young ladies who may unwisely yearn to stray” (Todd, 1980:3). Sudha, in the novel *The Vine of Desire*, aided by her childhood friend Anju, “surreptitiously battles the institution of marriage and all the social conventions that trap women” Todd, 1980:4).

In Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni’s novel *Sister of My Heart*, the two cousins Sudha and Anju, who are very different, yet connected by a special bond, assume themselves as twins. Divakaruni uses the bond of “sisterhood” relationship as a desirable one by Sudha and Anju who are “closer even than sisters, they share clothes, worries, dreams in the matriarchal Chatterjee household”, especially on the emotional support that they both render to each other. Divakaruni’s novels abound in literal and figurative familial relations; the most important of these is that between sisters. Her novels often center on the lives of immigrant women. She says, “Women in particular respond to my work because I’m writing about them, women in love, in difficulty, women in relationships. I want people

to relate to my characters, to feel their joy and pain, because it will be harder to be prejudiced when they meet them in real life". It is her ardent interest in women which insinuates her to write about women and about their relationships that they maintain in life. Sudha is a girl of dreams and illusions while Anju is critical most often and thinks with reason. Of all the women folk at home Anju likes Sudha. She speaks thus: "I could never hate Sudha. Because she is my other half. The sister of my heart (p.24). Anju deems that Sudha can understand her in such a way that nobody can understand her. Sudha is such a mate that she could comprehend not only her words but also her silence. Anju, being the first-born got possessive of Sudha that she considered her the sister of her heart. She says, "I can tell Sudha everything I feel and not have to explain any of it. She'll look at me with those big unblinking eyes and smile a tiny smile, and I'll know she understands me perfectly. Like no-one else in the entire world does. Like no-one else in the entire world will (p.24)." The cousins' life in the second section of the novel, *Queen of Swords* is distinctive from the first part of the novel, *Palace of Snakes*. The cousins' life is so secure in the *Palace of Snakes*. In the *Queen of Swords*, life moves on a different perspective where Sudha is the architect of all her accomplishments. Sudha is overwhelmed to behold Dayita, who is the root cause of all the modifications in Sudha's life. Nothing could dissuade Sudha or coerce her to feel apologetic or induce her to think over again about her resolution. Thus, Sudha finds herself on her way to self-empowerment. Joel D. Block states that the solidarity of female friendship is largely ignored for; there are a plethora of books on man-woman relationships and the mother-daughter bond. He states, "It is rare, though, to read of the electricity that suffuses female friendship, of the feelings women develop for one another that intensify their existence. Friendship remains a vast fertile area of women's lives that are unexplored" (Joel & Greenberg, 2002:1).

*Sister of My Heart* is significant as a tale of the beloved sisters Anju and Sudha who assume themselves as twins and who experience conflicting loyalties; ambiguities become obvious; their married life is not that happy as they thought it to be. The three mothers in the household endeavour, to take care of Anju and Sudha, in spite of their unfortunate fate. It is noticed that this could be the evidence for Sudha to gain strength in order to face the future. This strength of mind is offered by the "sisterhood" bond, where Sudha and Anju come together in to create a new identity in America. Their emotional disturbances make them emerge from subordination to empowered women of individual and moral strength. Divakaruni's feminism causes her to speak against the hegemonic role of male characters in a patriarchal society, who always fail to understand women. In her anthology of stories entitled *Arranged Marriage*, most women "are seen as the victims of the Indian custom of arranged marriage until their changing lives in America liberate them from their exhausted marriages and they can wake up to the so-called blessings of westernization" (Jahan, 1984:88). Her immigrant women feel that America is given a definite role in their process of awakening from the dark chambers of life. In the short story entitled *The Ultrasound* (*Arranged*, 203-30), two cousins, Runu and Anju are pregnant at the same time. Runu lives in India whereas Anju in California. They undergo ultrasound and amniocentesis tests during their pregnancies. Runu's mother-in-law and her husband pressurize her to get aborted, when it is revealed that she is pregnant with a girl, because they would only accept a male child as the family's first born. Runu opposes this and abandons her in-laws house as per the suggestion of Anju, who opines that Runu's immigration to America will be the only solution for all her problems. When Runu decides end her wifhood in a fleeting moment of apprehension, Anju questions herself about her role in taking away Runu's traditional Indian womanly qualities by her "misplaced American notions of feminism and justice" (*Arranged*, 227).

The United States of America is re-designed as the promised land in Divakaruni's novel *Sister of My Heart*, which can be considered as an expansion of the short story *The Ultrasound*. The novel creates an intriguing backdrop, set in Bengal in India, progresses to the situation depicted in the short story. In *Sister of My Heart*, the cousins Anju and Sudha (Runu from *The Ultrasound* appears here as Sudha) grow up together developing the kind of "sisterhood" relationship stronger than any other bond. Whereas *The Ultrasound* ends with the expectation of Runu's migration to America, "in the story's novelistic incarnation we are given more insight into the rationale and the promise of this

immigration. The United States again becomes the promised land, “as amazing as the fairy kingdoms of Pishi’s tales” (SMH 179), the land across the ocean at the end of the rainbow (309-10), where Sudha decides to go, to save her unborn daughter from being aborted, as determined by her mother-in-law. Divakaruni herein, attempts to draw attention to the age old social injustices like female infanticide/ foeticide and dowry system against women through the art of sensitive storytelling. Reviewing the novel *Sister of My Heart*, Peter Nazareth writes, “In Divakaruni’s work, despite sex, class and caste oppression, women need not end up as victims. America chips away at ossified Indian tradition, for people to see, as Krishna shows, that the imperative of life is deeper than arranged marriage. America and India are twinned (819).” Divakaruni’s novels mostly have an origin in the concept of social realism and transmit a particular message to her readers. She brings into play, social realism as a means to empower women and to encourage them to be themselves. She propagates through her women how personal choice is the birth right of all humans irrespective of their motherland. It is perhaps, she champions for the awareness of women that they can trace their own way, which is etched in their consciousness.

The Chatterjee family’s female figures deprived of their men nourish Anju and Sudha journeying their way to the well-being of the cousins. At every stage of their motherhood, widowhood, divorce and other mishaps, they throw light on the upper-class Bengali background and traditions. As Divakaruni hails from the same backdrop, she observes the same in both the angles cherishes and criticizes through her diasporic perspective: “Psychological healing and memory-mending are orchestrated by the characters in the novel through the device of story-telling. And in spite of the mild allegorical overtones concerning the inscrutability of the human heart, this is a scathing critique of the patriarchal and religious institutions of Bengali Brahmins and the socio-cultural traditions of postcolonial India (Bharathi, Vol.Vii:2013)” Anju and Sudha experience separation by marriage in their adulthood, but they never give a way to anything to stand between them and go to the extent of even jeopardizing their love of the men in their lives. In this context, the novel *Sister of My Heart*, can be considered a novel of female friendship. Divakaruni rejects conservative parables by creating new ones. The first part of the novel is entitled *The Princess in the Palace of Snakes*. The protagonists herein, Anju and Sudha are in the hold of their three mothers’ and the traditional role of the Indian women under the patriarchal system. This is symbolised by the traditional fairytale of the princess in the palace of snakes waiting for her Prince to rescue her. The second part entitled *The Queen of Swords*, is not a traditional fairytale, but a mesmerizing tale weaved by Sudha to wipe out the depression in Anju, upset over her miscarriage. She narrates this tale to Anju over telephone when Sunil urges her to speak to Anju. Interestingly, the outcome of listening to the story is astounding when Anju emerges bright from the clouded veil. Mothers’ feel happy over the change in Anju and Pishi Ma asks Sudha about the story she told Anju, as it is from her that Sudha learnt the art of storytelling.

*‘I told her a story’.*

*‘Ah, a story’, nods Pishi. More than any of us, she knows the power stories hold at their centre, like a mango holds its seed. It is a power that dissipates with questioning, so she merely asks, with an odd, wistful look, ‘Was it a story I had told you, Sudha?’*

*I am sorry to disappoint her. ‘It’s a new story. One I made up, sort of, on the spot.’*

*‘Does it have a name?’ asks Gouri Ma.*

*I start to shake my head. Then it comes to me.*

*‘The Queen of swords’, I say. (312)*

The tale woven by Sudha symbolizes the world where women draw courage to stand up for themselves and being individualistic by not depending on men. Undoubtedly, the author of the novel innately envisages the same. Anju loves Sunil and Sudha loves Ramesh until she is forced to leave by his betrayal, they suffer many a stinking experiences of despair and envy when Anju realizes that



Sunil has a crush for Sudha. In spite of all these, her love for her sister Sudha outshines when compared to the other relationships that they maintain. As such, Divakaruni most obviously explores the theme of “sisterhood” and suitably entitles *Sister of My Heart* and this is noticed when Anju worries for Sudha, when she walks out of her in-laws house: “*Did I push Sudha into making the wrong decision, misled by my American - feminist notions of right and wrong? Have I condemned her to a life of loneliness? (272)*” Anju is intelligent in sensing that Sudha’s presence in her married life will surely lead to trouble. As Sudha always lives in an enchanting fairy world, long before their marriage, predicted in her dream thus: “If only Anju and I, like the wives of the heroes in the old tales, could marry the same man, our Arjun, our Krishna, who would love and treasure us both, and keep us both together.” (131) Sudha’s journey to America is surely the beginning of her journey to a world created by women. “*Divakaruni makes Anju and Sudha speak alternately in their own voices, constantly shifting perspective, the narrative technique itself underlining their twinning as much as the events of their lives*”(Bharathi, Vol.Vii:2013).” Anju is obsessed with the thought that she must facilitate Sudha to thrive in her life despite the fateful disturbances. It is fitting, then, that, a novel of sisterhood should end with Anju’s thoughts:

*“We’ve formed a tableau, two women, their arms intertwined like lotus stalks, smiling down at the baby between them. Two women who have travelled the vale of sorrow, and the baby who will save them, who has saved them already. Madonnas with child . . . for now the three of us stand unhurried, feeling the way we fit, skin on skin on skin, into each other’s lives. (347)”*

Divakaruni chooses “sisterhood” theme in her novel, and places her women to inspire or guide the women of India in the West. “The solace faced by Sudha in the novel is similar to the postmodern woman faced by all souls stuck between the crossroads of tradition and modernity. When certain aspect of conventional pattern of life become morbid and tormenting, one wishes to tear apart all boundaries and escape into a world where everything is replete with novelty, glory and adventure. (Bharathi, Vol.Vii:2013).” Divakaruni believes that woman-woman friendship is a unique one because they share their life-changing experiences as women and tries to balance their conflicting passions that they encounter as daughters and wives, lovers and mothers. In an interview, she states that the power behind her writing “is the desire to put women in the centre of stories, to have their voices be the voices of interpretation, their eyes the ones that we see through. There just hasn’t been enough of that in the world, if you look back at literary history” (qtd.in Lalita 23).

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## 76. Looking at Life through the Eyes of Death: Studying the Literature of Death and Dying

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Thanatology, as the study of death and dying, and the psychological mechanisms of dealing with them, has attracted academic attention towards an issue which is a longstanding human preoccupation. *The Encyclopedia of Death and Dying* documents that the evolutions in medicine increasingly complicate the comprehension of death. Technology has propelled paradigmatic shifts in the popular understanding of death as the end of life. Cardiopulmonary failure no longer suffices as the exclusive determinant of death and hitherto unknown benefits of ‘life support mechanisms’<sup>40</sup> and ‘neomorts’<sup>41</sup> have transposed death to a liminal zone. Yet, alongside these marked shifts, there prevails the cornucopia of death practices which constitute a cultural resource and are markers of social behavioral patterns and configurations. One reason for this concurrent survival of two apparently disparate outlooks is the belief in immortality.<sup>42</sup>

Phonologically, the English “immortal” has its roots in the Latin *immortalis* meaning “not mortal” (*mors / mort* in Latin referring to ‘death’). Immortality, thus, conveys the sense of a perpetual life and often in the theological context is associated with the notions of after-life, resurrection, and rebirth.<sup>43</sup> According to Bronislaw Malinowski:

the belief in immortality is the result of a deep emotional revelation, standardized by religion, rather than a primitive philosophic doctrine. Man’s conviction of a continued life is one of the supreme gifts of religion, which judges and selects the better of the two alternatives suggested by self-preservation – the hope of continued life and the fear of annihilation . . . the rites of mourning, the ritual behaviour, immediately after death, can be taken as pattern of the religious act, while the belief in immortality, in the continuity of life and in the nether world, can be taken as the prototype of an act of faith. (Robben 21)

Religion and burial rites, thus, extend a comforting succor and help restore normalcy to the social order that has been temporarily disrupted by an event of death. Since diverse cultures and

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<sup>40</sup> Life support mechanism is the use of machines to keep someone’s vital bodily functions operating without any perceptible brain functions.

<sup>41</sup> Neomort or the newly dead refers to a brain-dead human being that could be kept on life support for organ transplantation, medical and nursing education, and drug research. The term was coined by Willard Gaylin and first appeared in his 1974 article “Harvesting the Dead.” According to Gaylin, the availability of modern respirators has made possible artificially sustained respiration in an individual even after the occurrence of complete brain death. However, given the acceptance of brain as the one, “universally applicable” determinant of death, such patients could well be declared dead. In that case, “these cadavers would have the legal status of the dead with none of the qualities one now associates with death. They would be warm, respiring, pulsating, evacuating, and excreting bodies requiring nursing, dietary, and general grooming attention—and could probably be maintained so for a period of years” (Gaylin, “Harvesting the Dead” 26).

<sup>42</sup> This paper shall focus particularly on the theological approaches to immortality rather than the contemporary, technologically induced actualisations of the same.

<sup>43</sup> Robert Jay Lifton’s term “symbolic immortality” conveyed the varied modes that people adopted in order to overcome the universal fear of death. Symbolic immortality could be understood in terms of *biological immortality* (through ones offsprings), *creative immortality* (through art), *theological immortality* (through notions of after-life, reincarnation, etc as propagated by religion), *natural immortality* (to believe oneself to be an eternal part of the universe), and *experiential immortality* (through altered states of consciousness). Recently, Stephen Cave in his *Immortality* (2012) also offered four different narratives—“Staying Alive,” “Resurrection,” “Soul,” and “Legacy”—as ways of attaining symbolic immortality.

religions hold varied paradigmatic representations and value the dead in different ways it is indeed difficult to prioritize the needs and views of one group over another. However, by offering a socially shared image of death, such rites allow the mourners to grasp the finitude associated with the event. Most of these mortuary practices, therefore, serve as connecting links between the past and the present, and between the living and the dead.

For instance, the the Guarayu tribesmen of Eastern Bolivia believe that “soon after burial the liberated soul of the deceased [starts] on a long and dangerous journey to the land of the mythical ancestor, Tamoi or Grandfather, who lived somewhere in the west . . . . [Finally when the soul arrived] the Grandfather welcomed the soul with friendly words and washed it with a magic water which restored its youth and good looks. From then on, the soul lived happily, drinking chicha and carrying on the routine activities of its former life” (Eliade 49-50). The Guarayu belief is interesting at multiple levels. First, it refers to the restoration of youth after death. Second, it also talks about the soul’s indulgence in “routine activities of its former life.” And third by stating that the soul of the newly dead travels to the land of the ancestor it establishes the bond between the living and the dead. Not only is there a metaphorical reunion awaiting the living after their death but the post-death lifestyle and conduct too resemble their stay in the mortal world. Such beliefs in the after-life pertain not only to indigenous tribesmen but are very often theologically upheld. Robert J. Lifton and Eric Olson in “Symbolic Immortality” observe— “Imagery of rebirth is found in the Hindu and Buddhist as well as the Jewish and Christian religions.” According to the Buddhist philosophy, the human form is “the evolving principle, the principle of continuity whose normal goal is Enlightenment” (Evans-Wentz 1960).<sup>44</sup> Similarly, the Abrahamic religions by preaching the existence of Heaven and Hell firmly establish the faith in an after-life among the believers.

What is of interest, however, is the fact that these traditional beliefs in immortality have been assimilated with the present-day approaches towards death and dying. For example, the broad concept of the natural human body once formed of and by earthly elements (earth, fire, air, water and ether)— upheld particularly by the Hindu and Buddhist philosophies— being returned to those basic elements through death has been modified into the concept of “ecological immortality.”<sup>45</sup> Although the interdependency between thanatocentric culture and the environment is ageless, there has been a growing trend, especially since the mid-nineteenth century, in the sphere of burial practices to adopt and adapt new methods of burial that will attend to the growing environmental concerns. For Douglas Davies the idea of “ecological immortality” fits within a new and broader ecological ethics providing individuals with “a new way of thinking about themselves, their lives and their world.” The present day practice of Japanese Tree-Burial (*jumokuso*) befits Davies’ understanding of “ecological immortality”. First created in 1999 by Chisaka Genpo, the head priest of a Buddhist temple, the basic concept behind Tree-Burial is the marking of the grave with a tree. The inhumation consists in digging a hole near the tree, into which the remains are directly buried. Each burial spot is, then,

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<sup>44</sup> The theory of rebirth in Buddhism (as also in Hinduism) is implied through the Sanskrit term “samsara,” the cycle of birth, death and rebirth propelled by *karman*.

<sup>45</sup> In Tibet, for instance, the four Northern Buddhist methods of disposing of a corpse are aimed at returning the body to its constituent elements as quickly as possible. Cremation is considered the best method to adopt. Earth burial, water burial and air burial are also practised. When air-burial is adopted in Tibet, even the bones of the corpse, after the birds have stripped them of flesh, are disposed of by being hammered to bits in small circles in the rocks of the funereal hill, then mixed with flour and formed into a dough and given to the birds to devour. Although, all known religious methods of disposing of a corpse are in vogue; but, owing to lack of fuel for purposes of cremation, ordinarily the corpse after having been carried to a hill-top or rocky eminence, is chopped to pieces and, much to after the Parsee custom, given to the birds and beasts of prey. In some remote districts earth burial is customary; and it is commonly employed everywhere when death has been caused by a very contagious and dangerous disease. Otherwise, Tibetans generally object to earth burial, for they believe that when a corpse is interred the spirit of the deceased, upon seeing it, attempts to re-enter it, whereas cremation, or other methods of quickly dissipating the elements of the dead body, prevent such attempts.

marked by one or more wooden tablets on which are inscribed the name(s) of the deceased. A catchphrase of this practice is “the deceased reborn as flower”. The use of “reborn” is quite significant as it once again invokes the essentially theological beliefs in after-life and rebirth. The burial ground in the case of “jumokuso” (as also in the *woodland burials* practised in Britain since the 1990s) provides an opportunity to return to old customs, develop new rituals and participate in ways that were not possible given the time and logistical constraints of the crematorium.

Similarly, the practice of embalming, immensely popularized by the funeral industries of today, draws upon the ancient Egyptian tradition of mummification. In *The Principles and Practices of Embalming*, Clarence G. Strub and L. G. Frederick state “a funeral service is a social function at which the deceased is the guest of honor and the center of attraction”. Joyce in his short story “The Sisters” presents the readers with a brief yet vivid example of this scenario. While describing the deceased priest he writes— “There he lay, solemn and copious, vested as for the altar, his large hands loosely retaining a chalice. His face was very truculent, grey and massive, with black cavernous nostrils and circled by a scanty white fur.” Today, the dead is seen as an object of display. As a result, the body has to undergo rigorous procedures of embalming and restoration, particularly to make it presentable for viewing, to feign an attitude of healthy slumber and normality, without the signs of disease or dismembering prior to the final rites. What was primarily an act of preservation, has now transformed into a highly commercialized means of body disposal. One cannot but possibly agree with Oliver Leaman’s remark that “[d]eath is itself controlled and transformed by the forces of society which are intent on preventing us from directly confronting death and decay” (Howarth and Leaman 150).<sup>46</sup>

However, despite such attempts at masking the reality of death, humankind’s fear of death has not completely dissolved. In fact, the ‘uncanny’<sup>47</sup> sensation that death continues to conjure has led to the coinage of a new term “the uncanny valley” by Masahiro Mori. Mori’s conception of the ‘uncanny valley’ is corroborated by Ernst Jentsch’s understanding of the ‘uncanny’ which was later elaborated by Freud in his essay “The Uncanny,” (both of whom associate the uncanny with the fear of death). According to Mori, when objects and features behave almost, but not exactly, like natural beings, it induces a response of revulsion among the observers, which as Mori points out could be depicted through a “valley,” a dip in the graph of the comfort level.

The “uncanny valley,” although popular in the fields of robotics (animation and cinemation) can be applied to several literary texts. E. T. A. Hoffman’s “The Sandman” is perhaps one of the earliest and best examples of this phenomenon.<sup>48</sup> Hoffman is deft in his portrayal of Olympia, a humanlike doll. Hoffman writes— “[Olympia’s] beautifully shaped face and her figure roused general admiration . . . . In her step and deportment there was something measured and stiff, which struck many as unpleasant, but it was ascribed to the constraint produced by the company.” A reader without a prior knowledge of the text will immediately mistake Olympia for a living-breathing individual. In fact, Hoffmann maintains the suspense by presenting Olympia as the daughter of Professor Spalanzani. That Olympia is unlike a human is only subtly hinted at through the following lines—

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<sup>46</sup> Leaman’s observation points towards humankind’s innate tendency towards death-denial. Life support systems and neomorts are human attempts at denying death its irrevocability.

<sup>47</sup> Freud in his 1919 essay “The ‘Uncanny’” defines it as that which is “undoubtedly related to what is frightening—to what arouses dread and horror”. He further observes, “[the] uncanny is in reality nothing new or alien, but something which is familiar and old-established in the mind and which has become alienated from it only through the process of repression.” Freud’s definition of the term corresponds to his understanding of the German “unheimlich” (the opposite of “Heimlich” meaning homely).

<sup>48</sup> Hoffman’s “The Sandman” is also the text that Freud discusses in his 1919 essay. However, Freud concerns himself with the issue of the double and Hoffman’s portrayal of Coppélius.

Olympia's hand was as cold as ice; [Nathaniel] felt a horrible deathly chill thrilling through him. He looked into her eyes, which beamed back full of love and desire, and at the same time it seemed as though her pulse began to beat and her life's blood to flow into her cold hand . . . he bent towards her mouth, when his glowing lips were met by lips cold as ice! Just as when he had touched her cold hand, he felt himself overcome by horror

The initial positive impact that Olympia has on the gathering is precisely because of her appearance which is undoubtedly human. Nathaniel, who is completely beguiled by her, is only momentarily overcome by horror, a feeling that he quickly dismisses. The sense of horror that he experiences is stimulated by the extreme coldness of Olympia's physical disposition, icy coldness being particularly associated with dead bodies. Olympia, therefore, triggers an immediate awareness of death and subsequently the fear associated with death in Nathaniel.<sup>49</sup>

The issue is not very different in the case of Mary Shelley's "The Mortal Immortal" either. Shelley's Winzy like Olympia induces the sense of the uncanny, a revulsion not just among the other characters but also among the readers. Once a mortal, Winzy ceases to be so after he accidentally consumes an immortality elixir that also halts the process of aging. Gradually, his ever youthful and immortal disposition begins to stir feelings of "horror and detestation". The uncanny in this example operates by making a human devoid of its essential properties, that of age and death. While on the one hand, death is the object of fear, on the other hand, immortality too is looked upon with dread. By situating the "uncanny" within the framework of death both these short stories help illuminate the paradoxes in social behavioral patterns and attitudes towards death, dying and immortality. The literature of death, thus, involves juxtaposing and integrating contradictory yet concomitant perspectives towards death and dying.

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<sup>49</sup> Karel Čapek in his play *R.U.R. or Reason's Universal Robots*, a science-fiction fantasy about robots and the men who mass-produce them also dwells on a similar theme. Čapek elaborates on the theme of death in the play and attempts to establish that the only distinguishing factor between the robots and the humans is that they do not "register" death or the fear of it.

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## 77. Southern Flavour from Indian Cuisine: Reference to Works of Narain and Raja Rao

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### Introduction

Indian English literature is a multi-coloured gift package to the contemporary world literatures. Indian writers in English brought to the Indian fiction, many elements in which it had previously been largely deficient an epic breadth of vision, a metaphysical rigour and philosophical depth, a symbolic richness, a lyrical fervour and true Indianness of style. R.K.Narayan, Mulk Raj Anand and Raja Rao have been stable representatives of Indianness through their works. Out of the famous trio, R.K.Narayan and Raja Rao are essentially southern in their thought and expression. It is not wrong to figure out the fundamental regional touch in their novels and this never drag our hands from the chain of nationalistic oneness .

### From the Roots

R.K.Narayan is one such writer who intends to give aesthetic satisfaction out of his work rather than treating his art as a mere communicative medium. Born at Madras, graduated from Mysore Maharaja college. R in Narayan's name stands for Rasipuram and K for his father's name Krishnaswamy Iyer. But he prefers to be called simply Narain. Raja Rao was born in 1908 at Hassan, a small town in Mysore. He was greatly influenced by Kannada saint poets. Raja Rao in an interview published in ' The Illustrated Weekly of India ' narrated, he was named Raja on account of the specially privileged occasion of his birth that took place when the then Maharaja of Mysore was standing at the door of his house and his father was receiving him in a ceremonial way.

### Names of the characters

Narain and Raja Rao incorporates their characters carefully into the native setting by giving regional names to them. We observe few names like Achakka, Moorthy, Boranna, Puttamma, Ramakrishna pai, Govindan Nair, Bhoothalingaswamy Iyer, Eletchan-the Malayali, Nimka ,Narsiga, Javni, Hosakeri Nanjundayya Swamy, Chandran, Muthu, Sastry, Venkat Rao, Kannan, Selvi and Honappa. We can clearly identify some common South Indian suffixes to the above names like 'amma', 'iah', 'akka', 'anna', 'an', 'appa', 'Iyer', 'Nair', 'Rao', etc.. that are identities of south.

### Art of story telling

Kanthapura novel begins in a traditional scenario of storytelling by an elderly woman, Achakka to another woman. It appears to be like a fable of memory with flashback and stream of consciousness techniques told in a leisurely manner by mixing truths with imagery adopting a vernacular narrative strategy in order to immerse the listener into the story. In *The Man Eater of Malgudi*, Narain follows the primitive Indian technique of narration that keeps the reader in curiosity and suspense through out. He draws sources from epic tales and mythologies for effectiveness.

### Linguistic aspect

The most interesting part is adornment of language to the ideas of the writers. Raja Rao in order to convert his thoughts exactly into a foreign language took up various shortcuts. He made an extensive use of resources of Indian languages like Sanskrit and Kannada. It springs from Indian

manner of gesture and speech without any distortion. Here is an example for his capturing the cadence of the Kannada speech:

“ Ramu, my child, are you awake or asleep? Javni, You monkey! why dont you come in? Who do you think is here Javni? My brother, my brother!”

Still he never lapses into Baboo English. Raja Rao's female elderly narrator of Kanthapura is said to be speaking the Kannada language and if She were to Speak English,she would exactly speak in this way and no other: “ If you are the sons of your father do what this learned boy says”. Another example of localised translated idea of Raja Rao: And hearts began to beat,and yet we saw no Moorty,and yet no Moorty,and yet not a hair of his head was seen.” Raja Rao transports Kannada words into English viz..Dasarahaavu,Aiyyappa,Ayyo,Ayyayyo etc... And holds tightly the native ingrediants in all his novels.He also says that 'Gambhiratha' which mean profoundity and majesty when added to the power of English,this blend satisfies the requirements of language of narration.Certain objectionable language in cursing manner has also been used by him. “ May your house be destroyed-may your wife die childless-I will sleep with your mother.” in Kanthapura. Raja Rao's directly translated phrases “ God has not given me a tongue for nothing...”, “Every squirll has its day” “ The policemen are not your Uncle's sons” Expressions like Harikatha-man, Gandhi-man are coined by him. But R.K.Narayan does not pressurize English language with the heavy vernacular burdens. Still it is a challenge to any Indian Writer to create Indianness in English. His direct usage of South Indian words like beedi for tobacco, sanyasi for saint, anna for currency,Amma for mother are significant. Some of the phrases heard in our day to day lives: “ You and Your News paper” - commonly used as “Nuvvooo,Nee newspaperunuuu..” “Have you come to your senses” - “ Ippatikyna thelivochinda?”

We can also find a method of using words with completing sense called 'Purnam'.It belongs to Sanskrit and its derived languages. Ex: Muhurta'm,Mandapam,Gopuram and Kalyanam etc...It is worth mentioning here that some phrases used by these writers directly convey that their works and backdrops belong absolutely to South India: “Savitri, the North Indian Princess...” -- The serpent and the rope by Raja Rao. “The Gramophone company,which had its factory somewhere in North India, automatically collapsed.” - R.K. “ Have you heard of a thing called Jujitsu..?Well this is a simple trick in Jujitsu perhaps known to half a dozen persons in the whole of South India.” - R.K

### **Local setting**

R.K.Narayan's Malgudi in 'Malgudi days' is a beautiful Image shown by Southern Mirror.Malgudi,though a 'Country of the mind' is speculated to be Lalgudi or Yadavogiri in Mysore by Srinivasa Iyengar,few others viewed it as Coimbatore. We also identify R.K's Landmarks like Mempi forests,Kukanhalli tank ,Chettiar Stores etc.. Raja Rao's first description of the vividness of his Sthala-purana,a Buildungsroman, "Kanthapura" “High on the Ghats is it,High up the steep mountains that face the cool Arabian seas,up the Malabar coast is it,up Manglore and Puttur.”

### **Religion and culture**

While depicting the village as a whole,the writers give hints of Southern style of the localites offering divine prayers to Goddess Kanthapureswari,Watching 'Harikatha',etc... “ Karthik has come to Kanthapura...Sisters Kartik has come with the glow of lights and the unpressed footsteps of the wandering Gods...”- Kanthapura. There are references to exclusive south Indian diety names and their pujas from R.K's pen like Kapileswara swamy, Satyanarayana Puja,'God of Tirupati' and Lord Subramanya. Celebrating of South Indian Festivals like Pongal and Pronouncing Deewali as Deepavali points the Dravidian culture.



## Music and art

“Music is divine whether Eastern or western” as said by a popular character in a movie is true. In Indian Classical music, Carnatic is essentially South Indian. R.K discusses about Bhairavi raga, Punnaga-varali raga, Kalyani-Varnam, Tyagaraja Swamy Kriti in Begada as a contrasting Raga, Thodi compositions, Javalis, folk songs and Pallavi. It is well known that Tyagaraja swamy kritis are composed in Telugu language.

## Food

South Indian Culture reflecting in Edible stuff is one of the evidences. In South India, 'Coffee' is a common and prominent beverage usually served in metal cups to ordinary ones and in Silver cups to special guests. Nanjamma in Kanthapura serves Coffee in Silver cup to Moorthy. In Kanthapura there is mentioning about Skeffington Coffee Estate. There are references to Pulao, Payasam, Idlies, lentil soup called Rasam, Pongal and Bondas. Some other items like Dosai Appalams, ragi also mentioned. “Only fools marry and they deserve all the trouble they get... You don't have to own a Coffee estate because you like to have a cup of coffee now and then.” -- The Man Eater of Malgudi

## Conclusion

Besides the above observations, there are also some typical points that prove writers' native interest. Intermediate study course, loose dhothies called lungies, Tamil pictures, caste divisions- Brahmin quarters, Black smits, Gold Smiths, Coffee planters, potters's street, Weavers quarters, the communities of Untouchables and D.Gs called dancing girls may be identified. References to the cities like Hyderabad, Madras-Banglore express, Mandhakam and Katpadi, Rameswaram, the town of Paamban, Koppal, Karaikudi, Mylapore and Kumbam are also made. Thus India, a home of a diversity of cultures under the influence of different racial and religious groups of which Aryan culture and Dravidian culture are the distinctive ones. The impact of these is inevitable on writers right from the beginning of the evolution of their ideologies as well as literary outputs. On the whole this is the flavour of delicious variety of south diffused from the Indian Literature cuisine.

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