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Contemporary Trends in English Literary Studies

The terrain of English literary studies in the 21st century is witnessing a profound and dynamic transformation. As we navigate an increasingly interconnected, digitized, and pluralistic world, the contours of literary scholarship are being reshaped by new critical frameworks, interdisciplinary synergies, and evolving pedagogical priorities. This special issue of our journal seeks to engage with these shifting paradigms and spotlight the myriad ways in which English literary studies continue to reflect, challenge, and reimagine contemporary cultural discourses.



A defining trend in current literary studies is the foregrounding of *marginalized voices and alternative canons*. The past decade has seen a surge in scholarship that recovers and re-evaluates the contributions of women, Dalit writers, LGBTQ+ voices, Indigenous storytellers, and postcolonial perspectives, thereby unsettling the traditional Eurocentric literary canon. This decentering reflects a broader ethical and political commitment to inclusivity and social justice within the humanities.

Equally compelling is the rise of *interdisciplinary approaches* that integrate literature with fields as diverse as environmental studies (ecocriticism), artificial intelligence (literary AI), medical humanities, and digital humanities. These intersections have expanded the scope of literary inquiry, enabling scholars to explore narratives of climate change, algorithmic poetics, illness and embodiment, and the digital archiving of texts with renewed vigor and relevance.

The proliferation of *digital media and technologies* has also revolutionized literary production and criticism. E-literature, hypertext

narratives, and virtual reading communities exemplify how storytelling modes are evolving in a digital era. Meanwhile, social media platforms have transformed the public intellectual landscape, making literary criticism more accessible and participatory.

Another notable trend is the increasing emphasis on *global Englishes and world literature*. With English now a global language, the boundaries between national literatures are becoming porous. Writers from non-Western contexts are crafting complex narratives that blend local realities with transnational themes, and scholars are responding with comparative methodologies that interrogate these hybrid cultural productions.

Simultaneously, literary studies are revisiting and revitalizing *classical and modern texts* through newer lenses—be it through affect theory, memory studies, trauma theory, or ethics of care. This reflexivity signals a healthy continuity within the field: a willingness to engage the past even as it embraces the future.

As guest editor for this issue, I am heartened by the depth and diversity of scholarship our contributors bring. Their essays traverse genres, geographies, and generations, offering fresh perspectives on enduring questions. It is our hope that this collection not only contributes to ongoing debates but also inspires new lines of inquiry.

In conclusion, contemporary English literary studies stand at an exciting crossroads—deeply rooted in tradition, yet constantly in dialogue with the present. As we move forward, the challenge will be to sustain this critical energy, foster inclusive practices, and ensure that literature remains a vibrant space for reflection, resistance, and renewal.

Prof. (Dr.) Mukesh Yadav

Guest Editor

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Globalization and Estrangement in Mohsin Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*

M. Priya Sukanya and M.P. Ganesan

Introduction

Mohsin Hamid, a Pakistani novelist, was born in Lahore on July 23, 1971. He grew up in the United States where his father was a professor at Stafford University. Hamid later returned to Lahore with his family and enrolled in an American School in Pakistan. At the age of eighteen, he went back to United State to complete his studies. After graduating from the Princeton University in 1993, he returned to Pakistan and began his carrier as a writer. His first novel *Moth Smoke* was published in 2000 and his second novel *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* was published in 2007. *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* is his well known novel, which has been translated in to twenty five languages. Hamid is considered as a one of the most influential voices of Pakistani writing in English.

In Mohsin Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*, the protagonist Changez, a Pakistani man recounts his life story to an unnamed American in Lahore cafe. Changez talks about his early life in Pakistan, studying at Princeton University and working a top valuation firm in New York. After the 9/11 attack, he becomes disillusioned with American values and identity. His relationship with Erica reflects his struggle with assimilation and cultural identity. As hostility towards his growth in post-9/11 America, Changez goes back to Pakistan. He embraces his roots and rejects the Western ideals. The novel explores themes of identity, belonging, cultural alienation and the impact of global politics on personal lives. It prompts the readers to think about the complexities of cultural identity and the effects of globalization.

According to Mahendra, Globalization is the process of people's business and government interacts and integrats around the world. The term globalization" first appeared in the early Twentieth century, replacing the French term (mondialization). It developed its current meaning in the late twentieth century and became widely used in the 1990s to describe the new level of international connection after the Cold War. The origin of globalization goes back to the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. It advances in transportation and communication. This has been increased global exchange led to more international trade and the sharing of ideas, beliefs and cultures. Globalization is mainly an economic process but also involves social and cultural aspects. Conflicts and international diplomacy are also significant parts of globalization. In literature, globalization refers to how literary texts engage and reflect or critique global processes. It involves the interconnectedness of cultures, economies and societies worldwide. Literature often explores the various dimensions of globalization.

Hypothesis

This study aims that the Globalization offers opportunities for success and achieve the dream but it also increase the feeling of isolation and confusion about identity, especially for individual like Changez who are caught between American and Pakistani culture.

Objectives

1. To analyze the impact of globalization on Changez through his journey in *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*.
2. To investigate how globalization initially shape Changez's identity and aspiration in United States.
3. To analyzes how Changez's sense of identity evolve throughout the novel in relation to his experience in the United States and Pakistan.
4. To explore the reason behind Changez's return to Pakistan to context of globalization and estrangement.

Review of Literature

Dr. Cengiz Karagöz in his 2020 articles, “Globalization and Creole Culture in Mohsin Hamid’s novel “TRF”, provides a detailed analysis of how global and local cultures mix and influence individual identities and urban environments. Karagöz explores the cultural blending in the novel, emphasizing the active and mutual nature of globalization. By looking at the experiences of the main character, Changez, in both Lahore and New York, Karagöz shows how globalization shapes both Eastern and Western cultural elements. One can understand how globalization impacts personal and community identities in the novel.

In her 2019 research paper titled “The Reluctant Fundamentalist: Hybridity and the Struggle for Identity,” Amani Sami Salmeen delves into how Mohsin Hamid’s protagonist deals with having two cultural backgrounds and the difficulties of keeping a mixed identity while dealing with the pressures of globalization. The paper shows the tension between the main character's own feelings and those of the society around him, focusing on his internal struggle and the outside pressures. Salmeen's analysis gives the reader a deeper understanding of how the protagonist learns to accept himself in a world that's increasingly interconnected.

Statement of the Article

Globalization offers opportunities for success but can also lead to feelings of isolation and identity confusion, as seen in Changez's changing cultural identity in both the United States and Pakistan.

Globalization

Globalization significantly contributes to individual feelings of disconnection and alienation, as it often imposes a uniform culture that undermines local identities and communal bonds. As discussed by Nederveen Pieterse (2009), the process of globalization can lead to cultural homogenization, which erodes local traditions and fosters a sense of cultural displacement among individuals. This disconnection is particularly acute in marginalized communities, where individuals may

struggle to maintain their cultural identity amidst dominant global influences. Bhabha (1994) argues that these pressures can lead to profound identity crises, as individuals grapple with the clash between their cultural heritage and the overarching narratives of globalization. Ultimately, this dynamic creates a landscape where individuals feel increasingly isolated from their cultural roots and communities, highlighting the complex relationship between globalization and personal identity.

Changez's Initial Ambition and Success

In Mohsin Hamid's novel *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* the main character, Changez, a Pakistani man, goes through a shift in his identity and ambitions while in the United States because of globalization. At first, Changez is ambitious and aims to achieve the American Dream. His journey starts with his education at Princeton University, a symbol of global prestige and excellence. Getting into such a top school shows the appeal of globalization, where talent can cross national borders. After finishing his degree, he joins Underwood Samson, a company that represents the meritocratic and capitalist ideals of globalization, offering the chance for a successful career in the global financial sector. Changez says: "This is a dream come true" (3).

Changez's assimilation into American culture shows his strong desire to belong and succeed. Excited by the new opportunities, he embraces his life in the USA. He takes part in social activities, adopts Western clothing, and enjoys the fast-paced lifestyle of New York City. His romantic interest in Erica, an American woman, highlights his commitment to fitting in. At the same time, he struggles with the complexities of his identity in a globalized world. Arjun Appadurai's terms highlight this complexity, as he casts "Muslims as an interruptive presence on the global stage," revealing how their identities often challenge the narratives of globalization and assimilation.

The Impact of 9/11 attack on Changez's identity

As Changez Explores American culture, he starts to feel socially

estranged. Despite his success, he faces subtle discrimination and is seen differently because of his Pakistani identity. This shows the clash between his cultural background and the dominant American culture influenced by globalization. Changez initially wants recognition and belonging in American business and social circles. However, as he feels more estranged and disillusioned, especially after the 9/11 attacks, his connection with America fades. This reflects a broader critique of globalization, which divisions and exclusions based on nationality and ethnicity. Globalization introduces Changez to new ideas and lifestyles that challenge his previous beliefs and values. His romantic relationship with Erica, an American struggling with her own identity issues, further complicates his self-esteem. The conflict between his Pakistani heritage and the American identity he starts to adopt creates an inner struggle that shapes his evolving sense of self. As Morey articulates, "Hamid illustrates how Changez's struggle is emblematic of a broader dislocation experienced by many Muslims in the post-9/11 world, caught between their cultural heritage and the pressures to assimilate." The conflict between his Pakistani heritage and the American identity he starts to adopt creates an inner struggle that shapes his evolving sense of self. Changez says, "I was uncertain where I belonged: in New York, in Lahore, in both, or in neither" (168).

Identity Struggle in Globalized World

Changez starts to question his place in American society and how American values compare to his Pakistani roots. Throughout the novel, Changez reconnects with his Pakistani identity in many ways. When he visits Lahore, he reflects on his family, cultural heritage, and the political issues in Pakistan. His interactions with family and old friends show the differences between his life in America and life in Pakistan, making him rethink his priorities and sense of belonging. By the end of the novel, Changez's identity becomes more ambiguous; he no longer fits clearly into being either American or Pakistani, but instead occupies a complex space between cultures and ideologies. He becomes "reluctant" about his fundamental loyalties and struggles with the conflicting loyalties and perspectives shaped by his experiences in both countries. Changez's

journey in *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* explores how identity is formed through globalization, cultural encounters, political events, and personal reflection. His development shows the complexities of managing multiple identities and the impact of global forces on how he sees himself.

Changez's Return

Changez's return to Pakistan represents his reconnection with his social and public identity. After experiencing social estrangement and frustration in the US, returning to Pakistan allows him to rediscover and reaffirm his Pakistani heritage. This reconnection serves as a response to the homogenizing effects of globalization, which often threaten local cultures and identities. Through Changez's journey, Mohsin Hamid critiques the superficiality of globalization's promises of economic and cultural integration. His experiences in the corporate world and as a foreigner in the U.S. highlight how globalization can lead to feelings of alienation and detachment from one's roots and values.

In exploring themes of alienation and belonging in a globalized world, Hamid examines Changez's navigation of tensions between his American experiences and his renewed sense of belonging in Pakistan. Changez grapples with conflicting loyalties and identities, illustrating the challenges of forming one's identity in a globalized environment that, despite its connectivity, often fosters feelings of isolation.

In *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*, Mohsin Hamid skilfully weaves together themes of globalization and estrangement to challenge conventional ideas of identity in our interconnected world. Hamid contrasts the alienation that can come with pursuing success and assimilation in Western societies with Changez's longing for authenticity and belonging, drawing him back to Pakistan. The story explores the complexities of cultural assimilation, the erosion of local identities under global pressures and the ongoing search for personal integrity in a world shaped by economic, political and cultural globalization. This narrative invites readers to reflect on the importance of understanding and preserving diverse cultural identities, even as globalization continues to reshape how we perceive ourselves and society.

Conclusion

In conclusion, through Mohsin Hamid's novel *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* the researcher explores themes of identity, globalization and cultural conflict. Using Changez's journey, the paper examines how globalization both connects and divides individuals across borders, evoking feelings of both connection and estrangement. Changez's path from seeking integration into American society to later disillusionment and reconnection with his Pakistani heritage highlights broader challenges in today's globalized world. By exploring these themes, the researcher encourages readers to reflect on their own identities and how global forces influence their personal and collective sense of belonging in an interconnected world.

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A Discourse on Men's Liberation in the Select Works of Saul Bellow

M. Karthikeyan and C.N. Annadurai

Introduction

Saul Bellow's literary works provide a rich exploration of men's liberation, offering insights into the complex interplay between internal desires and external constraints. Through an analysis of *Dangling Man*, *The Adventures of Augie March*, *Herzog*, and *Humboldt's Gift*, this article seeks to uncover the nuanced portrayal of liberation in Bellow's oeuvre. By examining the existential and psychological dimensions of freedom, Bellow's novels reveal the paradoxes and challenges inherent in the quest for self-fulfillment.

I. Dangling Man: The Paradox of Waiting

a. Context of Waiting

In *Dangling Man*, Bellow presents Joseph, a man caught in a state of anticipation as he awaits his induction into the army. This period of waiting serves as a metaphor for Joseph's existential limbo and his struggle with the concept of freedom. The novel illustrates how Joseph's inability to act becomes a crucible for his internal conflicts and reflections on liberation.

b. Internal vs. External Freedom

Joseph's existential struggle highlights the tension between internal desires and external constraints. Bellow's portrayal of Joseph's introspection reveals a profound disillusionment with both personal aspirations and societal expectations. This dynamic underscores the idea that true liberation often remains elusive amidst conflicting demands.

c. Role of Alienation

Joseph's alienation from societal roles and personal desires emphasizes the psychological dimension of liberation. Bellow's depiction of Joseph's detachment underscores the complexities of navigating one's identity amidst external pressures and internal conflicts.

II. The Adventures of Augie March: A Quest for Self-Actualization

a. The American Dream and Liberation

In *The Adventures of Augie March*, Augie's dynamic pursuit of self-actualization reflects the complexities of achieving liberation within the framework of the American Dream. Bellow explores how Augie's adventures illustrate both the potential and limitations of this dream as a vehicle for personal freedom.

b. Role of Identity and Self-Discovery

Augie's journey is marked by a continuous search for identity. Bellow's narrative highlights the interplay between personal aspirations and external influences, revealing how Augie's quest for self-discovery is integral to his pursuit of liberation.

c. The Paradox of Freedom

Bellow's depiction of Augie's quest reveals the paradox of seeking freedom through external achievements. Augie's experiences illustrate how the pursuit of success and validation can simultaneously facilitate and complicate the quest for genuine liberation.

III. Herzog: The Intellectual and Emotional Dimensions of Liberation

a. Intellectual Exploration and Liberation

In *Herzog*, Bellow portrays Moses Herzog's intellectual pursuits as both a source of liberation and a potential source of conflict. Herzog's philosophical musings reveal the relationship between knowledge and freedom, emphasizing the challenges of reconciling intellectual aspirations with personal fulfillment.

b. Emotional and Psychological Struggles

Herzog's emotional and psychological struggles are central to the novel's exploration of liberation. Bellow's depiction of Herzog's personal relationships and internal conflicts underscores the importance of emotional resolution in the quest for freedom.

c. Search for Authenticity

The search for authenticity is a key theme in *Herzog*. Bellow's portrayal of Herzog's journey reflects the challenge of balancing personal authenticity with societal expectations, highlighting the complexities of achieving liberation in a conformist world.

IV. Humboldt's Gift: The Artistic and Existential Dimensions of Freedom

a. Role of Art and Creativity

In *Humboldt's Gift*, Bellow explores the role of artistic creativity in the pursuit of liberation. Humboldt's artistic legacy and Citrine's engagement with it highlight how creative endeavors can both facilitate and complicate the quest for self-expression and freedom.

b. Existential and Personal Freedom

Citrine's journey reflects a broader existential struggle for freedom. Bellow's depiction of Citrine's attempts to reconcile personal desires with responsibilities reveals the complexities of achieving liberation in the context of personal and societal demands.

c. Paradox of Success and Freedom

The novel also examines the paradox of success and freedom. Citrine's achievements and societal recognition contrast with his internal struggles and sense of dissatisfaction, illustrating the idea that true liberation often eludes those who seek it through external validation.

Conclusion

Saul Bellow's exploration of men's liberation across his works offers a multifaceted perspective on the quest for freedom. Through his nuanced

portrayals of characters such as Joseph, Augie, Herzog, and Citrine, Bellow reveals the complex interplay between internal desires and external constraints. The analysis of *Dangling Man*, *The Adventures of Augie March*, *Herzog*, and *Humboldt's Gift* underscores the paradoxes and challenges inherent in achieving true liberation. Bellow's literary contributions provide valuable insights into the nature of men's liberation, emphasizing the need for a deep understanding of both personal and societal dimensions in the quest for self-fulfillment.

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Patriarchy in Shobha De's Novel *Starry Nights*

Swarna Latha Gaddam and Chithra V.B

Introduction

Patriarchy is a word having Greek origin. It is the combination of two words patria and arkhe. Patria means father and arkhe means domination. So, patriarchy means domination of father in the family. According to socialist Sylvia Walby “Patriarchy is a system of social structures and practices in which men dominate, oppress and exploit women.” In the book *Understanding Patriarchy*, bell hooks defines patriarchy as a political, social system that insists that males are inherently dominating, superior to everything and everyone deemed weak, especially females and endowed with the right to dominate and rule over the weak and to maintain dominance through various forms of psychological terrorism and violence. Most of the feminist writers like Mary Wollstonecraft, Virginia Woolf, Maya Angelou, Jane Austen, Sylvia Plath, Simone de Beauvoir dealt about patriarchy and its consequences in their writings. Indian feminist writers like Meena Kandhasamy, Arundhati Roy, Shashi Deshpande, Anitha Desai, Manju Kapur, Shobha De and others also expressed their views on the position of women in men centered society and their adaptations towards it. Their writings help in enlightening the women who are being oppressed by the oppressor men and learns to question to get their way and finds their identity in masses.

The article named “A Quest for Gender Equality in Meena Kandasamy’s *Touch*” by Shuddhodhan Athwale, mentions being Dalit woman, Kandaswamy’s poetry is emerged out from her own experience and active engagement with the cause of championing caste and gender equality. The Indian caste system like endogamy segregates people from Dalit community to higher caste community. She portrays women,

particularly Dalit women not just as victims of the lust of the higher caste men but also as ones fighting against the injustice perpetuated by men. Meena Kandasamy vehemently condemns especially against the dalit women sexual exploitation, ill-treatment as slave in patriarchal society. This article also focuses on how Meena Kandasamy rebukes the stereotyped patriarchal behavior of men recognizing women as mother, daughter, sister and even as a goddess but never as a woman herself. The women are treated as object or chattel and often subjected to domestic violence. Her's is a direct attack on the social malaise and attempts to gender equality.

Aswathy Cheriyan in his article named "Patriarchal Domination in Arundhati Roy's *God Of Small Things* and Alice Walker's *The Color Purple*" comments that the mentioned novels analyze gender oppression through marital and inter-gender relations of female characters. Arundhati Roy seeks to sensitize men by protesting against the treatment of women, its dehumanizing taboos, patriarchal cultural imageries. African-American writer Alice Walker in her work "*The Color Purple*" portrays uneducated African-American women in South upholds women-bonding and female creativity to acquire strength and inspiration to survive the plethora of brutality endured by triply burdened Afro-American women. These novels also manifest women's suffering in a male-chauvinistic society and challenge the patriarchal system and shows men's transformation.

The article "Patriarchal Identity in Shashi Deshpande's *That Long Silence*" by N. Prabhakaran speaks about Shashi Deshpande that she portrays her women in Indian culture very vividly how they have been humiliated, tortured and exploited in male oriented society. The women are protected by the false impression of a beautiful screen of her social graces and obligations. In the novel "*The Long Silence*" she brings forth the theme of alienation, isolation and hollowness of protagonist's life, isolation and hollowness of the protagonist's life and her distaste and struggling towards her present life, brooding about her past life and thinking to support the future. Each character fits themselves in their

stereotype roles in order to learn to lead their life peacefully without questioning anyone for their identity. Even though they get the chance to come out from that rustic life, they deliberately accept it and find satisfaction in playing their roles perfectly in patriarchal conditions.

The above articles explored that all the writers concentrated on women subjugation, marginalization and exploitation and they portrayed in their work how their protagonists tried to overcome the problems they face in their life and the strategies they followed to fulfil their needs and wishes. Men in all the above said novels, treated women as a commodity and they even didn't bother about women's feelings and didn't value their suggestions and they were given least importance. Likewise in Shobha De's novels also the similar themes are discussed but Shobha De has taken upper class elite women. For instance, in her first novel *Socialite Evenings*, *Second Thoughts*, *Starry Nights* and other works also she has represented the present-day upper-class women taking from real life. Her style of illustrating the characters is extra ordinary and un-comparable. The language used by her is unique and easily understandable to everyone.

Simon de Beauvoir in her work 'Second Sex' mentioned that men are treating women as 'the other', which is mysterious. From the centuries, the status is not changed till now in this patriarchal society and they didn't get their original identity. They are still under the shade of man's egotistic activities. If they try to get their true identity, it is considered as a crime by the society. The hollowness in women's life is still more evident by marriage. They are confined to household chores and they made them into mere machines working in stereo type roles which resulted in losing interest in leading life happily and hopefully.

Shobha De, the prominent versatile writer, columnist, journalist and a model was born in Mumbai into a Marathi Brahmin family. She began her career as journalist and founded the *Star Dust Magazine* which contained Bollywood interviews, gossip and photographs. In *The Times of India*, Ankita Shukla reflected her views on Shobha De as "Unignorable has been Shobha De's unabashed description of the women folk in her

novels.” Her novels take a leaf in representing the women realistically and the innermost feelings and desires of urban women. She mirrors her women taking from real life situations. The themes like women subjugation, marginalization, suppression by dominant men were also be not neglected by Shobha De. Her women are dare to express their anguishes freely and goes to extreme end to fulfil their needs. She talks boldly about sex, lesbianism, lust in her novels in regional language. Criticizes identified her as a Jackie Collins of India. In her second novel *Starry Nights* this was clearly known by readers. In one of her interviews, she herself accepted that there are more similarities with the characters in this novel to the people of the real Bollywood. In her novels she represents, how the women protagonists win over the patriarchal situations by hook or crook. Men are given least importance and her women are elite urban women. Middle class and lowerclass women were least bothered by her. Being contemporary writer, she read the minds of the present-day women in close quarters. Bijender Singh in his article “Unwomanly Women in Shobha De’s Select Novels” says women in metropolitan cities feel free and for them sex is like food and if they feel bored, they go to multiple partners and to satiate their bodily hungers, they go for extra-marital relationships. They don’t bound to be in chains of relationships. Dr. Madhvi Verma’s article “Shobha De’s Feministic Approach in her Novel *Starry Nights*” quotes the new generation of feminism holds the beauty and power of women’s sexuality to achieve their needs. They consider sexual pleasure as human right. Shobha De’s novels have given us a new dimension to ponder over it.

The protagonist Aasha Rani, in the novel *Starry Nights*, was an innocent, dark skinned, chubby little girl from Madras was pushed into the glamorous world by her mother, who was completely aware of that field. Amma takes her to once famous producer, Kishenbhai to get the first chance in the film. But amma only sends her to sleep with Kishenbhai without her consent and tells her that these are common in this field to get a chance and convinces her daughter. He also assures amma that he will definitely help in getting a role in the film. He changes her original name Viji to fancy celluloid name as Aasha Rani. He also sends her to

many prominent people related to industry and other business people like Sheth Amirchand, M.D. to sleep with them for getting a chance. He also tells her that she should treat them nicely and impress them with her words which help her career. He also says that he will come tomorrow morning to take her. She pleads amma and Kishenbhai with her eyes but they avert her. By Aasha Rani's mesmerism and beauty Shethji shows more interest in her and she also accepts him to be with him. But Kishenbhai has given his dil to Aasha Rani. So, he feels possessed of her and he confronts her about Shethji and her relation and calls her filthy prostitute and questions:

What has Shethji given you, what have all those others given you that I haven't?

(p-16)

Aasha Rani enters into the film industry and she tastes the success with her debut film. After attaining a stardom, she adores Akshay Arora, a co-star and a married person who got hits with her combination. He encouraged her in all aspects and helps her in learning many things. She was fascinated by him and wants to spend more time with him and vice versa. But he abruptly loses his interest in her and starts extricating himself from her clutches. Because of Akshay, she sends her mother to Madras. Amma tells her that don't believe him. He is a cheater. He will deceive you and deserts you as he is a married person. He doesn't spare you for his family. He is a womanizer. Don't rely on him. He is using you for his benefit. But Aasha gives a deaf ear to her mother's words. Aasha meets Akshay at Rooftop Club and stared at her and shouted,

'Why have you come here?' Aasha Rani stammered, 'My shooting got over early.

Third shift cancelled... I thought...' (p-74)

Akshay blames her for cancellation of his shooting. He screams at her as:

' Bitch! Don't you know your place? Following me around.

I don't like my women spying, you are a spy!

Wanted to catch me with someone, didn't you? Get out, get out!'

"You heard me – Out!" (p-74)

She seeks pardon but he struck her hard across her face. She looked up stunned –he struck her again and again and Aasha Rani fell to the floor but he didn't stop. He kicked her prostrate form and she tasted blood also as it flowed from nostrils. She lay there sobbing. With out showing pity on her he left her there like that only and went away. She was humiliated by him in the public. But nobody comes to save her from the hands of Akshay. Shethji takes her to hospital and she was treated to health. Even though Akshay abused her, she still loves him and pleads him to marry her. When he refuses, she realizes that he had used her for his pleasure and attempts suicide. Amma brings her back to health and takes her to Madras for a change.

Malini, a ghazal singer, wife of Akshay Arora quits from her profession when she was just beginning to get noticed, when Akshay proposed her. It was obvious he wasn't looking for a glamour girl or intellectual. He told to the press on the day he was to wed her,

'I need a home maker. Someone who will be a good mother to my children.

I don't want to marry a painted doll;

some cheap film girl who will flirt with all my friends.

Malini is the right woman for me.' (p-53)

Malini believed in Akshay's words and hoped her life would be fruitful and happy with him.

So, when he proposed her, she thought of him that:

"My husband means more to me than a career.

I believe a wife's place is in the home, not in a recording studio.

Akshay is an old-fashioned man. I will never displease him." (p-53)

Once when a reporter asked about Akshay Arora's affairs, then she told her that I trust him completely and I have no doubt on him. She was true to her husband but he even before their honey moon, he betrayed her trust for half-a-dozen times. She notices that he was an indiscriminating womanizer and a champion hypocrite. Malini became film industry bhabhiji immediately after their marriage. Later he treats her as a sex object and starts neglecting her. He didn't like her to attend his muhurats as he was superstitious and believed that if she attends the function, the film would flop. So, he sent her videos to watch the function. Malini observes her husband and Aasha Rani were slyly exchanging their looks in those videos. She feels desperately at her husband and thinks that he didn't keep his promise as husband. Few months later she confronts Aasha Rani to know the truth about their affair with the help of Rita, her friend, film industry angel and agony hunt. Instead, Aasha Rani warns Malini that she should teach her husband not to come to me. Feeling guilty and insecure about Akshay and marriage, she screams at Aasha Rani and wait for a chance to take a revenge. In this context Shobha De brings forth how the women will be easily fooled by the soft words spoken by men to attract towards them and also how the men make women to fix in their domestic stereotype roles and doesn't allow them to think and act individually according to their will. By this the women loses their identity and unwantedly and unknowingly they get trapped in men's hands. Men doesn't give scope to express their ideas and there is no value to women's suggestions. Men think that they were the whole and sole persons who think for the welfare of the family and I upbringing their offsprings. Most of the men want their women to be in the home and follow their instructions and treat them as puppets in their hands. They won't allow them to deviate from this and if the dare to question, they will be punished physically and abused in the public until their ego satisfies.

By piecing amma Girija Devi's life Aasha came to know that her father appa, who was Madras' biggest and most successful studio, controlled a large chunk of the South Indian film industry married another woman

before he married her mother. Her mother used to say about her father as:

‘Your appa was a real movie Mughul’ (p-91)

Her father deserted her mother and then leaving to the fate. Because of her father’s deeds amma was humiliated before father’s another wife and later her father cutoff giving money for their survival and she has to bring up her children by herself. So, she sold all her jewelry and poverty made her enter into prostitution to lead the family. Later, she pushed Aasha Rani into film industry and helps her to conquer the top position using sex as a weapon. Though amma was deceived and subjugated by her father, she didn’t lose her love towards him. So amma was perplexed by hearing about appa’s health condition and goes to nurture him. Aasha Rani was puzzled at her amma’s behavior. Aasha Rani exclaims:

‘But why should I go to see him? I haven’t seen him in years.

Since I was a child. He hasn’t bothered about any of us either.

Now that he’s dying, why does he care whether we see him or not?’ (p-97)

But amma convinces her daughter to be with him at his last days and tells her that it is her responsibility to make him happy. Her sister Sudha also tries to convince her. But Aasha Rani questions Sudha about her father:

“ Did he care when we were starving? Did he come to our help when Amma had to go around begging for work? I have no feelings for him.

I don’t know who this man in the hospital is...”

“What would you know about the life we faced, amma and I ?

You were too young then.” (p-97)

Later Aasha Rani took pity on her father and goes to him to nurse him back to health. Appa feels guilty about his behavior towards them and repents and gives his own studio which was kept secret to all as a gift to

Aasha Rani. By this character Appa , Shobha De shows how appa like people should feel and realize their mistake and tells them to understand the feelings and plight of their life partner and their children and act according to their wishes and needs. Men should learn sacrificing their life to their family like that of women who thinks husband and children are everything to them and values more than their life.

Once when Aasha Rani was travelling in flight, Gopalakrishnan, a friend of her father also travels in the same flight with her and he exploits her there itself to satisfy his bodily pleasures. Shobha De by portraying the characters like Akshay Arora, Kishenbhai, Sheth Amirchand, M.D. and Gopalakrishnan, she clearly explained how women are being cheated by men by blindly nodding their heads for what they were asked to do. In this novel Aasha Rani, Malini, Amma were exploited by them. They were all dominated and subjugated by them. Women were easily suppressed, deceived and dominated by men in the name of marriage, religion, tradition and culture. Women sacrifice everything for their husbands and children but men are taking it as lenience and treating women as scape goats. Being a woman, Shobha De understood the problems of women very well and tried her best to put before the readers to act in a right way towards women. Shobha De, dives into the minds of women and knows the inner feelings of women and through her writings she enlightens the people and guide them to give equal importance and treat them as human beings. By this novel, Shobha De explores the women sufferings and darker areas behind the glittering world. She didn't hesitate to show the hollowness of Bollywood which appears beautiful externally. Her boldness and frankness in expressing the sensitive areas like sex, lesbianism, hetero sexuality is incomparable.

Conclusion

Shobha De, in her novels clearly expresses the women as strong willed and able to get through all complicated situations and attain the goal at any cost. She read the psychology of women and so she portrays her characters lively and make them to win over the fate. This article explores the patriarchal element of men in women's life and how it is tilted the

life of Aasha Rani, the protagonist of the novel *Starry Nights* and how she puts her complete efforts physically and mentally to win. Shobha De boldly talks about sex and how Aasha Rani uses her body as a weapon to get success. The darker side of Bollywood is clearly shown in this novel. Hence men should learn the human values and respect women. Being in the hands of patriarchy men and women unknowingly becoming victims and spoiling their lives. So, they should understand ones needs and importance and go hand in hand for the progress of each other. Men, who think women 'a less' than them, should realize they are strong, tough, solid, sturdy and powerful.

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Dire Straits of Women in the Fiction of Nayantara Sahgal

Monika Mishra and Rafat Khanam

Introduction

Nayantara Sahgal's works are well established in the investigation of women's liberation, complicatedly winding around orientation, legislative issues and cultural standards. As one of India's premier English-language scholars, Sahgal's stories have long centred on the singular battles of ladies, especially concerning India's advancing socio-political scene. Her scholarly result, particularly her books, depicts the existence of ladies among custom and innovation, where they wrestle with their characters in a male-centric framework. Through her nuanced characters, Sahgal uncovers the intricate decisions ladies should make as they explore individual flexibility, marriage and social assumptions. One of the vital topics in Sahgal's women's activist composing is the dismissal of regular orientation jobs. Her female heroes frequently oppose the idea of ladies as simple expansion of their spouses or families and on second thought look for independence and uniqueness. Sahgal stresses the struggles under the surface these ladies face, torn between the cultural assumption to adjust and the individual craving for self-declaration. This strain is noticeable in books like *Rich Like Us* and *The Day in Shadow*, where the heroes should go with tough decisions viewing their jobs as spouses, moms and free people. Sahgal's depiction of these ladies mirrors her faith in the significance of self-articulation and individual flexibility as foundations of women's activist character (Sahgal, N. 1985).

One more basic part of Sahgal's women's rights is its crossing point with governmental issues. Coming from a family profoundly engaged with the Indian freedom development and post-frontier administration, Sahgal's encounters with political change essentially impact her women's activist thoughts. In her books, she frequently compares the political disturbances in post-freedom India with the individual battles of her female characters. This highlights that the battle for ladies' privileges and individual flexibility is all around as pivotal as the public battle for political power. The political connotations in her works enhance her women's activist evaluation, recommending that the freedom of ladies is entwined with the more extensive journey for civil rights and equity.

Sahgal's woman's rights additionally study the male centric design of marriage and family, which she depicts as restricting for ladies. Her characters much of the time challenge the customary jobs doled out to them inside the family, looking for organizations in view of common regard as opposed to mastery. In *Tempest in Chandigarh*, for instance, she portrays stressed relationships where ladies, in spite of their obviously advantaged positions, are smothered by their spouses' assumptions and cultural standards. Through these depictions, Sahgal advocates for connections based on fairness, where ladies' yearnings and wants are not subjected to the impulses of their male partners. Nayantara Sahgal's women's activist viewpoint is both individual and political, established in her faith in the significance of individual independence and opportunity for ladies. Her works are a strong evaluate of the limitations put on ladies in Indian culture, offering a dream of a more populist future where ladies can declare their freedom. Her commitments to women's activist writing reflect the situation of Indian ladies as well as the widespread battle for balance, making her a critical voice in both Indian and worldwide women's activist developments.

Indian female authors have embraced the lady's world with remarkable meditative validity. They have initiated an inward exploration to learn more about and assess the level of private awareness of their female personalities. In Anita Desai and Nayantara Sahgal's books, women are no longer goddesses; instead, they are human who transition from

being used as a property to having opportunities, hesitating to take risks and being imperfect to being good, while Shashi Deshpande portrays the white-collar class women who are told to show what men have made of ladies, these two female authors handle the metropolitan high-society women. Her women are not fond of heroes who focus only on males. The woman in Shobha De is shown as a creative force that manipulates the components of society. The ladies of Kamala Markandaya rule over the males.

Markandaya turns her woman into a tyrannical teacher, a young man's practical trickster. She envisions a lady's life in which the person is controlled, constrained, prepared, manhandled and dealt with like a pet. The portrayal of ladies in fiction is unique. A significant quality of a few books composed by her is that the fundamental characters are imaginative indications of the writer. Nayantara Sahgal recognizes in a meeting that only one of her five books, *The Day in Shadow*, was self-portraying – that is, in light of her encounters. Other than that, I drew a few motivations for my champions and different characters from my encounters, however, the *Day in Shadow* acquired its focal topic – a terrible monetary repayment that came during a separation – from my conditions. In any case, she endeavoured to reproduce the conditions and dilemmas she experienced in her life in books like *Tempest in Chandigarh*, *The Day in Shadow*, *A Circumstance in New Delhi*, and *Rich Like Us*. Be that as it may, the writer's sincere quest for a response to her concerns, which helped her in doing as such, has more to do with the human condition than it does with her own life (Markandaya, K. 1954).

Nayantara Sahgal's eight books depict the national consciousness of contemporary India against the historical backdrops of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Mahatma Gandhi, and Balagangadhar Tilak. When read as a whole, her first six books – *Rich Like Us*, *Storm in Chandigarh*, *A Time to be Happy*, *This Time of Morning*, *A Situation in New Delhi*, and *The Day in Shadow* – appear to be written in roughly chronological order. Politics is Nayantara Sahgal's specialty. Politics is her background and environment; it is her natural material. She is the daughter of

renowned freedom fighter of the Independent Movement Ranjit Pandit and remarkable daughter of Vijayalakshmi Pandit, who held important positions in national life as well as important assignments abroad. She is also the 'raven-eyed' niece of Jawaharlal Nehru, the first Prime Minister of Independent India and lieutenant of the non-violence movement. Novelist Nayantara Sahgal asserts that her works are political and that each one represents an era of India's growth since 1947'. Sahgal portrays in her deals with the issues and hardships faced by wedded ladies who feel mistreated, manhandled, and committed to focusing on their spouses and homes. She does this with a sharp consciousness of these worries and a thoughtful capacity to connect with them. A portion of their women acknowledge their destiny with little dithering, however, the extraordinary greater part of them murmur for possibility and step by step reject the generalization by deciding to stay separated or to isolate to keep carrying on with significant lives. Nonetheless, in the wake of directing an exhaustive assessment, Sahgal presumed that the family custom is an area of strength for unimaginably, to submissively request its protection and urge men to go along with it. Her composing shows showiness and luxury in her most memorable works. She can get an exact and strong style when she composes "What is going on in New Delhi". Her style is easy yet perfect, liquid and staggeringly distinctive and her language might be succulent, flexible and sharp or anything the second calls for. Her expert touch and discipline put her aside with her refined and urbane style. "In an educated Indian environment, she is flawless in her medium, which is modern Standard English". An elegant and graceful style has always been one of. Sahgal's major assets, as seen in her novels, effortlessly merge fiction with reality.

As a female creator, Sahgal accepts that supporting ladies' opportunities is her essential obligation. In her works, she portrays the manners by which ladies are abused in current times by the two people and the more extensive society. She tried to depict the reasonable manner in which a lady pays special attention to herself and her concerns. She accepts that a lady ought to try to comprehend and acknowledge herself as an extraordinary individual as opposed to a wedded similarly as an

individual to a man. She utilizes the models of male legends to delineate her subject of the quest for a potential open door; however, she likewise focuses on the too-manly culture. Nayantara Sahgal guaranteed that notwithstanding their disparities, her encounters as a political writer and as an author are commonly building up because they share a typical subject: the possibility of human opportunity, both individual and public, and its developing women's activist pertinence. As she would see it, ladies should try to perceive and recognize that they are more than just an object of a man's longing. Regardless of her intense analysis of the male-overwhelmed society, she utilizes the male hero's outline to address the possibility of her mission for autonomy. For over forty years, Sahgal has been an unmistakable figure in the scholarly world, referred to for her political element composing as well as her imagination (Sahgal, N. (2005).

Being the essential political creator in the Indian English abstract scene gives her a fascinating complexity. Her craft has areas of strength for an establishment and addresses her characteristics as well as the moving view of force and opportunity held by an expansive crowd out of nowhere presented to both. In her direct depiction of the void of man-woman connections predicated on socially endorsed occurrences of sexual direction lopsided characteristics, Sahgal satisfies an obtrusively women's activist capability. In this sense, the new lady without a doubt requires a realignment of the models that oversee the working of social connections. As she explores these evolving conditions, marriage without any trace of profound responsibility, sex absent any enthusiasm, and love absent any trace of thought are contemptuous to her.

Feminism

Feminism is a social and political movement which started in Europe in the late 18th century by female writers. They raised the voice to the equality for women in society. Its aim was to establish social, political, economic and personal equality for women in society. This campaign started for women rights for right to vote, to earn equal pay, work, education, and share in property and about marriage related issues.

Feminist also worked to ensure the security for girls in the society, to get equal legal rights, against domestic violence and sexual harassment. These feminist standards changed the perception of people for women and raised the women standards in the society.

In 19th century there were many feminist writers who were engaged to raise the issues of women through their writings. Women at that time were facing different issues and struggling for identity and equality to men in family and society. At that time the voice for female welfare was raised by female authors. Mary Wollstonecraft raised the voice against the women exploitation. This movement was started by the female authors like Mary, Virginia Woolf, Jane Austen, Toni Morrison, Sylvia Plath, Mary Shelley and many other feminist writers who raised the voice for equal rights to women.

Nayantara Sahgal is known for her distinct writing style that combines lucid prose, realistic character development, and keen societal insight (Kumar 2005). Her novels are frequently regarded as a beautiful combination of realism and social critique, expertly weaving human stories into the greater story of Indian culture and its political environment. Sahgal's works excel in depicting the nuances of human relationships while also addressing pressing societal issues. Her speech is particularly impressive; it not only reveals her characters' inner thoughts and intentions, but it also highlights the complexities of social relationships.

Literature Review

Nayantara Sahgal's works have been widely examined through a feminist lens, with critics and scholars emphasizing how her narratives explore the personal and political challenges faced by women in a patriarchal society. Sahgal's feminist vision reflects her own experiences in post-colonial India, where she often portrays women navigating the tension between tradition and modernity. This literature review explores the critical discourse surrounding Sahgal's feminist themes, focusing on her portrayal of female autonomy, marriage and the intersection of gender and politics.

Feminism and Gender Roles

R.K. Dhawan's *Indian Women Novelists* offers one of the foundational examinations of Sahgal's feminist writing. Dhawan emphasizes that Sahgal's works provide a critique of traditional gender roles, particularly within the Indian context, where women are often confined to restrictive roles in the domestic and public spheres. In novels such as *The Day in Shadow* and *Storm in Chandigarh*, Sahgal's protagonists challenge the societal expectations placed upon them, particularly in marriage and motherhood, seeking self-realization and independence (Dhawan, 1991). This defiance of conventional norms, as Dhawan notes, is central to Sahgal's feminist philosophy, as her characters resist the expectations that define them primarily through their relationships with men.

Political Feminism and National Identity

Ritu Menon's analysis in *Feminist Perspectives on Nayantara Sahgal* situates Sahgal's feminist discourse within the larger framework of Indian politics. Menon argues that Sahgal's feminism is closely linked with her political critique, where women's struggles for personal freedom reflect broader issues of national identity and democracy. In *Rich Like Us*, for instance, Sahgal explores how patriarchal structures in both family and political institutions oppress women, making a case for gender equality as a vital component of democratic progress. Menon's work highlights Sahgal's belief in the parallel between political liberation and women's emancipation, portraying personal autonomy as essential to both feminist and national development (Menon, 1994).

Intersection of the Personal and the Political

Supriya Nair's *Politics, Feminism, and the Female Body in Nayantara Sahgal's Novels* emphasizes the connection between Sahgal's political background and her feminist outlook. Nair suggests that Sahgal's feminist narratives cannot be separated from her political engagement, particularly given her association with the Nehru-Gandhi family. Nair examines *This Time of Morning* and *Storm in Chandigarh*, highlighting how Sahgal juxtaposes the political instability of post-colonial India with the

personal struggles of her female characters. According to Nair, Sahgal's feminist vision encompasses both individual liberation and systemic reform, making her novels a critique of not only patriarchal structures but also political ones (Nair, 2006).

Feminism, Class and Caste

Sangeeta Ray, in *Engendering India: Women's Narratives and Nation Building*, extends the analysis of Sahgal's feminist writing by exploring how issues of class and caste intersect with gender. Ray argues that Sahgal's portrayal of women from different social and economic backgrounds, particularly in *Rich Like Us*, reveals the complexities of gender oppression in India. Ray notes that while Sahgal's upper-class protagonists often experience greater freedom, they are still constrained by gender norms. At the same time, working-class women in her novels face multiple layers of oppression, shaped by both gender and socio-economic hierarchies. This intersectional approach adds depth to Sahgal's feminist critique, highlighting the diverse experiences of women in post-colonial India (Ray, 2000).

Psychological Dimensions of Feminism

Jasbir Jain's essay "Feminism and the Woman's Voice in Nayantara Sahgal's Fiction" examines the psychological dimension of Sahgal's feminism, focusing on how Sahgal portrays the internal lives of her female characters. Jain argues that Sahgal's characters not only struggle with external societal pressures but also with internal emotional and psychological conflicts, which are often a result of their constrained roles within a patriarchal society. In novels such as *The Day in Shadow*, Sahgal emphasizes the emotional toll that living under patriarchal oppression takes on women, particularly in terms of mental health and self-identity (Jain, 2000). Jain's analysis adds a layer of complexity to Sahgal's feminist discourse, suggesting that her work addresses both the social and psychological effects of gender-based discrimination.

Table 1 offers a succinct overview of the many critical stances taken on Sahgal's feminist themes in her various works. Every academic focuses on a different facet of her feminist story, ranging from political and intersectional analysis to personal identity and social duties.

Author/ Source	Key Focus	Main Findings	Novel Discussed
R.K. Dhawan (1991)	Gender roles and feminist critique of traditional norms	Sahgal's protagonists challenge conventional gender roles in marriage and society, seeking independence and autonomy	The Day in Shadow, Storm in Chandigarh
Ritu Menon (1994)	Intersection of feminism and politics	Sahgal portrays personal freedom and gender equality as essential to national progress, reflecting political critique	Rich Like Us
Supriya Nair (2006)	Political background and its influence on feminist narratives	Sahgal's feminist vision is inseparable from her political beliefs, highlighting the connection between personal and systemic reforms	This Time of Morning, Storm in Chandigarh
Sangeet a Ray (2000)	Intersectionality: Gender, Class, and Caste	Sahgal explores how gender oppression is compounded by class and caste, revealing the diverse struggle of women	Rick Like Us
Jasbir Jain (2000)	Psychological dimensions of feminism	Sahgal delves into the emotional and psychological struggles of women under patriarchy, emphasizing mental health impacts	The Day in Shadow

The critical discourse on Nayantara Sahgal's feminist writing reflects a broad and multifaceted exploration of gender, politics and personal identity. Scholars such as R.K. Dhawan, Supriya Nair, Ritu Menon, Sangeeta Ray, and Jasbir Jain have contributed significantly to our understanding of Sahgal's feminist vision, emphasizing how her novels critique patriarchal structures, advocate for personal freedom, and explore the intersection of gender with class, caste and politics. Sahgal's works remain vital to the study of feminist literature in post-colonial India, offering a nuanced critique of the challenges faced by women in their quest for autonomy and self-realization.

Discussion

Nayantara Sahgal's contributions to feminist literature are significant within the broader context of Indian writing in English, particularly in the post-colonial period. Sahgal's novels frequently revolve around women who, despite being deeply entrenched in traditional structures, actively challenge their subjugation. This discussion examines how Sahgal portrays the multifaceted nature of feminism, intersecting with political, social and psychological aspects of women's lives. The feminist discourse in her works is complex and layered, reflecting not only gender struggles but also broader critiques of societal and political institutions.

Challenging Traditional Gender Roles

The feminist writings of Nayantara Sahgal are mostly based on her criticism of conventional gender roles, especially those associated with marriage. Sahgal illustrates the constraints patriarchal standards inflict on women and their quest for autonomy and self-fulfilment through these characters. The female characters in her books forcefully go against the social powers that endeavour to classify and restrict them, declining to acknowledge their mediocre situations in a detached way. As her legends offset their cravings with those of society, Sahgal's depiction of these inside and outer struggles is a significant subject in her women's activist story. As they continue looking for self-acknowledgment, the characters should scrutinize the customary jobs

that are pushed onto them, long for opportunity and rethink their personalities in manners that go past marriage and life as a parent. For ladies' strengthening, Sahgal's women's activist vision features the need for social change that would empower ladies to characterize themselves as indicated by their principles. She is situated as a significant voice in Indian women's activist composition since her works address both an individual fight for freedom and a bigger scrutinize of the male-centric organizations that confine ladies' situations in the public eye (Sahgal, N. 1986).

Intersection of Feminism and Politics

Nayantara Sahgal's women's rights are firmly laced with her political investigation. RituMenon brings up that Sahgal frequently draws correlations between the public battle for a majority rules system and freedom and the battles looked at by people for independence inside male-centric families. For example, Sahgal portrays the male-centric standards that persecute ladies in *Rich Like Us* as a smaller-than-expected variant of the dictator rule forced by severe states. This connection features how the country's quest for a majority rule government and equity is reflected in the singular endeavours of people for opportunity and equity. In this sense, Sahgal's women's activist story rises above orientation concerns and integrates them into post-pilgrim India's political design. Sahgal's women's activist viewpoint underlines the worth of individual freedom for ladies' prosperity as well as concerning the development of society at large. She battles that a nation holding back nothing advances all in all assuming ladies are to be liberated from oppressive frameworks. Sahgal features the relationship of political and individual flexibility through her female legends, underscoring the significance of orientation fairness for the progression of the country. Sahgal's women's rights are arranged inside a bigger system of civil rights, where ladies' strengthening turns into a significant power for changing both society and the political scene, because of this arrangement of individual and political opportunity.

Feminism beyond Gender: Class and Caste Dynamics

Nayantara Sahgal's women's activist account is significant because, as Sangeeta Beam brings up, she gives cautious consideration to diversity while depicting ladies from various social and financial foundations. In *Rich Like Us*, Sahgal dives into the complexities of orientation enslavement in a progressive society, showing how ladies' lives are not homogeneous but rather formed by converging components like standing and class. With this methodology, Sahgal can discredit the idea of an extraordinary female encounter and deal with a more nuanced depiction of womanliness. By perceiving the numerous real factors that ladies experience, Sahgal features the manners by which their financial foundations essentially affect their difficulties. For instance, although the privileged ladies in Sahgal's books could have better admittance to riches and schooling, they in any case need to manage man-centric guidelines that control their activities. Due to their extravagance, they are yet dependent upon the pervasive impact of orientation separation, showing how even ladies who appreciate significant cultural advantages can succumb to instilled generalizations. Then again, average ladies experience both orientation segregation and monetary abuse, which worsens their persecution and makes it more challenging for them to accomplish independence. Sahgal's diverse methodology features the complicated exchange between ladies' concerns in post-pioneer India and the requirement for women's activist talk to think about the shifted real factors of ladies in different social classes. This enthusiasm for intricacy hoists Sahgal's women's activist evaluation and lays out her composition as a huge explanation of the significance of a complete and comprehensive comprehension of orientation issues.

Feminism and the Institution of Marriage

Nayantara Sahgal's works spin around her analysis of marriage as a man-centric establishment, underscoring the battles and constraints her female characters experience inside this social design. As indicated by Sahgal, marriage as often as possible turns into a combat zone where ladies battle against the prohibitive imperatives that man-centric

guidelines force upon them. The hero Simrit in *The Day in Shadow* capably explores the close-to-home and social disturbance that follows her separation, giving a striking illustration of this issue. The disgrace that separated ladies face in the public arena, which uncovered the serious analysis they face for needing autonomy from unacceptable relationships, compounds Simrit's battle. Sahgal features the severe idea of customary marriage assumptions through Simrit's story, showing the way that they might keep ladies in abstinence and troubled cycles. Through introducing female characters who proactively challenge and go against these shows, she advances a progressive reconceptualization of marriage as a foundation grounded in value rather than predominance. As indicated by Sahgal's compositions, ladies might accomplish genuine satisfaction and self-acknowledgment by rethinking their jobs and connections as per their terms as opposed to by observing man-centric guidelines. Her analysis of the organization of marriage repeats her bigger women's activist topics, which present her books as requests for ladies' freedom and cultural change. Marriage isn't an objective in Sahgal's story scene; rather, it is a muddled spot where ladies should practice their power and reshape their personalities to break liberated from the imperatives of ordinary orientation standards (Sahgal, N. 1982).

The Role of the Body in Sahgal's Feminism

A critical part of Nayantara Sahgal's women's activist manner of speaking is her assessment of the female body, which shows the intricate connection between the body and the more broad subjects of political and individual power. Supriya Nair has focused on the way that Sahgal much of the time involves the female body as an intense image of resistance to male-centric predominance. This centre is most clear in her book *This Season of Morning*, where the female body fills in as a similitude for the hardships ladies experience in guaranteeing their independence in a general public that is constrained by guys, as opposed to simply being an actual item. In Sahgal's story, the body assumes the job of a material that is recorded with social principles and assumptions. The female characters battle with the assumptions put on them by

ordinary ideas of orientation, which habitually determine how they are to act, show up, and distinguish themselves. By foregrounding these real encounters, Sahgal accentuates both the physical and mental components of ladies' abuse. Her characters' concerns are an impression of bigger social compels that expect to limit ladies' opportunity and articulation by controlling their bodies. Sahgal doesn't, in any case, possibly portray abuse with regard to the female body; she additionally features the chance of independence and strengthening. Sahgal's female heroes forcefully go against the social standards that endeavour to characterize them by assuming back command over their bodies. As well as being an actual demonstration, this recovery is a statement of independence that empowers ladies to address man-centric norms and reshape their personalities. Along these lines, the body turns into a position of strengthening where ladies might go to bat for their inborn right to life and success.

Feminism and Post-Colonial Identity

The post-provincial Indian setting wherein Sahgal's women activist work is set is one in which the battles for female balance and public character habitually impact. Sahgal analyses the struggles among custom and modernization in her books, particularly as they connect with ladies' liabilities in the public arena, particularly in *Tempest in Chandigarh*. Her female heroes are regularly conflicted between the valuable open doors introduced by a more moderate, contemporary society and the requests of a conventional male-centric culture. This contention mirrors the bigger post-provincial personality fight since Sahgal battles that settling ladies' treacheries is essential for understanding the potential for public headway. Accordingly, Sahgal's evaluation of post-provincial legislative issues and culture is inherently connected with her women's activist talk (Ray, S. 2005).

Conclusion

Nayantara Sahgal's feminist discourse delves into the complex interplay of gender, identity and power in post-colonial India, providing a

comprehensive criticism of patriarchy. By fighting for women's autonomy and self-definition outside their connections with men, Sahgal challenges traditional gender norms and the constraints of marriage via her nuanced representations of female characters. Her attention on interconnection features the fluctuated encounters of ladies from different social and financial beginnings, featuring the way that rank and class concerns are inseparably connected to orientation segregation. Sahgal highlights the need for a comprehensive way to deal with orientation issues and connects to the women's activist talk by offering a nuanced point of view on ladies' troubles. Sahgal stresses the meaning of real independence in women's activist development through her assessment of the female body as an area of both mistreatment and liberation. She states that self-acknowledgment and insubordination of social guidelines are the keys to veritable strengthening by outlining her characters' processes towards recapturing command over their bodies. Nayantara Sahgal is situated as a critical person in Indian women's activist composing since her works at last act as a powerful interest for civil rights and orientation uniformity. Her accounts address current orientation discussions and act as a wake-up call that accomplishing ladies' freedom requires a local area exertion to change society.

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Cultural Trajectory: A Study on Philip Roth's Select Novels

B. Balaji and B.R. Veeramani

Introduction

Numerous Jewish writers have sparked controversy, yet none have faced the level of scrutiny and hostility from their peers as novelist Philip Roth. His unrepentant depictions of assimilated Jews who reject traditional values have led to his alienation from the community.

Jewish leaders, establishing Roth as the consummate Jewish outsider. At the same time, his work helped shape the self understanding of an emerging generation of Americanized Jewry, and continues to speak to Jewish today. Philip Roth is one of the greatest contemporary writers to present the positive and negative side of life in a pragmatic way. He presents good and bad characters. Mostly, he takes a Jewish character to represent every man in the universe. While portraying a character, Roth shows the rise and fall of his protagonists. Most of his characters usually face debacle and fall after reaching their destination either by hook or crook or by their own iniquities and transgressions. The protagonists commit crimes by drinking their lives to the lees or going away from their Jewish religious ways. They always rebel against the elders and rabbis of their Jewish circle and experience either physical or psychological debacle. Thus, debacle becomes a leitmotif in many of Roth's major fictions.

Jewish American Literature and Culture

In the centuries that followed, with the subsequent waves of Jewish immigrants, Jewish-American literature flourished. Several Jewish-American writers wrote creative works such as plays and poems

primarily in the language of the dominant culture—English. The first most notable voice in Jewish-American literature is Emma Lazarus (1849-1887). Her inspirational poem, a sonnet, The poem “The New Colossus,” composed in 1883, is regarded as a significant anthem of American immigration. It is engraved at the base of the Statue of Liberty, extending a warm welcome to the weary, the impoverished, and the “huddled masses yearning to breathe free.”

Moreover, the Jews in America have migrated into the United States of America from different parts of the world. By design by preference, and by mental acculturation the German Jew, the Czech Jew or the Russian Jew wants to remain as a minority within minority ethnic group. This argues for the Jew's deep-seated attachment to his race and more particularly the land and language of his original roots. To put it differently the Jew does not wish to be anything else except to remain a Jew. Jewry flows in his blood, and education, and his culture. Yet, their individualism is qualified by the demands of the American society and the Establishment. Therefore, the Jew remains dangling between his deeply embedded Jewish identity and the superimposed American identity. He is torn because of mental conflicts as a result of the dual identity and cultural divide. Therefore, the Jew becomes a victim of the society, and the pulls and counter pulls. Keith Michael Opadahi argues: [*The Novels of Saul Bellow: An Introduction*, 1970, p. 9]:

Eastern-European Jewish immigration

Towards the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century, there was a massive Eastern-European Jewish immigration. These new immigrants wrote prolifically and insistently in Yiddish. Their writings, gave an account of the lives of Jews in their old world, their journey to their new world—America—and their problems adapting to the new environment. These writers, also, established a flourishing press and theater in New York, with smaller offshoots in other cities such as Philadelphia, Boston, Cleveland, Chicago, Milwaukee, and Los Angeles. From these forum of popular culture, a serious literary endeavor grew. Solomon Blumgarten (1872-1927), whose

pen name is Yehoash, began the task of making Yiddish a literary language. This Yiddish writing retained its Jewishness through its own linguistic and cultural independence from the American milieu. After him, many Yiddish-language poets expanded Yehoash's project through the first half of the twentieth century. It is believed that these writers are the ones who set the stage for the notion of ethnicity that is central to the idea of Jewish-American literature in the later periods.

Culture Divide

The two Global confrontations only accentuated their plights and predicaments, as they were driven from place to place. As a result of displacement the Jews had to shed their identity of the original place to which they belonged and accept a new identity of the land where they were pushed. But the Jews wherever they are settled find it hard to give up their religion, rituals, customs, traditions, conventions, beliefs, and language. Therefore they suffer from dual identity or better still the pangs of cultural divide. In determining his identity in America the Jew has to struggle against his Jewry, Americanism, social realities, and personal predilections, and biases, and cultural moorings. Only by striking a balanced approach concerning these forces, he can establish an identity of his own that is truly dynamic, pragmatic, and realistic. Malamud on his part mainly concentrates on the Jewish American's experiences in America. The Jewish American portrayed by Malamud is deeply rooted in Jewry, but is forced to embrace Americanism. Consequentially, he suffers because of a dual identity - - cultural divide - -, which makes him turn out to be one of rootlessness, homelessness, and facelessness. The unwillingness to shed his Jewry and the compulsion to enter the Mainstream of American culture pose to him a serious dilemma, and his inability to resolve causes anguish, the *Sturm-und-Drang*, and *Angst*. Almost any generalization about Americans will be true of some group in the country, and as surely not true of many others.

Many Americans lack awareness of the diverse groups and subcultures that constitute the nation, as well as its significant political, geographical, and social divisions. [Raymond D. Gastil, "Cultural Regions of America"

in *Making America: The Society and Culture of the United States, 1988*, p. 121]: Frederick Jackson Turner pointed out that these designations changed as the country grew, so that “west” continually referred to an area further and further from the Atlantic coastline. The distinctions between “region” as an area defined by its internal characteristic political interactions with other areas is a distinction that should be kept in mind. Sections need constantly to be redefined according to changing growth patterns and needs, but there are surely still sectional struggles. According to Raymond D. Gastil [“Cultural Regions of America” in *Making America: The Society and Culture of the United States, 1988*, p. 123].

The New England Region Culture

The cultural regions that emerged beyond the Atlantic Coast can be seen as developments westward of the original regional organization of the country. Historically the United States was divided at the time of its founding by a broad division into three groups of states: New England, Middle Atlantic, and Southern. The majority of people in each area had come from the United Kingdom, although in different proportions from its subdivisions. However, the histories of each area were quite different. To elaborate on this point, the New England region is stamped with the particular culture of the immigrants into the New England region. Originally defined by its intense Protestant Christianity, the majority of the people are now Roman Catholics, except in certain rural areas. However, as the immigrant groups came into the region, they were, in a cultural sense, often “converted”. Today all the East Coast regional cultures have a more European or English class system than the other parts of the country.

Southern American Culture

As a cultural region, the South is the most distinctive of all the cultural regions in America. Its dialects are more widely recognized and more different than other regional dialects. This is particularly true when one remembers that Black English is a Southern dialect. The South has

produced not only a variety of Black song styles, such as the Blues and the Jazz, but also the best-known and presently influential popular White styles of music. The “mountain” or “hillbilly” music of a previous generation is now better known as “country”. The cowboy music of the frontier was in large part derived from the South. Today the two have been integrated as “country western”. The music capital of this development is Nashville, Tennessee. Nashville is also a centre of the development of popular religion. However, the capital of the Southern Baptist denomination, the fastest growing of the major Protestant sects in America, is Dallas, Texas, in the Western south division of the region. In many ways the borders of the South can be determined by noting the boundaries of Southern Baptist predominance in religious affiliation. Incidentally, the South is the only major region in America without a large Catholic presence.

From a political and social viewpoint the Midwest is centred on Chicago. The section maintains the continuing and special viewpoint of the interior. However, culturally the area varies so greatly from north to south that it is necessary to distinguish between Upper Midwest and Central Midwest regions. Yet again, the attitude toward politics in the region has been called “moralistic”. Here politics is regarded as equally the concern of all. Ideas and ideals should determine policies, it is felt, not the balance of interests common to the professional politics of the South. The Rocky Mountain region is the least well defined of the cultural regions in America. The people here are more interested in their own identity than in the development of a regional sense. The mixture of the peoples that make up the region is as representative of the nation as a whole as that of the central Midwest.

The Mormon region of southeast Idaho and Utah illustrates most vividly the difference between defining regions by physical geography or economic criteria, and defining them in cultural terms. Utah was established in the middle of the nineteenth century in the New England tradition as a model state based on a particular religious vision. The Mormon community that developed around the Mormon religion, and as such was driven out of several areas because of its religious beliefs

and practices. The Alaskan region comprises Alaska, which is both a state and a region, or group of proto regions. It is still a frontier area with a low percentage of native-born - - aside from the Indians and Eskimos. That latter have profited recently from a settlement in the courts concerning their mineral and oil rights. They now have enough wealth to become a permanent force in the area. The Hawaiian region is a particularly desirable place for most Americans. Aside from extreme southern Florida it is the only tropical part of the United States. It is also the only region group where non-Whites dominate life. The largest single ethnic group in Hawaii is of Japanese background, but Filipinos, Chinese, Samoans, people of native Hawaiian ancestry, and mainland Americans join in the mixture. Thus these broad divisions in America serve to study the diverse cultural patterns that commingle in America..

Jewish Music Culture

The Jewish music that qualified Jewish culture and is a major aspect of the Jewish cultural heritage is both vocal and instrumental. The musical scale and the melodies used in Jewish music, as well as the musical instruments, closely resemble those of the countries in which the Jews live. All the same the Jews suffer from nostalgic memories of their homeland. It is interesting to record the definition of the term, nostalgia, as given in *Everyman 's Encyclopaedia* [III Ed., Vol. IX, 1949, p. 781]: All the same, Herzog is a representative modern Jewish American suffering from paranoia, and neurosis, and fighting for survival in a multi cultural American society in which the Jewish American is not able to be a full mixer because of his Jewry and because of the anti-Semitic feeling persistent in America. Saul Bellow's hero suffers because of his racial predicaments proves true James Hastings religious definition of suffering [*Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, xii, 1970, p. 22]: Society everywhere is in conspiracy against the manhood of every one of its members. Society is a joint stock company, in which the members agree, for the better securing of his bread to each shareholder, to surrender the liberty and culture of the eater. The virtue in most requests is conformity. Self-reliance is its aversion. It loves not realities and

creators, but names and customs. . . . Nothing is at last sacred but the integrity of our own mind. . . the great man is he who in the midst of the crowd keeps with perfect sweetness the independence of solitude. In other words, he is not aware that the commonplace attempt in the American society to invest sports events with the myth breaking significance of religious ritual in older cultures is futile. After all, baseball is not a revelation of total reality, nor can it supply, except in a very limited way, models of universally exemplary behaviour.

The period between late 1960s and 1970s witnessed some of the most reputed novels in the United States of America. Many works by the realistic writers of this period vividly portrayed the involvement of America in World War II. Saul Bellow, a Canadian born Jewish – American writer became one of the most influential writers of this time. Unlike his immediate predecessors, Roth defines Jews in a different way. He cared two straws for the culture, which would remind one of ancient Jewish foreseers like Isaiah and Jeremiah. As a vates, he always talked about the backsliding which leads to debacle, the leitmotif of his major novels. In spite of the virtues, Roth's characters fall down to meet a callous end. Fashions and trends change. Every writer undergoes changes and his writings too. Having started with *Goodbye, Columbus* as a novice, Roth has seen much success in his 55 years' writing experience with 30 novels to his credit, of which many have won National and International awards. Roth was bestowed with four great awards for his first novel, *Goodbye, Columbus and the five short stories*. No writer has ever been welcomed to the literary world as with the case of Roth. David Gooblar says, The "Self – Conscious and deliberate zig – zag" has continued to define Roth's career to the present day, creating a body of work as varied and fertile as that of any writer in recent memory.

Conclusion

The Jewish American portrayed by Philip Roth's is deeply rooted in Jewry, but is forced to embrace Americanism. Consequentially, he suffers because of a dual identity, cultural divide, which makes him turn out to

be one of homelessness, and facelessness. The unwillingness to shed his Jewry and the compulsion to enter the Mainstream of American culture pose to him a serious dilemma. The Jewish music that qualified Jewish culture and is a major aspect of the Jewish cultural heritage is both vocal and instrumental. American Jewish life that make Roth's work uniquely Jewish. Either way, there is no question that Roth's impact on the Jewish community as fiercely independent writer has been enormous, and then examining Roth's conceptions of establishments dynamics can be a powerful tool toward understanding the American Jewish community.

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Balancing Social Responsibility and Family Loyalty in Arthur Miller's *All My Sons*

S. Mangal and C. Chitra

Introduction

Miller has been one of the most outspoken American writers of the last four decades. He has held generally progressive and radical views and has variously written against racism, capitalism and Vietnam War. All these ideas are amply reflected in his plays. Arthur Miller was an American playwright who came to the scene after the second world war. Born in 1915 in a Jewish middle class family, Miller was educated at the University of Michigan where he distinguished himself in journalism and playwright. After a few year struggle as a playwright Miller achieved his first success with *All My sons* in 1947. Since then he has written about nine major plays, film scripts, short stories and several critical essays. During his years as a playwright, Miller has earned all the fame and success that a modern writes is capable of getting. At present, he ranks with Eugene O'Neill and Tennessee Williams as one of the three foremost playwrights of America. He has written these novels and a few short stories too. Arthur Miller's first successful play was *all my Sons*. It illustrated the theme that a man should recognise "his ethical responsibility to the world outside his home". It is the story of Joe Keller, a successful businessman who had earned a lot of money during the war by manufacturing defective cylinders for aeroplane engines. In the course of the play, the discovery is made that his pilot son Larry, believed to have died in an air-cash, had deliberately, smashed his plane to 'pay' for his father's evil which had taken the lives of several other pilots. It is left to the other son, Chris to bring home the truth to his father. At the end Joe Keller kills himself by way of doing his penance to his son and the society. Although there was nothing remarkable about

this play, it made a strong appeal to the audience for its brutal frankness and hard-hitting language. The play tends to expose the evil of capitalism in which the pursuit of money leads to a sacrifice and loss of social; and human values. Had Joe Keller not been so greedy for money, he would not have sold the defective cylinders and his son would not have died. It is in this context that early in his writing career, Miller acquired the label of a 'committed playwright. In his later works, however, Miller's interests turns to more enduring aspects of the human condition.

Social Responsibility in *All My Sons*

In "*All My sons*, Miller's portrayal of Social responsibility highlight the need for individuals to balance personal obligants with a larger sense of duty to humanity. The play demonstrates that moral integrity requires recognizing the impact of one's actions on society as a whole and that failing to do so can lead to devastating consequents. Kate Keller's denial to Larry's death is also connected to social responsibilities. Her refusal to accept Larry's death allows her to avoid facing Joe's guilt. Kate embodies the idea of turning a blind eye to moral responsibility, both to society and within her own family, which ultimately contributes to the play's tragic conclusion. By maintaining the lie about Larry's survival, she helps perpetuate Joe's denial of his own moral failings. Throughout the play, Miller shows the consequences of neglecting social responsibility. Joe's actions during the war are initially hidden, but when the truth comes out, the damage is profound. The deaths of the pilots, Larry's suicide, and the eventual unravelling of the Keller family demonstrate that neglecting one's responsibility to society can lead to personal and collective tragedy. The play suggest that moral failures have a ripple effect, impacting not just the immediate evictions but also families and communities. The play explores the tension between loyalty to one's family and the wides responsibility to society. Joe justifies his actions by claiming, he did it for his family, particularly his surviving son, Chris. However Chris represents the opposing view, advocating for a sense of responsibility that extents beyond one's own family to the broader community. Miller presents a sharp conflict between family loyalty and

social responsibility. Joe's justification for his actions-providing for his family shows the tension between caring for one's immediate circle and contributing to the well-being of society at large. Joe's attitude that "a man can't be a Jesus in this world" highlights the temptation to place family interests above societal duties. Chris's confrontation with his father underscores that this mentality is not sustainable, true moral responsibility must extend beyond one's household, particularly in matters that affect human lives. Joe Keller, the father and central character, represents a failure in social responsibility. His decision to ship defective airplane parts during World War II, which led to the deaths of 21 pilots, is a result of prioritizing his business and family's financial security over his action by insisting that he did it for his family but in doing so, he ignores his responsibility to the soldiers who relied on his parts. His narrow sense of duty ends up causing destruction not just to the community but also to his own family. The tragedy reveals the dangers of isolating personal or familial responsibilities from the larger social framework.

Family Loyalty in *All My Sons*

Miller sees the family as a group. He does not give any prominent place to any one character. However in *All My Sons* it is the role of the father, that captures greater attention. The father is given excessive veneration by sons and it is this excessive veneration that becomes the real cause of the tragedy. In the eyes of Chris, Joe Keller is not just a man but 'a good in decay' Chris says: "I know you're no worse than most men I thought you were better. I never saw you as a man I saw you as my father. I can't look at you this way, I can't look at myself." (p. 82) In *All My Sons*, Arthur Miller explores the theme of family loyalty and its complex, often destructive consequences. Family loyalty drives the characters' decisions, shaping the central conflict between personal obligations and ethical responsibility. Joe Keller exemplifies extreme loyalty to his family, particularly in his actions as a father and provider. He makes the catastrophic decision to ship defective airplane parts during World War II to ensure his business survives, justifying his

actions by claiming it was all for his family's financial future excuses his crime demonstrates his prioritization of familial duty above moral responsibility to society. Joe sees himself as a father first, someone whose primary obligation is to protect his family, even if it means hurting others. Kate Keller's loyalty manifests in her son, Larry, who disappeared during the war. Her denial of Larry's death is not only rooted in a mother's love but also in her need to protect her husband. If Larry is dead, it would mean acknowledging that Joe's decision indirectly caused Larry's death, a truth too painful for her to accept. Her fierce loyalty to both Joe and Larry prevents her from confronting the reality of Joe's guilt. Chris represents a more conflicted sense of family loyalty. While he loves his parents and feels a sense of duty toward them, his time as a soldier has instilled in him a broader sense of social responsibility. When he learns about Joe's role in the deaths of 21 pilots, including, indirectly, his brother Larry, Chris is devastated. His loyalty to his father is tested, as he grapples with the moral implications of Joe's actions. Chris's struggle illustrates the tension between familial love and the need for justice and truth. Though Larry is absent from the stage, his death is a critical element in the play's examination of loyalty. Larry's loyalty to his moral values and to the men who died because of Joe's actions drives him to commit suicide. His death, revealed in a letter, exposes the unbearable conflict he felt between his loyalty to his family and his sense of social duty. Miller's play ultimately critiques blind or unconditional family loyalty. By prioritizing the needs of their family above all else, Joe and Kate fail to see the broader ethical implications of their actions. This misguided loyalty leads to their downfall, showing that family loyalty, when separated from social responsibility and moral integrity, can be destructive rather than protective. Family in Arthur Miller's dramas plays a vital and major role. Miller regards family as a polis. He does not treat family merely as a means to delineate the affectional ties among the members of the family. Family to him means something wide in social context. Miller is concerned with the problem. "how man make for himself a home in that vastness of strangers and how may he transform that vastness into

a home?.” Almost in all his plays, Miller tries to find an answer to the problem. “How man develop for himself a transitional polis that may bridge the gap between the private home of the family and the public home of that new unity towards which, he believes the world to be moving? Affectional ties do not attract Miller. He always sees the family as related to the larger group, the society in inseparable and life-giving ways. Miller does not use family as a mere microcosm. There is something beyond family, i.e., society is to be treated as a larger family. To Chris Keller in *All My Sons* there’s something bigger than the family, through for Joe Keller ‘Nothin’ is bigger. There is a larger idea of the family in these words of Chris “Once and for all you can know there’s a Universe of people outside and you’re responsible to it”. (p.84)

All My Sons may be considered as a drama of family relationships. Though Miller appears to be arguing strongly in favour of a certain positive relationship between the individual and society, but in *All My Sons* family relations are predominant. The play deals with relations between the mother and the son, the father and the son, the husband and the wife, the brother and the sister and son. To Joe Keller “nothing’s bigger” than the family. It’s everything to him. When Chris discovers his father’s complicity in the sale of defective cylinder heads to the Army Air Force, he turns against him. Rather than go on living, Joe Keller shoots himself. Keller’s death is a parable of our inescapable social responsibilities. Any evasiness or refusal is severely punished. Chris’s idealism has its positive side. It is related to post-war disillusionment of both civilians and soldiers, those who survived after seeing the horrors of war as well as some of the splendid, human qualities it brought out. They expected a better social order to emerge from humanity’s experience in the war. In Arthur Miller’s *All My Sons*, the theme of balancing social responsibility and family loyalty is central to the play’s moral conflict, particularly in the character of Joe Keller. The tension between these two values what one owes to family drives the dramatic arc and shapes the ethical dilemmas faced by the characters.

All My Sons as a Social Drama

All My Sons is essentially a social drama. Its main theme is that every person should recognise his ethical responsibilities to the world outside his home as well as in his own home. Miller strongly argues in favour of a certain positive relationship between the individual and society. He exposes human tendency to put one's self above the society. For him there is a continuing inter-relationship, a possibility of development. In *All My Sons*, the inescapable between individual and society is made clear by Joe Keller's agony when his neighbour calls him 'murder' and his elation when they respect and accept him. In the play, Keller's betrayal, of his parental responsibility is also seen. There is a great moral in the irony that Keller who justified his conduct on the ground that he was preserving his small business for his sons, should be exposed as a malefactor by his own son. It is significant that this man who harms society, his parental love and devotion to his family's welfare. Thus Miller's plays expose some important social contexts. His plays make clear the moral war that the playwright has been waging through his plays and the social philosophy that they demonstrate his characters and the environment speak of his realism. *All My Sons* is a powerful social tragedy. Its theme may be briefly described as the idea of guilt from the past permeating and destroying the present. In this play we get the idea of a man in the powerful grip of ambition, betraying society. Society is not entirely absolved of blame either. Miller draws up an indictment of the society too for he suggests that it is the pressures of a materialist society that guided Keller in making a choice that is antisocial. He could have admitted to the government the fact that the cylinders he supplies them were faulty. But to do so would be to lose the prestige of his business. The guilty protagonist is Joe Keller as industrialist who, during the war supplied the government faulty cylinder heads. When these brought about the death of twenty-one pilots, Keller committed the second crime of putting all the blame on his innocent manager Deever. Deever goes to jail and Joe Keller prospers. This irony is supported by other instances that Miller affords in the examples of those who suffer fighting for their country and those who, staying behind, flourish. But

the success of Keller is not lasting. The climax of the play is the suicide of his son in the army, on hearing the news of his father's crime. Keller finally, stripped of his sentimental defences, kills himself.

Joe Keller : Family Loyalty Over Social Responsibility

Joe Keller prioritizes his family's well-being over his obligations to society, which is evident in his decision to knowingly ship defective airplane parts during World War II. His rationale is that he did it to protect his family's future, ensuring financial security for his sons and wife. However, this choice ultimately leads to the deaths of 21 pilots. Joe's actions illustrate how when family loyalty is placed above broader social responsibility, the consequences can be disastrous. Keller justifies his decision by saying, "I did it for you, for the family". He believes that his first duty is to his family, even if it means compromising his integrity and societal ethics. This narrow view of responsibility highlights a conflict where family loyalty blinds one to broad consequences of one's actions.

Chris Keller, Joe's son, represents the opposing viewpoint, struggling to balance his deep love for his family with his sense of social responsibility. He feels a duty to society, especially having fought in the war and lost his comrades. Chris holds idealistic values, believing that people should act for the greater good. He is devastated when he learns about his father's involvement in the deaths of the pilots, as it shatters his ideals of what is right. Chris's internal conflict arises because he wants to believe in his father and protect his family, but he also cannot condone actions that betray social responsibility. He says, "I was ashamed of the kind of money we made," showing his guilt over profiting from unethical behaviour and revealing the difficulty of balancing familial love with moral duty. Kate Keller's loyalty to the family manifests in her refusal to accept the death of her son, Larry. She embodies the theme of denial, clinging to the belief that Larry is still alive because, if he were dead, it would mean Joe was responsible for his death as well. Kate's fierce loyalty to her family prevents her from acknowledging the truth, allowing Joe's moral failure to go unchallenged within the family dynamic. Miller uses these conflicting viewpoints to critique the

dangers of placing family loyalty above social responsibility. Through Joe's downfall, Miller suggests that ethical responsibility to society cannot be ignored in favour of personal gain or family success. By the end, Joe realizes the broader implications of his actions, confessing, "They were all my sons". This line encapsulates the play's moral lesson: one's duty to society is as important as one's duty to family.

Joe Keller : A Failed Attempt at Balance

All My Sons is a social tragedy. Much of Joe Keller's suffering and his ultimate death is due to the nature of American society. The American society is characterised by competition and commercialisation. Every individual is free to rise in life according to his capabilities and resourcefulness in society. People of American have firm faith in "the great American dream" which is based on the doctrine of self-help. This doctrine assumes that a person endowed with sufficient initiative can rise from lower to a higher position. Joe Keller's central conflict arises from his actions by prioritizing family loyalty. He claims that everything he did — particularly his decision to sell defective airplane parts was to secure his family's future. In his mind, he believes that being a good father means ensuring the financial security of his wife and sons, even if that comes at the expense of social responsibility. Chris Keller, Joe's son, represents a character who deeply values social responsibility, yet also feels a strong sense of loyalty to his family. Having fought in world War II, Chris has been firsthand the sacrifices people made for the greater good, and he has internalized this belief in the importance of collective responsibility. His ideals of selflessness and duty to society clash with his loyalty to his father when he learns of Joe's actions. Chris's struggle is one of balancing his loyalty to his family his love and respect for his father with his responsibility to the wider world. When he discovers the truth about Joe's crime, Chris feels torn. He cannot easily reconcile the father he loved with the man who caused the deaths of young soldiers. Chris's moral dilemma highlights the difficulty of balancing family loyalty with ethical obligations to society. He eventually realizes that true integrity requires confronting his father's

wrongdoing rather than defending him. In Chris's journey, Miller illustrates the challenge of maintaining both family loyalty and social responsibility. Chris wants to believe in the goodness of his family, but he also recognizes that one's duties extend beyond personal relationships. By the end of the play, Chris understands that one cannot truly be loyal to their family without also being responsible to society. He embodies the moral truth that family loyalty should not be at odds with doing what is right for community. Kate Keller's intense loyalty to her son Larry prevents her from accepting the full reality of Joe's crime. She cannot reconcile the idea that Joe's actions might have contributed to Larry's death, so she clings to the hope that Larry is still alive. Kate's loyalty to her family becomes a form of denial, as she refuses to acknowledge the broader consequences of Joe's actions. Kate's conflict demonstrates how family loyalty, when it becomes too singularly focused, can prevent individuals from confronting difficult truths. Her refusal to accept Larry's death and Joe's guilt reflects her inability to balance her loyalty to her family with her responsibility to face reality.

Balancing Social Responsibility and Family Loyalty

Miller's message in *All My Sons* is clear: family loyalty and social responsibility cannot be viewed as mutually exclusive. A healthy balance requires understanding that actions taken in the name of family have broader societal implications. The tragedy in the play arises because the characters particularly of fail to strike this balance. Joe mistakenly believes that protecting his family justifies betraying his social responsibilities. This imbalance ultimately destroys his family, suggesting that true loyalty cannot exist without moral accountability. Chris's arc shows that balance is possible, but difficult. His loyalty to his family is tested by his sense of social duty, and he ultimately learns that standing by his family requires facing the truth about their failings. Family loyalty in *All My Sons* is portrayed as a powerful but double-edged force. When loyalty to family is an understandable and deeply human value, the play demonstrates the dangers of placing it above moral responsibility

and ethical behaviour. Arthur Miller uses the limits of family loyalty, showing how, when taken to extremes, it can lead to devastating consequences for both individuals and the community.

Conclusion

In *All My Sons*, Arthur Miller suggests that balancing social responsibility and family loyalty is not only necessary but morally imperative. The play argues that family loyalty, when taken to an extreme or isolated from the larger social context, can lead to destructive consequences. By showing the tragic outcomes of Joe Keller's choices, Miller advocates for a more holistic view of responsibility one that includes both devotion to family and accountability to society. Only by balancing these forces can individuals avoid the moral compromises that lead to tragedy. *All My Sons* ultimately explores the tension between personal loyalty and collective responsibility, showing the two cannot exist in isolation. The characters' struggles illustrates how loyalty to family, if taken to an extreme, can lead to moral blindness, while social responsibility, though difficult, is essential for maintaining integrity in the larger community.

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The Release of the Cathartic Emotions in Late Rituparno Ghosh's Cinema *The Last Lear*

Shirsak Ghosh

Introduction

Based on Utpal Dutt's classic play, *Aajker Shah Jahan*, Late Rituparno Ghosh's film *The Last Lear* released on the year 12th of September, 2008 produced an element of catharsis in most of the scenes. Rituparno Ghosh films acclaimed in different National Awards. Cathartic appeal produced an element of zeal and pepping up in the film. The film won two National film awards – one for “Best Feature Film in English in 2007” and “Shefali Shah won the Best Supporting Actress National Award for her role in the movie”. (Wikipedia)

In Chapter VI of *The Poetics*, Aristotle defined tragedy:-

Tragedy, then, is an imitation of an action that is serious, complete, and of a certain magnitude; in language embellished with each kind of artistic ornament, the several kinds being found in separate parts of the play; in the form of action, not of narrative; through pity and fear effecting the proper purgation of these emotions. (51)

In his definition of tragedy, Aristotle observes that the action of tragedy arouses in the mind the spectator's pity and fear wherewith to accomplish the catharsis of such emotions. Critics think that the effect of tragedy is a kind of quiet achieved by either the purification or purgation of the emotions of pity and fear.

Eva Schaper in her article *Aristotle's Catharsis and Aesthetic Pleasure* describes her meaning of tragedy.

In one sense-usually regarded as the more literal one-'catharsis' means 'purgation', and this meaning derives from the medical context of healing

and curing through expulsion and evacuation of harmful elements; it means getting rid of disturbances by removing their causes. In the second sense, 'catharsis' is said to mean 'purification', and this meaning derives from a religious context of cleansing the spirit and sublimating the emotions in order to prepare for or to achieve a state of exaltation. This meaning has obvious moral overtones, whilst the medical one can be said to be morally neutral. Now it is obvious that Aristotle uses the term not literally, but metaphorically.

(Eva Schaper)

Ghosh arrived at a time when Bengali cinema was going through a dark phase. Satyajit Ray had passed away in 1992, leaving a vacuum. Although filmmakers such as MrinalSen, Goutam Ghose, Aparna Sen, and Buddhadeb Dasgupta contributed significantly to his genre of "intellectual cinema," they did not have much command over the commercial market.

(Rohit K. Dasgupta and Tanmayee Banerjee)

The film 'The Last Lear' opens with Gautam (played by Jisshu Sengupta) and his friend Siddhartha (played by Arjun Rampal), the director of the film heading by car to their movie premiere 'The Mask'. Meanwhile, in a different shot, Shabnam is getting ready to look after their injured co-artist Harish ji or Harry (played by Amitabh Bachchan).

Shabnam's husband Rajiv is extremely possessive about her wife Shabnam and she was overprotective of Shabnam. There was an ugly fight between a war of words and Rajiv had spread all the perfume spray on Shabnam's dress. So, we pity Shabnam from the opening scene to the last.

As Shabnam (acted by Preity Zinta) enters Harry's (acted by Amitabh Bachchan) house Vandana (played by Shefali Shah) is jealous of Shabnam with exceeding perfumes to find Harry. We find the hot heated and angry Vandana in this sort of scene. So, Shabnam went to the washroom and smoked and applied the smell to her dress. In the article, "Politics of Banning On-Screen smoking", by Patibandla Srikant, noted

director Rituparno Ghosh said the ban was “impractical” and “naive” [Frontlizie, 2005:11 -13]. The cineindustry is unable to digest the timing of the ban, when the Indian film industry has to compete with foreign movies and has to cope with ever increasing costs in making a movie and declining returns.

We come to the opening scene of *Harishji* (Amitabh Bachchan) in an interview with Gautam (Jisshu Sengupta) when Gautam’s magazine wanted to interview some retired co-actors during that time. During the conversation, Gautam mistakes the character of Robin for Robinhood and he has to have a penalty for leaving out of the house. Gautam was a journalist and was unaware of the play *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* whereas Harry was insanely obsessed with Shakespeare. “Collective repression of emotions may be one the main causes of large-scale violence.” (Thomas J. Scheff)

Influence of Shakespeare on *The Last Lear*

Gautam wanted to meet Siddharth, the director of the movie *The Mask* with Harry. Siddharth proposed the idea of Harry working with him in his movie ‘*The Mask*’. At first, he rejected the art of working with him as he was a theatre actor and he would not be fit to act suddenly in movies. Suddenly Harry rose and became Prospero of *The Tempest* and uttered his overwhelming speech:

Ye elves of hills, brooks, standing lakes and groves,
 And ye that on the sands with printless foot
 Do chase the ebbing Neptune and do fly him
 When he comes back; you demi-puppets that
 By moonshine do the green sour ringlets make,
 Whereof the ewe not bites, and you whose pastime
 Is to make midnight mushrooms, that rejoice
 To hear the solemn curfew; by whose aid,
 Weak masters though ye be, I have bedimm’d

The noontide sun, call'd forth the mutinous winds,
And 'twixt the green sea and the azured vault
Set roaring war: to the dread rattling thunder
Have I given fire and rifted Jove's stout oak
With his own bolt; the strong-based promontory
Have I made shake and by the spurs pluck'd up
The pine and cedar: graves at my command
Have waked their sleepers, oped, and let 'em forth
By my so potent art. But this rough magic
I here abjure.

(The Tempest V, i)

By performing Prospero at Harry's residence, Harry brought the ambience to silence. It seemed the crowd got spellbound by Harry's performance which brought an amalgamation of amazement. "In their book *Studies and Hysteria*, Freud and Breuer defined catharsis as "the process of reducing or eliminating a complex by recalling it to conscious awareness and allowing it to be expressed." Catharsis still plays a role today in Freudian psychoanalysis." (very well mind)

In the scene of the film *The Last Lear*, Shabnam was unmindful and was not prepared to rehearse her dialogue in her upcoming film *The Mask*. Harry could very well understand the nature of her co-actress in the film. He took Shabnam by a cliff and asked her to shout at the top of her voice as if a gentleman on the other side of the film could hear her. He then recited Shakespeare's lines from *Henry V*

Once more unto the breach, dear friends, once more;
Or close the wall up with our English dead.
In peace there's nothing so becomes a man
As modest stillness and humility:
But when the blast of war blows in our ears,

Then imitate the action of the tiger;
 Stiffen the sinews, summon up the blood,
 Disguise fair nature with hard-favour'd rage;
 Then lend the eye a terrible aspect;
 Let pry through the portage of the head
 Like the brass cannon;

(Henry V, V, iii)

A magical force reacted on Shabnam and she shouted in agony and cried about her life through her heart's ease. She can bring up her pent-up feelings and emotions. At this stage of life, she can ease her pain through solace and her cries can bring a cathartic effect as she can arouse her feelings and emotions gingerly. Mr. Bachchan could try to help her out but acted out smartly by moving slowly backwards to outdo her own fears and trepidations. At some moments, tears help us to glow our inner boil of pain and pleasure too.

KING LEAR

Where have I been? Where am I? Fair daylight?
 I am mightily abused. I should e'en die with pity,
 To see another thus. I know not what to say.
 I will not swear these are my hands: let's see;
 I feel this pin prick. Would I were assured
 Of my condition!

CORDELIA

O, look upon me, sir,
 And hold your hands in benediction o'er me:
 No, sir, you must not kneel.

KING LEAR

Pray, do not mock me:
I am a very foolish fond old man,
Fourscore and upward, not an hour more nor less;
And, to deal plainly,
I fear I am not in my perfect mind.
Methinks I should know you, and know this man;
Yet I am doubtful for I am mainly ignorant
What place this is; and all the skill I have
Remembers not these garments; nor I know not
Where I did lodge last night. Do not laugh at me;
For, as I am a man, I think this lady
To be my child Cordelia.

(King Lear, IV,vii)

The above lines of King Lear bring an element of catharsis all through the film Rituparno Ghosh's 'The Last Lear' directed in the year 2007. Amitabh Bachchan a.k.a., Harish Mishra (Harry), a theatre actor wants to play his dream role as King Lear but couldn't able to play his role as he had left the theatre when someone rudely commented about his live-in relationship with Vandana (played by Shefali Shah). Harry wanted to play Shakespeare with Shabnam (Priety Zinta) and in the intervals of the shooting of the film within the film *The Mask*, they exchange Shakespearean speeches of King Lear. In the last part of the movie, Shabnam came to see Harry after he had fallen from the cliff and could not rise again these speeches were spoken again. These speeches cast a glow in the faces of both the characters. The timing in which they arouse the speeches brings a cathartic effect to the audience at the point of time.

Regarding Thoraval's assessment of Rituparno Ghosh's work, he says the director is "promising without showing his worth yet".

One wonders whether worth lies only in the making of ‘high art’, keeping in mind that Ghosh propagates a more middle of the road cinema, which has nonetheless been highly acclaimed.

SHARMISTHA GOOPTU

Shabnam in the conversation with Harry wanted to know what makes an actor as she was a model and the critics wanted to give the worst review of her films.

“Harry: You know what makes an actor?

Shabnam: What?

Harry: Tell me.

Shabnam: Observation?

Harry: The desire to perform. Nothing else matters.”

Performance matters every time and it depends on who the performer is and what the activities they are doing. If we learn from our mistakes daily and apply the process of learning and trying to improve our performance, we can improve ourselves and can be a better performer at the pinnacle of life. This will undoubtedly help us to learn, observe and recreate ourselves into a better and smarter performer in the long run. “In what is perhaps his most sublime poetical creation, *Iphigenie*, Goethe shows us a striking instance of expiation, of the freeing of a suffering mind from the burden of guilt, and he makes this catharsis come about through a passionate outburst of feeling under the beneficent influence of loving sympathy.” (Studies on Hysteria, 3520)

As Harry and Shabnam became the closest of pals, Harry urged Shabnam to enact the play *King Lear* with her. Shabnam bolted from the blues when she heard the strange proposal of playing a Shakespearean character with Harry. She insisted that she might get a wrong reputation and a bad name if she could not match properly as a co-star with Harry. The cathartic effect took place on the camera being pointed at Harry. He dreamt of playing *King Lear* the role that he wanted to play in his lifetime. He had done all his background research, memorized all the

toughest quotes and even thought of preparing the topic well. Before a week as the play was about to take place, it was because of a “bad name” that he had left the stage. Looking backwards he realized that he had made a bad decision in his lifetime of leaving the stage. Rituparno Ghosh kept the audience and the spectator in the hope of amazement.

Rohit K. Dasgupta and Tanmayee Banerjee turn back to a film made by Bengali filmmaker Rituparno Ghosh earlier in his career. His death three years ago at the age of 49 shocked not only the Indian film industry where he had labored for nearly twenty years, but also his legions of fans, for whom he'd been a shining light of tolerance and artistic brilliance.

B. Ruby Rich

The Film within the Film

There was an interview scene between Harish ji and Gautam in the part of the movie where Gautam told the climax of the movie scene where Maqbool was been chased by the cops and suddenly falls down the cliff. Gautam asked a relevant question primarily as a theatre actor he has done every act by himself. Now in the climax of the cinema, ‘The Mask’, a stunt man would perform the role of him and how does Harish ji feel about it? It is undoubtedly a startling question that gave goose bumps to Harish ji about it.

We find like a baby, Harish ji pleads to perform this stunt by himself even if it can cause immense destruction in the future of Harish ji's life. A bond was even signed by Harish ji regarding this matter. When the shot was taken, things worked out well. The director Siddharth did not like this shot as no indication shows Harish ji fell from the bushes so he had to take a shot again but this time, Siddharth had undergone a trick. He felled all the trees so that his shot might look like the best shot in the film. His lack of respect for humanity over Harishji went down the drain. Siddharth's film was a hit but Harish ji had to suffer from contusion. He could never stand any time in his life nor could he remember anything.

Cathartic Effect of Different Characters in the Film

We find at the beginning of the movie that Siddharth (played by Arjun Rampal) the director of the movie, *The Mask* was sad and was burdened with sorrow. He doesn't flaunt out his guilt towards the rest of the co-stars but behind the mask of his face, lies another guilt. As days pass by and whenever the episodes of Harry turn into the picture, his sudden guilt consciousness rises up. "This theory-known as the Catharsis effect-suggests that an individual may be able to relate to a violent on-screen character and release negative feelings, thereby becoming less aggressive personally prior to viewing." (The Psychology Book, 290)

Despite being a film star, Shabnam's personal life is in trouble as there is no good communication between the couple. Moreover, the star sign where he wants to present herself to everyone falls extremely short in a scene where she avoids theatre because she needs a place to hide. She had chosen Harry's home as the best place and the three ladies Shabnam, Vandana (played by Shefali Shah) and Vandana (played by Divya Dutta) shared their inner turmoils and their angst within the short span of their time when the camera was focussed into them in the movie *The Last Lear*. "In Freudian terms, "catharsis" describes the act of releasing and feeling the deep emotions associated with repressed memories. If the significant event – such as the death of a parent was not fully experienced at that time because it was too overwhelming, the difficulty and the energy remain, to be released at the moment of catharsis." (The Psychology Book, 99)

Gautam's cathartic appeal lies in the fact that being a journalist, he should not ask the question of partaking in the shot of Maqbool jumping on the cliff. He sacrificed that he would not publish the book and change the name of the publisher to anyone's name. His guilt-consciousness forced him to take up this decision. Moreover, he knew Siddharth also felt somewhat guilty for Harry's condition, so there arose a distance between Gautam and Siddhartha.

Palash da (played by Prosenjit Chatterjee) played a cameo and was a film actor in this movie. He was concerned about Harish ji's condition and he shared a screen with Harish ji during the film shoot of 'The Mask'. It was an awe-inspiring fact that his real voice was dubbed on the screen. We also find Palash da requesting Siddhartha to meet Harish ji at his residence and this also shows his humbleness towards a human being in true colours.

The night nurse Ivy's (played by Divya Dutta) appeal lies in the fact that she's been treated more in an authoritarian way in the first part of the movie based on her class as a nurse. She was an obedient nurse did her work properly and looked after the patient Harry carefully. Her cathartic appeal lies in the fact that she wants to work as a nurse with whatever caliber she has within herself but her boyfriend does not like it. The independence that every lady wants in her life about herself and about what job the person is doing, irrespective of the outcomes. She wants her life not to be controlled by her boyfriend.

Vandana's cathartic appeal was been spoken in the last part of the movie. Harry and Vandana (played by Shefali Shah) came to the house fifteen years ago. She was attracted to Harry when Vandana's dad took her to the theatre and he was playing Othello in William Shakespeare's Othello. She was flabbergasted by the performance in Othello when she was angry at Desdemona, Othello's wife. She was attracted to the acting of Othello when Othello took his last breath and everyone was tongue-tied to silence. Harry wasn't so passionate in real life but on stage, he was the best in every field.

"Silence has been a leitmotif in all her performances, from Rituparno Ghosh's *The Last Lear* (for which she won a National Award), to that final, hair-raising shot in *Juice*, the actress has repeatedly used silence to her advantage. Shah agrees. "I feel silence is much more powerful than words. I'm one of the few actors who asks the director to cut all her lines. I keep telling them. I went for a poetry reading thing the other day and I cut down an eight-page poem to two pages! The visual medium gives you the luxury of a camera, a close-up, a visual context. It's not

like a radio play. I can see it then why should I say it? And if you can't show it, then I don't think you can be in this profession," Shefali says. (Sharma)

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One day Harry came home early, had his food at the destined hour and went to his room. She told Vandana that she left the theatre for good. He was about to play King Lear, his most ambitious project in a week but he had permanently left the stage. Someone commented rudely on the affair between Vandana and Harry. This made him frustrated and he left the theatre. Vandana on the other hand did not tell Harry that he was carrying the baby of Harry. She had gone quietly out and done the abortion without informing Harry anything about it.

Despite a two-hour and ten-minute running time, the story's tempo remains refreshingly fresh from start to finish. Some scenes arouse a cathartic appeal of pity and fear. Music by Raja Narayan Deb and Sanjoy Das play a major role. Usha Uthup's voice also plays a vital role at the beginning of the movie. Giving *The Last Lear* the much-needed glossy wrap-around are Abhik Mukhopadhyay's cinematography and Arghya Kamal Mitra's editing.

Film Reviews from Different Websites

"National award-winning director Rituparno Ghosh's Amitabh Bachchan starrer movie tells the story of a Shakespearian stage actor and it naturally enacts a lot of elements related to 'Shakespeare's works.'" (The Times of India)

"The film only works for Amitabh Bachchan aficionados who can savour the desi bard bellowing out the best of Shakespeare in his characteristic baritone.

The actor still manages to create magic moments on the screen as he portrays the arrogance and the naked need of a has-been actor who believes he is always good, simply because he can never be bad. Yet, he clings desperately to his last chance to display histrionics and is even ready to grovel before the filmmaker for his famous last shot.” (The Times of India)

“Commenting upon the Shakespearean touch to the film, Ghosh had told IANS: “Shakespearean interpretations over the years have always been in a colonial context. *The Last Lear* is the first attempt to take Shakespeare away from the colonial context and place it in an indigenous Indian context and actually transpose it to a film unit.” (Arpana)

“*The Last Lear* premiered at the 2007 Toronto International Film Festival. Soon after, it was screened at the International Film Festival of India (IFFI) in Goa and recently went to the London Film Festival.

The film was ready for release a year back, but producer Arindam Chaudhuri, managing director of Planman Motion Pictures, says he intentionally delayed its release in India.

“*The Last Lear* is a niche film and so it was required to be shown internationally before being brought to India. It has already travelled to film festivals in Toronto, Rome and London,” said Chaudhuri.

“When we thought of releasing the film around the summer vacations this year, the IPL (Indian Premier League) matches were on and there were also a lot of big films packed till now. We wanted to release it at a decent time when there won’t be many commercial films to compete with,” added Chaudhuri, who is also a management guru.” (Arpana)

“Rituparno Ghosh could have given [Amitabh] Bachchan the role of a lifetime in *The Last Lear*. But what we get is Bachchan declaiming Shakespeare, buoyed by a soundtrack which toplines thunder, lightning and rain, and spotlighted by a bright beam.” (Gupta)

“An overly complicated film-within-a-film story, told through multiple narrators, causes confusion in Rituparno Ghosh’s *The Last Lear*. The film was conceived as a vehicle for the greatest living idol of Indian

cinema, Amitabh Bachchan, in his first full length English-language film. The role of a mercurial stage giant who is brought out of retirement to act for the first time in a film, the part fits Bachchan like a glove, and gives him the chance to go over the top as many times as he likes. Had the script devoted more time to his character and less to the emotional problems of three women moving in his orbit, the film would have gained incoherence. As it stands, the audience's engagement varies as topics are confusingly pieced together." (Gupta)

"The film takes place both in flashback — from the movie's premiere while Harish lies in a mysterious coma — and as a film within a film. This is perhaps too much gimmickry for such slender and overly melodramatic material. The film derives from a play by Bengali actor-playwright Utpal Dutt. And all too often, when it reverts to three women holed up in Harish's flat, smoking, eating and gossiping, it feels laboriously like a play." (Honeycutt, 2007)

"Whether he's bellowing those soliloquies or begging his director to allow him to perform his own stunt, Bachchan delivers a measured performance every step of the way. There's a very good chance he'll be accused of hamming, but look closely and you'll notice his performance in *The Last Lear* is true in every individual moment, and yet, slyly quietly over-the-top in its cumulative effect.

But because of its languid pace and its needlessly heavy-handed direction, *The Last Lear* is ultimately only half-good. It's a film that achieves only part of its potential." (Masand)

Thus, the movie Rituparno Ghosh's "The Last Lear" arouses a catharsis of emotions in most of the scenes. Each of the scenes has an effect that startles the heart of the audience. From the beginning of the first scene to the last, it reproduces the Shakespearean dilemma, "To see or not to see."

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Challenging the Myth of Female Frailty: A Feminist Analysis of Social Constructs in Geetanjali Shree's *Tomb of Sand*

Vishnu Kumar Sharma

Introduction

Women across the world face pervasive challenges and acts of violence, including honour killings, sexual exploitation, and other forms of oppression, with the frequency of these incidents on the rise. In *Tomb of Sand*, Geetanjali Shree explores these grim realities, delving into themes of trauma, female solidarity, and resilience within a patriarchal framework. This study analyses passages, dialogues, and character arcs in the novel, supported by critical views, scholarly sources, and feminist perspectives, to uncover Shree's insights into patriarchal structures that sustain such oppression. Through a feminist and gender studies lens, the research highlights the unique challenges women encounter throughout their lives and the ways these struggles intersect with their gender identity.

This study applies an analytical framework centered on discrimination and oppression in contemporary society to address the following research questions.

- (a) How does Geetanjali Shree portray the concept of female weakness as a socially and culturally constructed phenomenon in *Tomb of Sand*?
- (b) In what ways do the characters in the novel resist or internalize societal expectations of gender and perceived weakness?
- (c) What feminist perspectives can be applied to understand the impact of imposed fragility on the personal identities and agency of female characters in *Tomb of Sand*?

The intersection of women's oppression and literature has attracted substantial scholarly interest in recent years. However, specific analyses of women's oppression within *Tomb of Sand* remain limited. This research aims to fill this gap by examining how the novel portrays women's oppression and its broader significance. The study vividly captures the hardships faced by women in certain contexts to understand Geetanjali Shree's intentions and creative choices. Investigating the author's perspective, motivations, and artistic decisions can deepen comprehension of the novel's themes and highlight its socio-political commentary.

Literary Review

The concept of patriarchy is essential for understanding gender dynamics. Various theories explore patriarchy through historical and cross-cultural lenses, examining gender inequality and the differences among women based on factors like ethnicity, class, colour and general facilities. The scholars like Wollstonecraft 1792; Mill 1869; Woolf 1929; Simone de Beauvoir 1949; Barrett 1980; Beechey 1977; Carby 1982; Coward 1978; Hooks 1982; Molyneux 1979; Rowbotham 1981 and 1992; Sargent 1981; Segal 1987; Walby 1989 and 1990; Tyson 2006; Evaristo 2019 and 2021 have shared their amazing views on gender discrimination. The study focuses on certain key patriarchal structures that collectively constitute the system of patriarchy: the patriarchal mode of production, which involves the exploitation of women's labour by men; patriarchal dynamics in waged labour; the patriarchal state; male violence; patriarchal relations in sexuality; and patriarchal cultural norms.

The present pitiful situation of women is contrary to Indian mythology where many of the highest powers are entrusted to female deities: Goddess Laxmi oversees prosperity, Goddess Sarasvati embodies knowledge, and Goddess Durga represents strength and protection. This raises the question of from whence the concept "Frailty, thy name is woman" (Raffel 21) is practised in modern societies across the world. Women are often intentionally labelled as the "weaker sex," a stereotype that they neither embody inherently nor historically. As creators, first

teachers, and the emblem to generate the mother tongue, women defy this categorization, suggesting that weakness is not a natural or biological characteristic but a social and cultural construct. Women are not naturally secondary or passive; rather, it is societal expectations and norms that define their roles and status. As Simone De Beauvoir in *The Second Sex* writes, “One is not born but rather becomes, a woman” (Beauvoir 283).

The birth of a girl is often twin one – an unwelcomed twin; unjust discrimination. The discrimination is socially and culturally constructed and it becomes very clear by observing certain cultural practices, especially in parts of India where certain rituals or ceremonies are reserved solely for the birth of a male child, such as the distribution of *batashas* (traditional sugar candies) or *gur* (jaggery), as well as *naal gaadana* (ceremonies to honour the placenta Ben-Senior). Ceremonies like *Kua Pujan* or *Jalwa Pujan* (worship of the well or water source) and *Thali Bajao* (plate-playing celebration) are traditionally associated with the birth of boys. (Government of India Ministry of Women and Child Development 15). Some or other numerous forms of discrimination affect women throughout their lives, impacting areas such as nutrition, clothing, education, honour, freedom, and decision-making etc. Bernardine Evaristo addresses these issues as manifestations of patriarchal privilege “The truth is that hierarchies of power and privilege won’t disappear, every historian knows this, it’s innate to human nature and inherent in all societies in all eras” (Evaristo, *Girl, Woman, Other* 208).

The prevalent discrimination is contrary to the fact that females are more than capable of balancing family and career. However, their true potential is often overlooked in patriarchal societies. It is alarming that women are discriminated against, at their workplace, based on the belief that those under 25 are not serious about their careers, while those between 25 and 50 are viewed as preoccupied with family responsibilities. Consequently, women experience multiple layers of oppression throughout their lives. But the truth is “Wives are young men’s mistresses, companions for middle age, and old men’s nurses” (Chaudhuri 60). And

“It is often seen, that bad husbands have very good wives” (Chaudhuri 61). Thanks to women’s nurturing and compassionate nature men attain positions of power within a patriarchal system.

Women face discrimination and oppression from the moment of conception until death. The practice of female feticide, which involves murdering female foetuses, poses a grave threat to the future. Gender discrimination is evident in the way parents often distinguish between their daughters and sons, as highlighted by Evaristo, *Girl, Woman, Other*.

“Amma explained, blowing smoke into the already thickening fug of the room my three older brothers became lawyers and a doctor, their obedience to the expectations of our father meant I wasn’t pressurized to follow suit his only concern for me is marriage and children” (Evaristo, *Girl, Woman, Other* 16).

Women’s roles within the home, which is the foundation of society, are consistently viewed as subordinate and undervalued. Traditional family dynamics favour the position of men as the heads of the household, while women are relegated to supportive roles such as housekeeping and childcare, a reality that Penelope reflects on with great pain. “who (husband) still insisted she remain at home as it was the natural order of things going back to time immemorial: me hunter – you homemaker me breadwinner – you bread-maker me child maker – you child raiser” (Evaristo, *Girl, Woman, Other* 286). Gender discrimination has been a constant issue since time immemorial, shaping women’s narratives and experiences resulting she is a story herself. “Once you’ve got women and a border, a story can write itself. Even women on their own are enough. Women are stories in themselves, full of stirrings and whisperings that float on the wind, that bend with each blade of grass” (Shree 11).

Discussion

The *Tomb of Sand* illustrates the experiences of Indian women who endure significant hardship in a patriarchal society. It explores the intricate dynamics of mother-daughter relationships, emphasizing the daily challenges women face. The novel highlights how Indian women are

breaking free from traditional customs and advocating for their rights. Characters such as ‘Bade’ (son) and ‘Beti’ (daughter) represent ideological divides, with the daughter striving to confront long-standing patriarchal norms and carve out her own identity. Additionally, the novel addresses the trauma experienced by women during the partition of India, as seen through characters like Ma (Chanda or Chandra Prabha Devi), who embodies the struggles of women forced to abandon their husbands, families, and entire lives in Pakistan in search of safety in India.

Geetanjali Shree powerfully illustrates the subjugation and marginalization of Indian women within their households. A wife prepares fresh meals daily for her husband, as it is believed that leftovers could harm him. Men are often given the best portions of food, while women are left with the “leftovers” (Shree 12), highlighting this significant imbalance. The narrator underscores that women have faced enduring oppression and injustice both at home and in society due to the patriarchal system. Geetanjali Shree’s narrative serves as a powerful reminder of the systemic injustices women face, both in their homes and in society at large. It challenges the belief that women are naturally destined for subordinate roles, asserting that gender roles and expectations are societal constructs that reinforce inequality.

Geetanjali Shree also highlights the absence of privacy and autonomy that women face within the household, particularly emphasizing the open-door policy at Bade’s home, where guests are allowed to enter at any time without prior notice or regard for the women’s own lives. Shree underscores this issue by stating “The term “privacy” is not even in their vocabulary, and anyone who asserts such a privilege is viewed suspiciously. What exactly is she concealing? Seems suspicious.” (Shree 31)

The narrator illustrates society’s expectations and biases through the character of Bade. He embodies the societal belief that women should remain confined to their homes and refrain from pursuing independent careers or lives defined solely by their relationships with men. Bade’s

criticism of Beti's "bohemian lifestyle," her late-night work, and her romantic choices reflect his desire to control and dictate her life.

"However, as she grew older, she needed instructions regarding what to do and what not to do. It goes without saying that an older brother must use the parental tone to express disapproval toward his sister. When his sisters' partners joined the conflict, complaints mounted and Bade became frustrated" (Shree 52).

Bade's concern for his sister's future was not centered on her career prospects or her ability to thrive independently. Rather, his main worry was that she might partake in activities that defied societal norms, thereby bringing shame to the family. He voiced this concern to their mother, warning her about the possible repercussions. "Bade cautioned Ma against talking to Beti too much on the phone and so on, and you are not to go there under any circumstances; we cannot legitimate her lifestyle" (Shree 63).

Bade's desire for control goes beyond just his sister Beti; he also tries to influence his mother's actions. When Ma provides Beti with a sense of privacy and a hint of freedom by metaphorically opening a window for her, Bade attempts to control and dictate his mother's decisions and behaviour, as illustrated in the following statement:

"Ma succeeds in creating a route to the forbidden. comparable to the window that opens out towards the guava orchard. Ma had made this secret passageway clear for Beti's entrance and exit. There was a resounding "No, never, ever, she won't go out!" inside. And in the intervening period, Beti flew like a bird out the open window" (Shree 35).

This depiction highlights the restrictive norms and double standards that society imposes on women. The character of Bade embodies the patriarchal mindset that seeks to confine women's choices, preventing them from leading their own lives and making independent decisions. Societal expectations for Indian women often demand that they adhere to everyone else's schedules and cater to their needs, frequently at the expense of their own well-being. This dynamic underscores the inherent

invisibility of women, who are primarily defined and recognized through their relationships—as daughters, wives, sisters, or mothers—rather than as individuals with their own needs and emotions. As a result, women are compelled to prioritize the feelings and needs of others over their own, perpetuating a cycle of selflessness that relegates their desires and self-care to the background.

Marriage, as a social institution, frequently fails to embody principles of equality, love, and respect. It establishes a framework that regulates emotions such as love and devotion, which should ideally be expressed freely. In many cases, husbands believe that fulfilling their duty means solely providing for their wives, who are expected to be completely dependent on them. This viewpoint underscores the unequal power dynamics in marital relationships, where the husband assumes a dominant role and the wife is perceived as reliant on his support. Such dynamics undermine the idea of a partnership built on mutual respect and shared responsibilities, instead fostering a sense of obligation for the husband. This creates an environment where the wife's autonomy and individuality may be compromised, as illustrated by Bade's assertions to his wife, "I'm the one who contributes money daily for everything" (Shree 129). However, the awareness that their husbands are responsible for their care and exert control over them often leads wives to feel inferior. As Simone de Beauvoir notes in *The Second Sex*, "The husband is often frozen by the idea that he is accomplishing a duty, and the wife is ashamed to feel delivered to someone who exercises a right over her." (Beauvoir 465)

Across India, the patriarchal society often overlooks the contributions of the bahu (daughter-in-law). Being a homemaker is an incredibly demanding role that requires constant effort, yet it frequently goes unappreciated. This is illustrated by the bahu's care for Ma, which remains unacknowledged and leaves her feeling overlooked. Despite her meticulous attention to detail, her efforts are ignored. She ensures that Ma's room is welcoming, adding thoughtful touches like a music player, flowers, and hot water, and even encourages Ma to watch the news on television. Yet, these contributions are credited solely to her

husband, Bade, while she remains in the background. She is responsible for planning and executing these details, including repositioning the toilet shower for Ma's comfort. The bahu expresses her frustration over the lack of recognition, lamenting that her son receives all the credit. "He always thinks big, and he thinks that what makes him biggest – Bade." (Shree 204). This underscores the widespread gender bias within the household, where women's contributions and creative efforts are often overlooked and credited to men. It highlights the necessity for a change in societal perceptions and a true recognition of the invaluable work that women undertake in the domestic realm.

The bahu's opinions were deemed insignificant by everyone, including the servants. Despite being the one who consistently made sound decisions and managed household matters, her authority was undermined. This became clear when Bade directed the servants to prepare parathas, while she proposed making khichdi instead. Susheela, one of the servants, ignored her suggestion and opted to make parathas instead. This act of disrespect and humiliation profoundly impacted her, as she anticipated that the servants would respect her authority and heed her advice. She expresses her disappointment by lamenting "Now even the servants are stubborn and don't respect me" (Shree 128).

In her frustration and disappointment, the bahu's voice reflected a deep sense of urgency and significance as she sought to express herself. She yearned for her voice to resonate and be acknowledged, highlighting her desire for recognition, validation, and respect. However, her plea went unnoticed, underscoring the existing power dynamics and the lack of appreciation for her contributions within the household. Despite being an essential part of managing the home, the bahu (daughter-in-law) never felt a true sense of belonging in her husband's house, as she articulated in her own words; "My home has never been my own" (Shree 205). Certainly "Man worships the idols he himself creates. But not those that God has made" (Shree 189).

This underscores the substantial unpaid labour women perform to manage their households, often at the expense of their own lives. Despite

their significant contributions, they frequently do not receive the respect they deserve. In *The Second Sex*, Simone de Beauvoir notes that domestic chores, marked by their repetitive and relentless nature, often feel akin to enduring suffering. This sentiment is echoed in the novel, where the bahu (daughter-in-law) experiences a lack of respect and acknowledgement for her efforts. She articulates her frustration, “Regardless of whether I speak, I am the villain; not only your father and aunt but even the housekeepers are after me!” (Shree 191)

Shree reveals the true nature of a male-dominated society regarding unjustified gender discrimination;

“When you’re quiet, you’re polite; but when I’m quiet, I’m wily.
If you did it, it’s good etiquette; if I do, it’s fawning flattery.
If you say it, it’s candid; if I do, it’s just rude.
If I ask, it’s obscene curiosity; when you do, it’s sympathy.
If I do it, it’s for my own convenience; if you do it, you’re most beneficent.
If I do it, I’m being stingy; if you do it, you’re being thrifty.
If I’m quiet, I’m acting proud; if you’re quiet, you feel bashful.
I’m extremely secretive, but you’re just reserved.
And my fashions are faux, whereas yours are cutting edge.
And if I lose something, what’s the big deal, but if you do, you’ve been robbed, woe is me!” (Shree 211)

In India, girls often lack the freedom to choose their life partners. One of the most striking elements of *Tomb of Sand* is its depiction of women as victims of a rigid patriarchal system that stifles their freedom. Chandi represents the many women whose lives are overshadowed by the oppressive forces of tradition and gender roles. She is compelled into an arranged marriage at a young age, becoming a mere pawn in a game she never consented to play. As the story unfolds, we witness her gradual evolution from a submissive bride to a woman who begins to question and challenge societal norms. She grows weary of the suffocating

environment that defines the lives of these women. Shree skillfully illustrates the physical and emotional abuse they endure, along with the trauma that shapes their identities. As Chandi reflects on her experiences;

“I am but a pebble, buried beneath layers of sand. I am invisible, my voice silenced by the weight of expectations. Each day, I crumble a little more, losing fragments of my spirit. My existence is confined within these walls, a tomb made of sand. Will I ever break free?” (Shree 229).

Through her vivid descriptions and insightful characterizations, Shree compels us to confront the unsettling truths that exist beneath the surface of society. She challenges readers to question the established norms and roles assigned to women, urging a critical evaluation of the systems that sustain their oppression.

Moreover, the narrator poignantly reflects on the historical tragedy of partition, which fragmented communities and families, leaving a legacy of violence and devastation. Women were especially vulnerable during this period, facing harrowing experiences of abduction, harassment, and sexual assault. The extent of their suffering was so profound that many women chose suicide as a desperate means of escaping further sexual violence.

The narrator tells the heartbreaking story of Ma, who lost her home, her life, her dignity, and her sense of identity during that chaotic period. The horrific account details how Ma was violently dragged from her home by a masked man, with her hair painfully snagged and pulled from her scalp by a sharp object. “She was dragged on and on and thrown into a truck where girls like her were there one on top of another like a sheep goat. A tarp was thrown over and they were buried beneath and taken into a graveyard” (Shree 598).

This vividly illustrates the severe harassment and brutal violence inflicted upon girls during the partition. The traumatic ordeals they suffered led many to prefer death over enduring such atrocities. The partition intensified tensions surrounding female sexuality and the concept of ownership, resulting in horrifying acts of violence against women from both communities.

The sexual violence that emerged during the partition starkly reflects society's view and treatment of women's sexuality, rooted in a desire for control and possession. This violence underscores how women's sexuality symbolically represents power within the gender dynamics of Hindu and Islamic societies in India. Sexual violence or rape was weaponized during the partition, as opposing factions abducted, assaulted, and even killed the sisters, daughters, and mothers of the other side.

Ma and the other girls endured a harrowing ordeal, subjected to days and nights of relentless abuse and a nightmarish journey. Transferred from one truck to another, deprived of food and facing constant acts of sexual violence, they were met with a brutal ultimatum, "Do you want to save your life or your honour?" (Shree 604)

The girls endured days of harassment, assault, and unimaginable brutality. Yet, amidst the darkness, there was a small glimmer of hope for Ma. She was eventually rescued and found refuge in the cantonment, crossing the border and placing herself on the side of India. In this tragic outcome, Ma had to abandon her life, her family, and her dignity, which became fragments of a past that could never be restored.

Once a girl experienced sexual assault, she was often deemed dishonoured by society and, tragically, even by her own family. In many cases, victims were compelled to marry their assailants, convert to their religion, and were permanently estranged from their families. Survivors frequently faced the heavy stigma and blame for the assault, leaving them marginalised as social outcasts. Evaristo speaks the truth thus,

"Patriarchal system that enabled female genital mutilation and seeing as women's genitalia are being butchered all over the globe in the name of culture or religion or whatever, why not do the same to men who perpetrate most of the world's sexual violence?" (Evaristo, 2019: 39)

To eliminate unjust discrimination against women, society must reflect thoughtfully: "Daughter. You love her. You fear her. Now you see her. Now you don't. All women, don't forget, are daughters" (Shree 89). To improve the status of women in a male-dominated society, it is

essential to “be a person with knowledge not just opinions” (Evaristo, *Girl, Woman, Other* 210) people then can realize that “gender is one of the biggest lies of our civilization” (Evaristo, *Girl, Woman, Other* 328). It is truly disheartening to recognize the “psychologically raped” status that many women endure (Evaristo, *Girl, Woman, Other* 292), highlighting the urgent need for societal change to secure a better future for our civilization. By embracing the Indian Vedic principle that “yatra naryastu pujoyante ramante tatra devata” (where women are honored, there the deities are pleased) (Manusmriti 3.56), we can envision a time when the dignity of women is upheld, paving the way for a flourishing era in our society.

Conclusion

The pervasive gender hierarchy within households often leads to the contributions and sacrifices of wives and homemakers being overlooked or undervalued. Despite their vital roles in managing the home and fostering family connections, their efforts are frequently dismissed or minimized. This inequitable treatment reinforces the societal notion that a wife’s worth is secondary to her husband’s, perpetuating a sense of inferiority and diminishing the acknowledgement they truly deserve for their hard work and commitment.

The severe hardships endured by women reveal the disturbing realities of societal attitudes and power imbalances. This study delves into themes of oppression, trauma, and female relationships depicted in the novel, highlighting the critical need for societal change and for women to be freed from their symbolic confinements. Shree’s storytelling emerges as a compelling appeal for change, encouraging readers to question entrenched norms and aspire to a society where women can escape limitations and actively shape their futures. The findings open a broader discourse on gender, systemic oppression, and societal change. The textual analysis could also provide meaningful perspectives for scholars, activists, and policymakers striving for women’s empowerment and social justice.

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Appropriation of Second Language in Cross-Cultural Context: An Analysis of Select Works of Meena Kandasamy and Joy Harjo

Neelam Yadav

Crucial to finding the way is this: there is no beginning or end.

You must make your own map.

Your identity is written in your blood, in your language,

in the songs your ancestors sing to you through the wind. ("A Map to the Next World" 137)

The quandary of memory, culture, and identity lies at the centre of not just Native American literature but also deeply rooted in Indian English literature of the marginals. Albeit differences between memory, culture and identity are unquestionably perceived at various levels, they are more often regarded as dynamic and fluid phenomena, progressing and continuously changing with the impact of various factors like language, ethnicity, gender, class and caste (in the Indian English context). One of the most interesting aspects of studying languages and literature of any country is their ability to connect and fill the gaps between various cultures and societies. My paper attempts to examine how cultural identity is constructed/negotiated in the selected poetry of Joy Harjo, a Native American poet, writer, and musician, and Meena Kandasamy—a dalit activist, poet, novelist and translator through a language (American English for Harjo and British English for Kandasamy) that is not the mother tongue of either of them.

Due to its far-reaching influence over the ages, English holds a distinctive place globally as a language of masters. Though once just a language among many, English has now been accepted as "world English" since the 1920s, "international English" from the 1930s, and most recently "global English" starting in the mid-1990s" (*The Impact of Global*

English on Cultural Identities in the United Arab Emirates 15). It has also been found that English is the only language spoken across all five continents and the official language in 52 countries (Deument 393, qtd. in CIA World Factbook). Hence, its unparalleled extent and being the language of the settlers in the USA and of colonisers in India, English became one of the languages of the indigenous Americans and Indians, respectively. Now, the question arises here: How do ‘Settlers’ and ‘Colonisers’ languages affect the writing style and cultural-political identities of the Indigenous and Indian population in general and of Joy Harjo and Meena Kandasamy in particular? If, for Harjo, English would become a tool of resistance and a medium of interaction to reconstruct womanhood and identity, then Kandasamy would appropriate English for her convenience and her cultural contexts. This paper attempts to find out how the poetry of these doubly marginalised writers transcend the boundaries of limitation of their native language and how these women poets chose to write in a language that has a history of being condescending. The paper will also question how the amalgamation of written literature in a second language alters authors’ relationship with their mother tongue and how often the second language becomes the tool to transform personal and collective trauma into healing.

Drawing on her mixed cultural identity, as confessed in many of her interviews and autobiographical works, “I was not a full-blood. I was an anomaly” (*Poet Warrior* 62), Joy Harjo has written about her multi-dimensional and “transcultural” (Nicole Schröder 206) world in most of her poems. Harjo is a mixture of Creek, Cherokee, African American, Irish, and French nationalities, yet she identifies most strongly with her Native American ancestry. This “hybridity” (Homi Bhabha 112) of her existence is the foregrounding theme of most of her works. Though many poems in her collections are primarily concerned with issues related to urban American Indians and problems of Native American women, especially single mothers and desperate individuals, historicising the hybrid identity and differences are the foregrounding themes in works like *What Moon Drove Me to This* (1979), *She Had Some Horses* (1983), *In Mad Love and War* (1990), *The Woman Who Fell from the Sky* (1994) etc. Harjo started writing poetry at a very young age “because

there was no other way to speak” (*Poet Warrior* 67). Her early work was in Navajo language and not her mother tongue, Mvskoke, “I did not know my own Mvskoke language because my father’s mother passed before he learned to speak “(63). Hershift to the English language as a means of communication and work happened much later in her life when she realised that if she wanted to be heard and apparent in the literary field, she must write in the very language of the colonizer, or, as she puts it, the “language of the enemy” (*Soul Talk, Song Language* xi). However, much like the Ngugi wa Thiong’o, Harjo is keenly aware that English is never going to be her language, yet unlike Thiong’o, Harjo does not ever abandon English entirely or as Azfar Hussain justly states in his article, “Joy Harjo and Her Poetics as Praxis: A Postcolonial Political Economy of the Body, Land, Labor, and Language”, Harjo “rather struggles to reinvent English in order to enact a challenging, interventionist Calibanesque language. Like Caliban of Shakespeare’s *The Tempest*, Harjo seems to say that she has learned the language from the colonizer but knows how to talk back in that very language” (37). Hence, English for her, became a tool of emancipation, empowerment and resistance. In her poems in English, she conveyed what she could not express either in Navajo or Mvskoke. Due to English’s status as a global language, Harjo won many accolades and awards for her English writing.

Harjo, in her collaborative anthology, edited with Gloria Bird, *Reinventing the Enemy’s Language: Contemporary Native Women’s Writing* (1997), agreed upon the status quo of English as the coloniser’s language. Still, she also essentialises how Indigenous people “have often been betrayed by those who first learned to write and to speak the language of the occupier of our lands” (20) and how it has become important for the Indigenous people to ‘give the colonisers’ back’ in their language:

I give you back to the soldiers
 who burned down my home, beheaded my children,
 [] my brothers and sisters.
 I give you back to those who stole the
 food from our plates when we were starving (“I Give You Back” 69)

Joy Harjo and Gloria Bird call upon the Indigenous feminist theory in their anthologised work and discuss the strategies for empowerment, which include “naming the enemy, reinventing the enemy’s language, and writing to survive” (12). Harjo, in her works written in English, her second language and also a “language of the enemy”, also vocalized her concerns about the absence of women’s intellectual references and traditions from the mainstream literature and research. Harjo uses English to share Indigenous female perspectives and to celebrate their resilience and heritage on a global scale. Ironically, Harjo is reclaiming the spaces for Native women’s voices, experiences, and spiritual autonomy in a language that historically marginalised these perspectives, as she accepts in an interview with Triplopia, 2005 “speak directly in a language that was meant to destroy us” (4). She appropriated the English for her cultural context, showcasing both the vulnerability and strength of her female sharer, touching on themes like survival, healing, and unity. As Janice Acoose words rightly clarify, “recognizing that language can and does shape our experiences, it is vitally important that Indigenous women appropriate the English language to represent our experiences” (4). Harjo also encourages these Indigenous women “to speak, at whatever the cost” (*Reinventing the Enemy’s Language* 21) because to speak and to use language “is to become empowered rather than victimised by destruction, ensuring our long-term survival” (21). These are the reasons Joy Harjo too, embraces the English language, claiming that using the ‘enemy language’ is the only option they have had to “tell our truths, to sing, to remember ourselves during these troubled times” (22). She also contends that by reconstructing and reinventing the enemy’s language, the hegemonic power of English remains in the hands of its users rather than the inventor. So when Indigenous women use English, they use it as a language that has the power to heal, regenerate, and recreate, subverting all the stereotypes long attached to English as the language of colonisers. The English usage by Indigenous women for their purpose also challenges the notion that a language does not necessarily have to be an enemy. It is the people who use them are. In one of her interviews with Harbour Winn, Elaine Smokewood, and John McBryde, Harjo

confessed how Toni Morrison's experiment with the English language gave food for her thoughts, and she wondered, "if you think of yourself as changing the language through the poetry you do, or creating a new language" (77). So, for her, English became a tool not just for navigating community transformation but for her inner change and establishing identity. Her poems became "expression of a culture... captured in its deepest roots and modulated with a sense of belonging and continuity" (Foreword xi). In *Soul Talk, Song Language* by Joy Harjo and Tanaya Winder, Harjo contends, "Identity is a complex question. How do we see and define ourselves and how do others define us," while proudly singing her Native Indian roots and embraced cultural heritage in her songs and poems.

Now, when we talk about technicalities related to the use of English as a second language, then one common understanding is that the speaker of the language needs to understand that mastery of the English language is less linear and more immersive, as a result, it a narrative space is created between the lines which could easily adhere to Native philosophies of their connections to the land, community, and ancestors. Joy Harjo embedded these native structures in her use of English while challenging the rigid syntax and norms of the language, making it resonate with Indigenous narrative voices.

In *Weaving Sundown in a Scarlet Light*, Joy Harjo uses English powerfully to convey her Indigenous experiences, spirituality, and storytelling traditions, appropriating them into a vehicle for expressing Native American identity and resilience. Even when Harjo writes in English, she makes sure not to lose the cadence and rhythm of oral traditions of Native languages. "Joy Harjo knows noise" (4), says Triplopia in her interview with Joy Harjo in 2005. Her poetry is rich in auditory imagery. When she is writing about something her words evoke all the senses. For example, in the poem "Bird", dedicated to Jazz Saxophonist Charlie Parker, she incorporates rhythm, music and emotional depth to approach the theme of spirituality, cultural knowledge of indigenous people and human love for their dear ones, "All poets/

understand the final uselessness of words. We are chords to/ other chords to other chords if we're lucky, to melody" ("Bird" 21).

The English Harjo uses in her works challenges colonial narrative and structure. She does not arrange the lines to meet the expectations of 'Global English'. Instead, her words become sound when she places them in her poetry and sway smoothly between storytelling, singing and chanting. She also denies English the patronising status, which has a history of being used as a tool of assimilation, she rather repositioned English as a medium for expressing cultural honour and resistance against national amnesia and erasure, "I do not want to forget, though sometimes memory appears to be an enemy bringing only pain," (*Poet Warrior* 9)

Harjo's poems are musical, intimate, political, and knowledgeable, deliberately mingling community memory and indigenous histories with resilience and love. She frequently uses images, symbols, and spiritual references from Navajo and Mvskoke in English, creating a linguistic pattern that is distinct yet acceptable. In some of her poems, she evokes the natural world and tribal cosmologies in English to speak about spirits, animals, landscapes, flora, fauna and her ancestors in ways that sometimes go beyond the language's typical lexicon. This blending of linguistic elements enables Harjo to retain the cultural depth of Indigenous worldviews while reaching a broader audience in English.

In *Weaving Sundown in a Scarlet Light*, Joy Harjo's English becomes a bridge between cultures and a powerful tool for affirming Native identity and spirituality. Her poetry demonstrates how English, when appropriated and adapted, can become a space for cultural memory, resistance, and celebration.

The opening lines of "For Alva Benson, and for Those Who Have Learned to Speak":

And the ground spoke when she was born. Her mother
heard it. In Navajo she answered as she squatted down
against the earth to give birth. It was now when it happened, now
giving birth to itself again and again between the legs of women.
(80)

appropriates that there always is a challenge in expressing Indigenous experiences in English, the language of colonizers. However, translating Indigenous narratives into English requires some skills. For example, in the poem “For Alva Benson, and for Those Who Have Learned to Speak,” Navajo thoughts are expressed in an English text, showing that Indigenous languages and knowledge are still alive. It also reminds us that English is not just a neutral tool—it can be repositioned to carry and share Indigenous mythical stories.

Meena Kandasamy is an English contemporary Dalit poet, translator, activist and content writer who, like Joy Harjo, chose poetry over fiction to emancipate herself from language hierarchy. “Languages are biased, fucked-up structures, clearly reflecting a lot of the status quo, reflecting the inequalities and very often reinforcing them” (Rufo), Kandasamy openly speaks up her mind about the apparent hierarchy in language systems. But she also believes that languages contain the potential for revolution. She chose English to resist not just caste discrimination but class and language subjugation as well. English, as we know, has a long history of being a language of power and privilege that remains inaccessible to many marginal groups of people in India. Kandasamy, in an interview with Ujjwal Jana acknowledges that her reasons for choosing poetry over fiction writing are deliberate. According to her, poetry is “intricately connected with language, and since language is the site of all subjugation and oppression, I think poetry alone has the power of being extremely subversive” (2). Hence, she offers her resistance through language as writing in English has the power to gain a wider audience who would listen to the usually silenced voice of the Dalits and the socially ostracised feminists like her. However, as a school student, Kandasamy’s interaction with English was an imposed one; as a writer, she chose English for two main reasons. One, as we know, English is the only language spoken across all five continents, writing in English would give her works access to a broader audience. Secondly, because of the “Englishization and Hybridization” (*The Impact of Global English on Cultural Identities in the United Arab Emirates* 51) of world culture, English provides corridors of power that have often been

socially and historically denied to people due to their subaltern status. So, English for Kandasamy no longer remains a language of colonisers. Instead, it becomes a tool of empowerment, emancipation and expression. Kandasamy subverted English language's oppressive structures by making English her own by infusing it with the richness of her own Tamil heritage and culture. Kandasamy's poetry often draws on Indian mythology, feminist discourse, and political history, layering references from various texts and cultural sources. In this paper, I also attempt to discern how the poetry of Meena Kandasamy, a doubly marginalised Dalit-woman writer, transcends the boundaries of limitation of her native Tamil language, a language she translates from but rarely writes in and how and why she chose to write in English, a language that has a history of being condescending.

Sharan Kumar Limbale, in his *Aesthetics of Dalit Literature*, explores the multitude of reasons for Dalits' writing. One of the reasons, according to him, is that "Dalit writers write out of social responsibility. Their writings express the emotion and commitment of an activist" (33). Kandasamy as an anti-caste activist, primarily writes to "articulate the voice of the Dalits, or subaltern, through the mainstream protest literature of the present time" (Jana 1). But she chose poetry over fiction to speak for the 'unspoken ones'. She decided to write poetry as she believed, "Like (Mira, Andal, Akka Mahadevi) each of these women, I have to write poetry to be heard" (*Ms Militancy* 8). She also considers it her 'social responsibility' to "put voices out there – who are not amplified or picked up easily within the Anglophone discourse" (Danek). Hence, English became the language of her resistance against the systemic exclusion of Dalit writings from the mainstream literature, "I can offer my resistance through language" (Kandasamy 2015), she proffers in another interview. Though Meena Kandasamy is intrigued by Tamil language and literature, she prefers being "located only within Indian writing in English" (Jana 2). Though she has translated *Tirukkua*, a classic Tamil-language text in English, she has not written any original text in Tamil. If Tamil, for her, is a language of "comfort and intimacy and safety" (Danek), English becomes a weapon for establishing her

identity and questioning the conventional systems of inequality. This intertextuality, where Kandasamy infused Tamil words into her English poems, deepens the reader's understanding of her poems by evoking historical injustices, marginalized voices, and elements of Tamil literature for their convenience. In many poems in the collection, *Ms Militancy* uses multiple allusions to Indian/Hindu scriptures, which also helps readers interpret her poems within the broader context of socio-political history and feminist literature, thus showing how language can be an instrument of both oppression and resistance, as apparent in the below lines:

I dream of an English
 full of the words of my language.
 an English in small letters. (*Touch 21*)

If we apply Bakhtin's concept of heteroglossia to analyse Kandasamy's texts, these poems could be read as open spaces where varied linguistic traditions, vernaculars, and notes meet and interact, thus challenging the condescending and power-controlled notion of English. In her most famous poetry collection, *Ms Militancy*, Kandasamy has appropriated the English language to critique not just hegemonic colonial history but patriarchy and caste oppression as well. She reclaimed the language of her colonial suppressors, repositioning it as a tool for resistance and empowerment. Kandasamy used bold, blunt and sharp vocabulary to write confrontational and savaged poems. In many poems of the collection, Kandasamy combines local Tamil references with global English words and phrases, creating a distinct linguistic space where Tamil mythical history intersects with caste politics and feminist discourse. In *Ms Militancy*, she also deconstructed many Tamil myths where the traditional characters and stories mingled with a modern and radical voice. Through this intermingling, she forced English to adapt to her requirement of the language rather than taking a completely different route. Hence, her poems resonated with both Tamil and global feminist readers, where oppressed, rebellious, and defiant voices break free from a singular, polished "literary" English. The English language in *Ms*

Militancy becomes raw and multifaceted, refusing the smoothness often expected in traditional English poetry. Hence, by merging native linguistic elements with English, Kandasamy has maintained a strong connection to her cultural roots, withstanding and resisting the dominance of English as a hegemonic language. Moreover, Kandasamy also used unapologetic English to write about female sexuality, rage and gaining autonomy.

So we see Kandasamy also used a feminist hermeneutic perspective to retell many Tamil/Indian/Hindu scriptures and myths from a Dalit feminist perspective, which gives space for new perspectives to grow. Through her highly sensual, sexual and rebellious language, she generated spaces traditionally denied to women. For example, in her poems like “Flesh finds a form of address” “I shall see my dark one”, and “Nailed”, etc. she reinterpreted and reimagined characters like Draupadi, Kannaki, and Mira etc. and gave them empowered voices, conveying agency, rage, and pride—challenging the conservative norms of femininity in both English and Tamil-speaking societies. Hence, as the readers of her poems, we see that through her appropriation of English, Meena Kandasamy in *Ms Militancy* created a poetic voice that was defiantly feminist, deeply rooted in her cultural context, and unyielding in its critique of power structures. Her English becomes an instrument of self-assertion and rebellion, a space where the coloniser’s language is restructured to confront and bulldoze the layers of centuries of oppression Dalit women witnessed. Draupadi, Sita and Kannaki in her poems, become symbols of Dalit women who have been wronged and experienced extreme violence due to double colonization: as women and as Dalits in India. In the poem, “Firewalkers”, the tale of Draupadi’s pain is reconstructed and retold:

Maari had a one-point goal. Maari had a maniac soul.

Maari made her men wage war, with her rapist’s blood

To drench her hair...

Combed her hair with his left thigh bone (Lines 1-5).

Her use of expressive and volcanic English to seek her identity and individuality, subjugated by two distinct patriarchal structures, results into empowering mythical characters and ultimately, dalit women in a patriarchal society.

Conclusion

So when Meena Kandasamy appropriated the English language in all her works in general and her contemporary poetry collection, *Ms. Militancy*, her deliberation is a nuanced act of linguistic and cultural negotiation. Albeit, Kandasamy uses global English to give platform to the suppressed marginalised voices and reach a global audience to engage with universal themes, simultaneously, she resists its hegemonic tendencies through her linguistic innovations and culturally specific belongingness to a marginal community of India. Her poetry, in general, and *Ms Militancy*, in particular, stand as a testament to how a language could be used as both a tool of oppression and a medium for liberation, problematising the very idea of the culmination of the tensions and possibilities inherent in multilingual and multicultural expression. Joy Harjo, on the other hand, picked up English to reinvent it and use it to establish her Indigenous identity and survive the Americanization of other Native languages. Joy Harjo and Meena Kandasamy use English in their poetry as a medium of expression and reflection of cultural identity immersed deep into their respective Indigenous American and Indian heritages. In many of their poems, they explicitly focus that while writing in English, they merely use English as a tool to challenge dominant narratives, critique social injustices against them, and assert their cultural identities against their respective colonisers. Hence, to conclude, if Harjo uses English as a tool of resistance and an agency of interconnectedness to reconstruct her womanhood, then Kandasamy appropriates English for her convenience to deconstruct her cultural identity as a marginal Dalit writer. For Harjo, if her works show the conflict of desires between using the language of imperialism on the one hand and maintaining and promoting Native American values on the other, then Kandasamy regards

her writing as a process of establishing her identity as a Dalit woman for whom her regional language, Tamil, is a language of love and intimacy and English, a language of rebel.

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English Proficiency Level in Urban and Rural Students: A Comparative Analysis

Reeba Devi

Language is a social behaviour used for interpersonal communication, allowing the culture of a society to be passed from one generation to the next. Through language, information is shared across generations. Broadly, the tools of communication can be categorized into two main types: signs and symbols. Proficiency in English is essential nationally and internationally because it opens up opportunities for communication, education and career advancement. Communication is an acquired skill, developed by individuals through socialization process within a society. This process is shaped by “social conventions that establish specific relationships between sets of symbols and sets of ideas” (McDavid and Harari, 1969). Language operates “as an arbitrary system of vocal symbols through which human beings, as members of a social group and participants in a culture, interact and communicate” (*Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Vol. 13, p. 696). Language, as a structured system of conventional symbols enables individuals to interact with one another and exchange ideas of common interest (Kuppuswamy, 1961). Thus, acquiring a language system involves the use of higher mental process.

The four language skills – listening, speaking, reading and writing – are essential components for effective communication. Here’s an overview of each skill and its importance:

- 1. Listening:** This receptive skill is foundational for understanding spoken language. Proficiency in listening allows one to comprehend and interpret spoken words, tones and nuances. It involves active engagement and is critical for building vocabulary, pronunciation and comprehension skills.

2. **Speaking:** As a productive skill, speaking enables individuals to express ideas, emotions and information orally. It requires a good grasp of vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation and fluency. Proficiency in speaking allows individuals to interact confidently and conveys messages accurately.
3. **Reading:** This receptive skill involves understanding and interpreting written texts. Reading proficiency includes the ability to decode words, understand context and interpret complex ideas. Strong reading skills enhance vocabulary, comprehension and critical thinking that are essential for academic success and effective communication.
4. **Writing:** As another productive skill, writing enables individuals to communicate ideas, information and arguments in a structured way. Proficiency in writing involves grammar, vocabulary and coherence. Good writing skills are necessary for creating clear, organized and persuasive text.
5. **Urban Area:** An urban area is a region characterized by high population density, extensive infrastructure and developed economic, residential, and commercial activities. It typically includes cities and towns with a concentration of buildings, transportation networks and public services. Urban areas often provide greater access to amenities, healthcare, education and employment opportunities. However, they may also face challenges like traffic congestion, pollution and higher living cost.
6. **Rural Area:** A rural area, in contrast, is a region with low population density and open spaces. It is often associated with agriculture, forestry and less-developed infrastructure compared to urban areas. Rural areas may consist of small villages or farmlands where communities are spread out and closer to natural landscapes. These areas tend to have fewer facilities and amenities but offer a quiet, less crowded environment and often a slow pace of life.

7. **National Level:** Strong English skills are often needed for accessing quality education, securing jobs and participating in various sectors like business, media and government.
8. **International Level:** English serves as a global lingua franca, facilitating travel, trade and collaboration across countries. It is crucial in sectors like technology, science and diplomacy where effective communication in English is often required.

The acquisition and transmission of language, as a form of social behaviour, apply from simple to complex modes of expression, both verbal and non-verbal. Effective language expression requires the development of certain linguistic skills which generally include listening, reading, speaking and writing. Listening involves accurately receiving and interpreting the message being conveyed. It is the foundation of understanding. Therefore, in the current research study, understanding has been emphasized as a key skill, representing listening. Reading and writing have been selected for investigating their prevailing status among the students as the Secondary class (IX+X) plays a significant role in the education. Therefore, the study has been conducted on the high school student (class X). Hoping so, that this study will strengthen the enthusiasm among the students towards their improvement in learning of English and through this study, the English language teachers may be creatively be motivated towards improving the understanding, speaking, reading and writing the four basic linguistic skills of their students.

Statement of the Research Problem

English proficiency level in term of understanding, speaking, reading, writing in urban and rural students: a comparative analysis.

Objectives of the Study

- (i) To assess the English-learning status in terms of the four basic linguistic skills, viz. understanding, speaking, reading and writing prevailing among the high school class students.
- (ii) To compare the prevailing status of English learning in term of linguistics skills with reference to gender and locality.

Hypothesis

To achieve the above objectives the hypothesis is framed as under:

- (i) There is no significant difference between the boys and girls students in their English learning status in terms of the four basic linguistic skills.
- (ii) There is no significant difference between the urban and rural locality High School class students in their English learning status in terms of the four identified linguistic skills.

Delimitation

The present study was delimited to the high school class (X class) regular students in rural and urban areas situated in District Meerut, Uttar Pradesh, India.

Research Methodology

As per the nature of the research problems in the present study, the descriptive survey method is used.

Variables

1. **Dependent Variable:** The English learning skills: understanding, speaking, reading and writing.
2. **Independent Variables:** Gender: boys and girls and locality urban/ rural).

Sample

I have collected the data of class X students of their rural surrounding in district Meerut. The class X students of these institutions, available on the day of data collection, were examined as mentioned in the following table:

I have collected the data of class X students of their rural surrounding in district Meerut. The class X students of these institutions, available on the day of data collection, were examined as mentioned in the following table:

Students	Urban area	Rural area	Total
Boys	50	50	100
Girls	50	50	100
Total	100	100	200

Data Collection Research Tool

In the present study self-made tool was constructed containing 10 items for assessing each student. The test was in the form of short statements and these items were to be responded on five points liker-system in terms of always often, sometimes, rarely and never bearing the score as 5,4,3,2,1 respectively. However, this tool (questionnaire) was validated on the content of those items keeping in view the meaning and linguistic contraction. There are 10 items for each skills and overall 40 items,

Data Collection Procedure

I visited the selected schools and administered the research tool (questionnaire) in the X class students available on that very date. This process was performed in all of those selected schools; the researcher herself remained present throughout the time in the classroom while responding students. These repondent sheets were collected back and arranged as per the hypothesis, each time was scored and categorized into four linguistic skills and tabularized.

Statistical Technique Used: Mean, S.D. and I-value test.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Tabularised data was subjected for statically treated in accordance with the framed hypothesis and their testing. Testing of hypothesis is number 1.

There is no significant difference between the boys and girls students in their English learning status in terms of basic linguistic skills in case of Urban and Rural area students.

Table 1: Comparison of English learning status of urban& rural locality boys and girls students in terms of, S.D and t-value

S.No.	Name of skills	Mean (1)	S.D (B1)	Mean (M2)	S.D (B2)	M1M2 Difference	t-value
In case of Urban student		Boy (N1=50))		Girls (N2=50)			
1.	Listening	5.33	0.82	4.74	1.05	0.59	233*
2.	Speaking	5.92	1.11	6.21	0.64	0.29	1.52
3.	Reading	5.53	0.66	5.20	0.64	0.33	137
4.	Writing	5.81	0.82	5.17	0.75	0.64	427*
5.	Total	22.59	0.85	21.32	0.78	1.27	7.42*
In case of Rural student		Boy (N1=50)		Girls (N2=50)			
1.	Listening	5.28	1.41	4.69	1.03	0.59	246*
2.	Speaking	4.64	1.13	5.31	1.14	0.67	258*
3.	Reading	5.31	0.74	4.45	0.73	0.86	585*
4.	Writing	4.32	0.72	3.82	1.05	0.50	270*
5.	Total	19.55	0.69	18.27	0.85	1.28	8.88*

At df = (55-1)+(55-1)=54+54=98

t-value significant at 0.05 level = 1.98

0.01 level = 2.62**

It appears from the above table that girls students obtained more mean values than boys students on there three linguistics skills and in total English learning status whereas it is reversed on their speaking skills. This difference between the mean values (M1M2) was estimated in terms of t-values up to a significance level, it was found that hypothesis was rejected. Among more than 95% students the girl students possess better status of understanding skill of English language in comparison to boy students. Among less than 95% students, the male students showed poor degree of English speaking skill than the girl students. Among more than 99% students girl students showed a better degree of English writing. On these observations it can be deduced the hypothesis no (1) stands not accepted.

Testing of Hypothesis No. 2:

There is no significant difference between the urban and rural locality High School students in their English learning status in terms of the four identified linguistics skills.

In case of girls Table 2(a): Comparison of boys of urban and rural locality in their English learning status in terms of Mean, S.D. t-values:

S. No.	Name of skills	Mean (M1)	S.D (B1)	Mean (M2)	S.D (B2)	M1M2 df	t-value
1.	Listening	5.33	0.82	5.28	1.41	0.05	0.23
2.	Speaking	5.92	1.11	4.64	1.13	1.28	8053**
3.	Reading	5.53	0.66	5.31	0.74	0.22	1.65
4.	Writing	5.81	0.82	4.32	0.72	1.49	10.42**
5.	Total	22.59	0.85	19.55	0.69	3.04	20.54**

In case of boys Table 2(b): Comparison of boys of Urban and rural locality in their English learning status in terms of Mean, S.D. t-values:

S. No.	Name of skills	Mean (M1)	S.D (B1)	Mean (M2)	S.D (B2)	M1M2 df	t-value
1.	Listening	4.74	1.05	4.69	1.03	0.05	0.186
2.	Speaking	6.21	0.64	5.31	1.41	1.90	3.91**
3.	Reading	5.20	0.64	4.45	0.73	0.75	6.00**
4.	Writing	5.17	0.75	3.82	1.05	1.35	7.06**
5.	Total	21.32	0.78	18.27	0.85	3.05	5.64**

At df = (55-1)+(55-1)=54+54=98 t-value significant at 0.05 level = 1.98
0.01 level = 2.62**

These observations lead to deduce that hypothesis no. 2 stands to be rejected except for the understanding of four skills. The sampled students (class X) pauses the average level of status on their listening, speaking reading, writing skills and also in total English learning.

Conclusion

The conclusions are drawn in the light of the acceptance/ rejection of the framed hypotheses as under:

- (a) The sampled student class x possess the average level of status on their listening, speaking, reading, writing skills and also in total English learning.
- (b) The sampled girl (whether urban or rural locality) students posses better degree of status in their listening, speaking, reading, writing skills and also in total English learning status in comparison to the boys students.
- (c) The sampled students of urban locality (whether boys or girls) posses better degree of listening speaking, reading, writing and into total language, than to those of rural locality. It lead to infer that locality variable plays a Remarkable role in English learning and its four skill listening. Speaking, reading and writing.

Educational Implication of the Study

Keeping in view, the findings of this empirical study, it can be inferred that the English language teachers should pay attention to their students in improving English learning status especially in linguistic skill.

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Gender Subversion and Identity in *The Pearl That Broke Its Shell*: A Study of 'Bacha Posh' and Judith Butler's Performative Theory

Suruchi Sharma and Abhishek Singh

Introduction

This paper analyses Nadia Hashimi's novel *The Pearl That Broke Its Shell*, which challenges societal norms and expectations regarding gender roles by utilizing a unique phenomenon called "Bacha Posh". Up until they reach adolescence, girls who dress and behave like boys are referred to as "dressed as a boy" or "bacha posh" in Dari. In Afghanistan, this practice has been used to challenge gender roles and facilitate the functioning of households without sons within patriarchal social frameworks. The idea that gender is not an innate trait that defines one's behavior but rather something that can be played and subverted via deliberate effort is consistent with Butler's performative theory. Families who need a male heir or lost their male child and do not have one have used the bacha posh practice, which entails disguising a young girl as a boy to permit her to move more freely and participate in activities traditionally reserved for boys. "I wasn't the first bacha posh. This is a common tradition for families in want of son" (Hashimi 36). Hashimi reminds us of the value of agency and self-determination in the face of societal expectations and constraints through the stories of Rahima and Shekiba. Both can challenge and modify society's expectations and pave the path for greater gender equality and social justice by acting and subverting gender roles. Gender, according to Hashimi, is a societal idea that is not a biological presumption. By using Butler's theory of gender performativity, this paper shows how people can challenge and fight oppressive gender norms through their performances of gender.

Hashimi presents two Afghan women Rahima and Shekiba who lived in different eras but experienced gender discrimination and encountered difficulties and limits in a patriarchal society that emphasizes male offspring over female children. "If I had a son this would not be happening! Goddamn it! Why do we have a house full of girls!" (Hashimi 5). The girls at the center of the story represent the fight for identification and self-expression in a world that is strongly gendered. Rahima and Shekiba are both restricted by the expectations placed on them as women, but by adopting the persona of a boy (bacha Posh), they can overcome these restrictions and achieve a sense of liberation and autonomy. The practice of bacha posh is perilous, though, and both women must navigate a complex web of connections and social expectations to keep their identities a secret.

Shekiba, Rahima's great-great-grandmother, was born in the early 20th century, and due to her family's poverty and the passing of her parents, she is forced to take on the role of a man to support her family."She changed her approach as she realized she could take advantage of her "manhood"" (Hashimi 208). She decides to serve as a security in the ruler's harem by adopting a masculine identity. Shekiba demonstrates the performative theory of Judith Butler, which contends that gender is something one does rather than something one is. Butler describes what is "produced through the stylization of the body . . . gestures, movements, and styles of various kinds" as "the illusion of an abiding gendered self" (Butler 179). Shekiba takes the masculine role and adopts male characteristics to navigate the patriarchal culture and gain agency and freedom. She does so by questioning social norms and conventional gender roles.

In the second story, an Afghani girl named Rahima disobeys gender norms by disguising herself as a boy to go to school and attain freedom. She continues to defy expectations by educating herself covertly and turning into a feminist activist. "I'm lucky I know how to read. It's a candle in a dark room" (Hashimi 237). Rahima is later married off to a violent and cruel guy in the book, but she organizes her escape since she won't accept her predicament. She disguises herself as a man and

travels across Afghanistan, resisting the patriarchal culture that wants to dominate her. When a person is acting bacha posh, they are actively assuming gender identification other than their assigned sex. By acting and dressing in a way that suggests they have a male gender identity, individuals can take advantage of distinct social conventions and freedoms. Ultimately, *The Pearl That Broke Its Shell* is a powerful and emotional analysis of the desire for freedom and autonomy as well as the strategies that women might use to engage in subversion and resistance to assert their own identity and agency in the face of oppression. By presenting an ambiguous and complex depiction of how women may resist and disrupt traditional gender roles, Hashimi's work significantly contributes to the gender and identity discussion in Afghanistan.

The Cultural Implication of Gender-fluid Tradition

Historically, men have held the bulk of positions of power and decision-making authority in Afghan culture, which has been predominantly patriarchal. They hold the opinion that "Girl, you know nothing of tradition" (Hashimi 123). Strict social and cultural norms have made it difficult for women and girls to participate in public life and have access to opportunities in education, employment, and other areas. According to historical chronicles and literary works, bacha posh has been practiced in Afghanistan for millennia. In Afghanistan, bacha posh has religious and cultural significance in addition to its historical roots. As a result, there are rigid social and cultural conventions governing the conduct and appearance of women, which might restrict their participation in public life. Families can obtain social standing, respect from their neighbours, access to employment possibilities, and other benefits by clothing their daughter as a guy. In Afghanistan and globally, the practice of bacha posh has generated considerable discussion and controversy. Some see it as a way to empower girls and challenge gender stereotypes.

Culturally, bacha posh is associated with Afghanistan's traditional gender roles that place great importance on male children and male privilege. It is important to note that bacha posh is a custom that is not just practiced

in Afghanistan and Pakistan but also in other societies. The fact that families believe they must use such methods to break down gender boundaries highlights how pervasive gender discrimination is in these countries. Families may experience pressure to produce a male heir in specific circumstances, or they may experience discrimination and exclusion if they do not have boys. Throughout history, different cultures and circumstances have engaged in the practice of dressing in attire normally associated with the other sex. The practice of bacha posh provides a deep and complicated viewpoint on gender roles and gender equality. It's crucial to keep in mind, though, because bacha Posh does not inherently question the idea of gender as a binary. By implying that girls can only achieve success and prestige by adopting a male persona, it might encourage detrimental stereotypes and gender inequalities.

"Bacha Posh is not an expression of girls' rights or gender equality, but rather a temporary relief from the restrictions placed on them in patriarchal societies. It is a way for families to navigate around those restrictions and gain some of the advantages that come with having a son" (Nordberg 47). Moreover, the expectation that females return to living as girls after puberty implies that there are restrictions on what girls may do or how they can engage in society, which can be demoralizing or disempowering. Although it is just transitory and the girls are expected to return to their given gender roles at puberty or marriage, the practice is not truly gender liberating. There are times when bacha posh is not a choice. Girls may occasionally be coerced or forced into adopting a masculine persona. They might not be given the same opportunities and resources as boys since they are thought to be a burden on their families. For girls bacha posh can be a means of survival.

The Performative Gender-disguising Custom of Bacha Posh

Butler contends that "Gender reality is performative which means, quite simply, that it is real only to the extent that it is performed" (Butler, 278). Concerning gender performativity, "Gender is the repeated stylization of the body, a set of repeated acts within a highly rigid

regulatory frame that congeal over time to produce the appearance of substance, of a natural sort of being.” (Butler 45). In *Bacha Posh*, girls repeatedly dress and act like boys to give the impression that they are boys, adhering to the social and cultural norms of Afghan society. This demonstrates how gender is performative and not an inherent or stable trait but rather something that is built and enacted via repeated activities “Because there is neither an ‘essence’ that gender expresses or externalizes nor an objective ideal to which gender aspires; because gender is not a fact, the various acts of gender create the idea of gender, and without those acts, there would be no gender at all. Gender is, thus, a construction that regularly conceals its genesis” (Butler 273). To combat the practice of *bacha posh*, feminist theory supports efforts by highlighting how gender is socially constructed, challenging cultural norms and expectations, promoting gender inclusivity and equality, elevating marginalized voices, and participating in feminist action. Gender is more than just a personal characteristic; it is also a set of socially accepted meanings and behaviors. It includes social, cultural, economic, and political facets of society and affects how people perceive and comprehend themselves in connection to others.

Rather than being innate or a stable element of one’s gender identity, the body can be formed in a given situation to adhere to societal norms. “The body is not a thing, it is a situation” (Beauvoir 66). In the context of *bacha posh*, a child’s physique is changed through grooming, clothes, and socialization to correspond to cultural ideals of masculinity, their identities as men are strengthened by giving them names that seem authoritative “becomes the site of a certain crossing, a transfer of gender” (Butler, *Bodies* 102) even if this may not be consistent with their internal gender identity. When the protagonist Rahima doesn’t follow conventional gender roles and practices, wears more male apparel, and cuts her hair short. As she rejects following social conventions that restrict her autonomy and agency, Rahima’s body takes on a rebellious and resisting role. It draws attention to how people perform their gender through their physical expressions and behaviors, challenging or meeting societal standards.

The “cultural practices of drag, cross-dressing, and the sexual stylization of butch/femme identities” (Butler 137) like, “Sit up straight and watch your legs. Although you may not know it, you are a girl and you should sit like one.” BoboShahgul snapped her stick against her grandmother’s arm (Hashimi 42). The instruction to “sit like a girl” given by BoboShahgul suggests that there are particular postures that girls are required to adopt, which may differ from those of boys. It implies that certain gendered postures and behaviors are expected of people based on their gender, which can be viewed as a type of social conditioning. “We could change your clothes and we’ll give you a new name. You’ll be able to run to the store any time we need anything. You could go to school without worrying about the boys bothering you. You could play games. How does that sound?” (Hashimi 23). It is a reflection on the performative components of gender, such as clothes, identity, behavior, movement, and education decisions that gender identity has on these individuals. Sara Ahmed emphasizes that the body is not a static or predefined thing but rather a dynamic and lived experience that is influenced by social, cultural, and political forces. The way the body moves displays it, and interacts with others actively contributes to the manufacture of meanings, which in turn actively contributes to the development of societal norms and expectations of gender, sexuality, and identity. “The body is not a neutral or passive entity on which cultural meanings are inscribed; rather, it is an active participant in the production of meanings” (Ahmed 43). The body actively changes and impacts the meanings that are associated with it through its embodiment, cultural context, identity, power dynamics, agency, and resistance, contradicting the notion of the body as a neutral or passive component in the process of meaning-making.

“Shekiba stared in wonder at the pants and could scarcely believe she should walk about in them... .She slipped one leg in and then the other, fastening the buttons at the waist... .Her hands ran over her backside and she shuddered to think the shape of her limbs would be so visible in these ballooned pants... .And yet there was something liberating about her new clothes... .Welcome, Shekiba. But here you will be Shekib, understand?” (155, emphasis added)

Shekiba's body is not a passive or neutral object; rather, it actively contributes to the construction of meanings as she questions conventional gender norms and expectations. Shekiba actively engages in the formation and negotiation of her own gender identity as well as societal conventions by adopting a masculine identity and using her body as a tool of resistance, agency, and autonomy.

The biological traits that make someone male or female are influenced by social expectations and cultural connotations in addition to biological ones."Sex is not simply a natural given, but a category that is always already infused with cultural meanings and social expectations" (sterling 5). It emphasizes the performative character of gender roles in this cultural setting and speaks to the societal pressures and limits that may restrict people's agency and expression of their real gender identity. "She is now your brother, Rahim. You will forget about your sister Rahima and welcome your brother." (Hashimi 36).It demonstrates the pressure to live up to societal and familial standards of gender, the internal struggle between one's inner self and public personas, and the impact of cultural norms on how people feel about gender.

"Take your Chador off," he ordered... I had wanted to rip the Chador off my head when Madar-jan put it on me but now, with Abdul Khaliq eying me this way, I couldn't let it go... .Maybe you haven't received any instruction on what it is to be a wife... .Let me explain to you how things are here. I am your husband and this is your home. When I ask for something, you make it happen... .Tonight I'll show you that you're a woman, not a boy." (167, emphasis added)

In Afghan society, women's status and functions are determined by their capacity to fulfill traditional gender roles, such as bearing boys and being submissive wives. Women's behavior, speech, and expression are governed by gender roles and standards, which can reinforce this conditioning and encourage women to perform silence as a way of meeting these expectations.It implies that social norms and expectations as well as biological variables play a role in determining femininity.

Rahima's behavior suggests that gender is a performance or set of behaviors rather than an underlying trait. Rahima, who was made to act masculine as a bacha posh, eventually acts femininely in a way that defies conventional gender roles and expectations, taking charge of her own life and opposing the patriarchal system that had subjugated her. "Yup, I go all around town and no one bothers me. I can do anything!" (Hashimi74). The way that a person understands their own identity, including their gender identity, is greatly influenced by societal standards and cultural meanings.

Bacha posh as a Form of Resistance

Girls have been able to transcend the rigid gender stereotypes that society has imposed and experience a different kind of freedom because of the bacha posh practice of cross-dressing. In a culture where gender roles are rigidly established and patriarchal standards are strongly ingrained, Bacha Posh challenges these norms by enabling females to dress as men and assume masculine tasks and privileges. This behavior undermines the fixed gender duties and expectations that are imposed on people based on their sex and upsets the binary conception of gender as being exclusively male or female. "Dress has always served as an essential and often subtle signifier of power and its imbalances, of cultural and political difference and similarity" (Sedgwick 148). Dress, as a sort of outer appearance, conveys social and cultural implications that go beyond simple clothing, and it is frequently utilized as a subtly powerful signifier of many social and political forces. The dress can be a means of communication, an assertion of one's rights, or a challenge to established standards because it is a visible indicator of one's identity, social standing, and views. The traditional view of gender as set and rigid can be challenged by those who purposefully dress in apparel that is normally associated with a different gender. It may be a way to demonstrate gender fluidity or to refute the binary idea of gender as either male or female. "Cross-dressing is a way of subverting the conventional power relations that are embodied in gender identity" (Garber 3). This enables her to assume traditionally male roles and duties, such as working outside and making decisions for the family.

People who disguise themselves subvert social norms that try to define how they should display their gender based on the sex of their bodies. “Cross-dressing challenges dominant cultural beliefs about the naturalness of sex and gender, subverting the social codes that attempt to prescribe gender-appropriate behaviour for individuals based on their sexed bodies” (Stryker 10). It has the power to challenge societal conventions that give some genders more privilege, power, or freedom than others. The pressures and expectations associated with gender roles in their society can also be regarded as being addressed by this culture, which helps families manage. “I felt a thrill as I chased after him. I liked being part of the team. I liked the dust kicking up under my feet. I liked being a boy.” (Hashimi 52). Rahima, however, is discovering fulfilment and freedom in temporarily taking on a male gender role or partaking in activities that are normally reserved for the opposing gender. This emphasizes how unique and autonomous each person is in expressing their gender identity in its purest form. It is crucial to understand that bacha posh girls’ experiences are not all the same and can change depending on many variables, including their family’s socioeconomic level, the culture in which they reside, and their unique personalities and life experiences. Additionally, clothing can give people a feeling of empowerment and liberation. Even if it might not be in line with cultural norms or the sex they were given at birth, transsexual people can construct a persona or outer appearance that reflects their true gender identity by utilizing clothing to conceal themselves. “You’re a working boy! Now, that’s news!” KhalaShaima clapped her hands together. “Yep, I go all around town, and no one bothers me. I can do anything!” (Hashimi74). They can maintain their social standing by raising their daughter as a male and avoid the stigma associated with only having girls.

“And me. I was Madar-jan’s helper. Her spunky, troublemaking Bacha posh. I know she wondered if she had made the right decision. If I were a little wiser, I would have told her it had been the best thing for me. I would have told her that I wished I could have stayed a bacha posh forever.” (Hashimi147)

Afghanistan's conventional gender norms are frequently demanded of women, which may restrict their chances and freedoms. Rahima was able to experience autonomy, freedom, and empowerment as a bacha posh, something that was uncommon for girls and women in her society. Rahima now thinks that being a bacha posh was the best decision she ever made. Even though being a bacha posh was unusual or questioned by some, she loves the experience and sees it as a good component of her identity. It clarifies the complexity of gender and cultural norms and how people negotiate and contend with them in their quest for autonomy and self-expression.

The role of bacha posh in Afghanistan's resistance to gender expectations:-

Agency and empowerment: In a patriarchal environment, bacha Posh can be seen as a means for girls and their families to exercise agency and feel empowered. Girls might defy established gender stereotypes that limit their mobility, access to education, and involvement in public life by temporarily assuming a masculine gender identity. As a result, they may have access to chances for employment, education, and other endeavours that would not otherwise be open to girls.

Questioning the fixity of gender: By emphasizing the performative element of gender, Bacha Posh questions the idea that gender is permanent and unchangeable. It emphasizes how gender is not only established by biological sex but also produced and enacted through cultural practices. This calls into question the binary conception of gender and creates opportunities for gender roles and identities to be reimagined.

Resistance to oppression: Another way to look at bacha Posh is as a kind of opposition to restrictive gender expectations and standards. It enables females to navigate and resist the gendered limitations placed on them by society and to reject the notion that they must adopt the stereotypical roles and actions that are associated with femininity. Girls and their families can use this resistance to stand up for their autonomy and agency in the face of repressive gender stereotypes.

Limitations and ethical considerations: To properly analyze and discuss Bacha Posh, it is important to be aware of its ethical constraints and limitations. It's critical to tackle this subject sensitively and with respect for Afghan traditions and ideals as an outsider and as a country. Any analysis or interpretation of bacha Posh must place a strong emphasis on the perspectives and experiences of Afghan people and groups while avoiding imposing preconceived ideas from the outside.

Implications and future directions: Talk about the implications of bacha Posh as a form of resistance and how it might advance gender equality in Afghanistan. Discuss potential future routes for study, legislation, and interventions that could aid girls and their families in defying repressive gender stereotypes as you examine the difficulties and prospects for preserving and extending the practice of bacha Posh.

Conclusion

Nadia Hashimi questions Afghani society's preconceptions about gender roles in *The Pearl That Broke Its Shell* through the extraordinary phenomena of bacha Posh. The practice of bacha posh in Afghanistan is a complicated and multidimensional phenomenon with important historical, religious, and cultural ramifications. By applying the gender performativity theory developed by Judith Butler, the novel highlights how "if the ground of gender identity is the stylized repetition of acts through time, and not a seemingly seamless identity, then the possibilities of gender transformation are to be found in the arbitrary relation between such acts, in the possibility of a different sort of repeating, in the breaking or subversive repetition of that style." (Butler 179). The experiences of Rahima and Shekiba serve as powerful examples of the value of agency and self-determination in the face of cultural expectations as well as how people can challenge stereotypical gender roles to advance social justice and gender equality. The perspectives of feminist theorists like Butler, Hooks, Connell, and Simon de Beauvoir highlight how gender is performed and enacted through repetitive behaviours within societal norms and expectations. They highlight that gender is an evolving idea rather than fixed or natural, determined by many cultural, political, and socioeconomic variables. The body plays a vital role in the formation of

gender meanings, altering and upending social norms and expectations rather than being a passive or neutral thing. The practice of “Bacha posh is a subversion of gender, a change in form that disrupts the established order. It is a resistance to the expected and a tool for achieving something else, something more” (Nordberg7). It’s critical to address bacha Posh with complexity and empathy, taking into account the variety of viewpoints and experiences while advocating for gender equality and inclusivity. For this, a multifaceted strategy that takes into account concerns like women’s and girls’ legal safeguards, access to education, and economic possibilities is necessary, then only we can envision a society in which bacha posh is no longer necessary and gender equality is the norm.

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Draupadi as an Oppressed Woman in Mahasweta Devi's *Draupadi*

B. Magdaline Sreeja Josephin and M. P. Ganesan

Introduction

The underprivileged class, with its history of tyranny and marginalization, dominates Mahasweta Devi's literature. The socially responsible writer has spoken out against oppression while simultaneously awakening an indifferent society. Devi's female protagonists look mentally climacteric, expressing the various mental requirements that drive them to approach, oppose and distance themselves from others. The anxiety develops in an adverse environment. Impulsive behavior causes basic worry to occur. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak has translated Devi's well-known collection of short stories, *Draupadi*, *Breast-Giver* and *Behind the Bodice*. The stories depict how women must cope with physical and psychological instability as a result of traumatic experiences in their bodies and minds.

Mahasweta Devi has led reader to understand the psychology of oppressed women seeking identity, independence and empowerment. In this struggle to achieve respect as an important member of society, some appear to be brave, some appear to be dying and some appear to be defying patriarchal conventions. Each female heroine appears to be fighting their own war with their distinct individuality under various harsh social situations. However, they all have one thing in common. Her female protagonist is shown combating patriarchal neglect through exploitation, marginalization and incomprehensible violence. Devi's female characters endure male's sexual abuse. Women who are subjected to societal injustice feel helpless.

Oppression

Devi's *Draupadi* is a vivid example of female marginalization. The peripheral female protagonists are victims of a deliberate, systemic and well-constructed kind of oppression. Instead of exploitation, marginalization is the bloodiest and most horrific type of oppression. Subaltern females such as Draupadi provide a voice for oppressed women. The bodies of underprivileged women have been used for commercial ends. They are forced to live in socially and economically deplorable conditions so that the upper class might gain from them. As a result, the female protagonists are trapped into a vicious cycle of marginalization. As members of the labor class, they are highly ostracized and the condition is exacerbated by their female form. Male dominance consumes their bodily existence through lust that needs to be satisfied by objectifying the women's bodies of the marginalized society.

Draupadi's marginalization in *Draupadi* is represented by her body being raped. It is an attempt by the authorities to quell an insurgent's fighting spirit in order to benefit from it. Draupadi's unwavering struggle against the terrible oppression of government authority is a threatening appeal to them. Draupadi's body becomes the focus of the dominant's power. The gang rape of Draupadi by numerous police officers demonstrates severe male dominance over females rather than superior over inferior, dominant over dominated. Senanayak, the police officer who boasts about his formidable tactics. Senanayak is an active participant in the destruction of disadvantaged people in an exploitative society. The unequal conflict between Senanayak, a first-world thinker and Draupadi, a third-world marginalized person, illustrates the contrast between upper-class wealthy people and struggling classes.

Draupadi, the female rebel of the Naxalite movement, becomes a victim of gang rape while attempting to secure drops of water to drink as their basic requirement. History rarely looks back on tribal tyranny with a sense of fairness. Draupadi's barbarous gang rape is still a vilified chapter in society. Gangor's destiny leads her down to become a prostitute after being objectified by an upper-class ace photographer, Upin's

photograph. The exposure of the images is used for the capitalist Upin's economic gain but it also makes a plain marginalized Adivasi female vulnerable to those who see her body in public. She carries the mark of rape and exploitation and marginalization behind the dirty bodice.

Draupadi, as a female, continues to live a subservient existence and bears the bitter fruit of marginalization in the form of social ostracism within her caste as a prostitute. Both the upper caste and her caste condemn her to a life of subjugation. Draupadi represents various tribes and tells the same story of suffering. Under patriarchal and cultural institutions, their bodies have been utilized to keep their mouths hushed in terror. The marginalization is the most damaging form of oppression as a whole category of people is expelled from useful participation in social life.

The story *Draupadi* demonstrates how powerful persons in hegemonic systems, such as Senanayak, can carry out his nasty game on a 'depressed caste' utilizing her body. The powerful authority finds a means to tear a weaker, naturally weak woman apart as punishment for breaking society's standards. Man will dominate the woman, she is submissive. So the man interprets it as a female's humiliation of manhood. Raping an outcast is intended to reduce her arrogance. The breathtaking image of a raped woman with scars all over her body horrifies the readers:

... senses that her vagina is bleeding. How many came to make her? Shaming her, a tear trickles out of the corner of her eye. In the muddy moonlight she lowers her lightless eye, sees her breasts and understands that indeed, she's made upright. Her breasts are bitten raw, the nipples torn. (171)

Draupadi as a female is a misfortune, she must go through the biological, social and psychological stages of the creating process once completed and Draupadi, surprise, finds her path to emancipation through her patience to endure barbaric persecution. Torture of women's bodies in the name of phallogocentric power appears to build dominance but fails to subdue a helpless woman. Simone de Beauvoir puts it in her famous

book *The Second Sex*: “A woman is not born, she becomes a woman” (301). Draupadi appears to reject Spivak’s concept of the subalterns. Devi has rendered Draupadi, the subaltern in mainstream literature, with full psychological vigor despite his wounded physicality. Biological oppression uses psychological strength to make the powerful opponent appear powerless. Draupadi’s actions astound the entire planet. Barbaric torture drives her insane and furious, while also displaying obsessive behavior she is not only the absolute demonstration of state-driven politics aimed towards the exclusion of the tribal communities but also as explorations of the violent militant aggression embodied in her characters.

Draupadi remains quiet as a river notwithstanding the violence that has violated the purity of the body. Instead of crying, shouting, or being subservient, she stubbornly refuses to wear garments when brought before Senanayak. Senanayak sees a naked body with wounds approaching him with her head raised. Draupadi’s aggressiveness makes Senanayak nervous. Her rage against social injustice instills in her the savage energy to strike at the base of patriarchy. Her resonant voice reflects her displeasure with the oppression of authority. Now that hegemony has been reversed, Draupadi’s control over the body as a female calls Senanayak’s weakness into doubt. Draupadi asks: “what’s the use of clothes? You can strip me but how can you clothe me again? Are you man?” (37).

Devi thus gives her heroes the upper hand by questioning Senanayak’s manhood, as he is afraid of confronting a woman, the object of his search, naked. Devi has demonstrated that unless a woman emerges from her cocoon of inferiority and transforms it into her strength, the subaltern would be oppressed. Draupadi provides up new possibilities for subalterns to speak up for themselves and use their bodies as a form of resistance. She resists viewing Senanayak, the powerful authority, as a powerless male life devoid of masculine attributes capable of confronting a woman with her pure heart rather than punishing her by rape: “Draupadi stands before him, naked, thigh and pubic hair matted with dry blood. Two breasts, two wounds” (36). Radha Kumar rightly states:

Tribal women are oppressed because as women they are used by those who have the power to oppress their people. Rape, torture and forced prostitution are the means land owners and police employ to humiliate, punish and establish control on an entire community which is economically and materially dependant. (139)

Draupadi body expresses the power of a marginalized woman. Draupadi performs a double role as both a woman and a disenfranchised person. As a woman, she is violated and marginalized. She resists through her raped body. Draupadi's female body serves not just as a site of patriarchal oppression but also as a means of social control. Devi has demonstrated how female reproductive organs have been commodified.

Draupadi, as a wounded tigress, becomes enraged. This is the moment when her repressed hostility, hopelessness, rage and anxiety must be expressed through the action of tearing clothes to conceal herself. Her refusal to cover female humiliation with the veil of a ten-meter saree reveals her combative temperament, which fuels her wrath toward her oppressor. When the rape, the ultimate run to a female body, is completed, it appears that she rises above the female shame that should exist in front of the male gaze. Instead, her blood confrontation implies that the female body represents more than just sexual tyranny but also a fierce resistance to being a woman. Ultimately, woman appears to be the sole decision-maker for her body.

Senanayak is horrified at Draupadi's aggressive approach to him, complete with a blood-soaked black corpse. Draupadi's conduct appears unusual in the context of violence, as she is rattled with an indestructible laughing that Senanayak simply cannot understand. The exercise of male sexuality on Draupadi's body appears to produce empowered women. A tribal woman's psychological development is influenced by her social circumstances, which manifests as oppression. The use of violence, such as rape, to silence subalterns has proven maladaptive. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's image of the subaltern as silent contrasts sharply with Draupadi's representation, which incorporates the subaltern's ability to communicate. They can also be heard.

Anxiety causes anger in Draupadi's mentality, making her arrogant towards society, which refuses to give her a drop of water since she is an untouchable. Draupadi demonstrates the thirst for power and achievement, which drives her to oppose others. The upper caste is perceived as exploiting and depriving the Adivasi population. Upper caste members deprive and exploit them. They are not allowed to participate in normal society. Their social segregation causes enmity. Their weakness inspires a sense of obtaining power and accomplishment in their field. B. Manoj Kannan observes: "In the context of India, there are two methods to describe the lowest strata of society: one is caste-based, and the other is economic-based" (51).

Draupadi is discovered to be secure in her own desire for power, which leads to her expulsion from society as an untouchable. She appears to harbor great hatred for the societal power structure. So, her revolt against landlords' power symbolizes her impotence, which develops in her mind the demand for power in order to achieve rights on their own.

Draupadi finds no one to make her feel safe following her husband's death. Her life with her husband was filled with love, dependence and satisfaction. But the combination of Dulna's death and her erratic life as an itinerant fuels her despondency. She feels alone but simultaneously becomes angry toward the killer of her husband, who sacrifices her life for his welfare of his communal people.

Draupadi's behavior changes dramatically when she is left alone to face her struggle without Dulna. Draupadi is portrayed beginning her journey from reliance to independence, trust to skepticism and love to hatred. An aggressive mentality tends to see everyone around her as an opponent. An aggressive personality is characterized by a strong desire to attain goals. Draupadi, an assertive personality, fights against her ostracized status by using her thoughts and body to make her voice heard in the mainstream.

This narrative demonstrates the contrast between the violence that occurs and how power relations and status in a culture play crucial roles in determining the type of vulnerability one is exposed to. Despite

being completely vanquished in body and mind, Draupati rises in protest and uses the same body to register her contempt of the authority that violated and dehumanized her. This is her power. This brutality becomes her method of rising anew.

Conclusion

Devi's enlightened philosophy has portrayed Draupadi in such a way that a tribal is seen to empower herself by the act of violence. The novel documents Draupadi's psychic growth in such a way that, when she experiences body trauma, the language of protest emerges through her rejection to the female body. B. Charanya observes: "educated and employed woman is offended in traditional and democratic cultures like India, allowing millions of uneducated women throughout the world to suffer the terrible destiny. (9)

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Dual Narratives and Temporal Fluidity: A Lacanian Analysis of *How to Be Both*

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Introduction

Ali Smith, a celebrated contemporary author, is renowned for her innovative narrative techniques and thematic exploration of identity and time. Her novel *How to Be Both* exemplifies these qualities, offering a complex and layered narrative that invites readers to engage with themes of duality and temporal fluidity. The novel's unique structure, comprising dual narratives that can be read in either order, challenges conventional storytelling and emphasizes the fluidity of identity and time. By applying Jacques Lacan's psychoanalytic theory, particularly his concepts of the Imaginary, the Symbolic, and the Real, this paper aims to provide a deeper understanding of how Smith's novel explores the complexities of human experience and identity. In doing so, the novel not only challenges linear perceptions of time but also invites readers to reconsider how narratives and identities are constructed and deconstructed in literature and life.

Lacanian Theoretical Framework

Lacanian theory provides a profound framework for analyzing *How to Be Both*, offering insights into the complex interplay between identity, time, and narrative structure. The novel's exploration of dual narratives and temporal fluidity can be examined through Lacanian concepts to reveal deeper layers of meaning about the characters' experiences and self-perceptions.

The Imaginary

In Lacanian theory, the Imaginary is the realm of images, illusions, and ego formation through identification with others. This stage begins in early childhood when the individual first identifies with their reflection in a mirror, forming an idealized image of the self. The Imaginary is characterized by its focus on perception and the fluid, often illusory nature of identity. In *How to Be Both*, the Imaginary is vividly reflected in the novel's dual narratives, where characters perceive themselves and others through memories and artistic representations. These narratives illustrate the fluidity and multiplicity of identity, emphasizing how individuals construct and deconstruct their sense of self through images and reflections.

Francesco del Cossa's Narrative

Francesco's narrative embodies the Imaginary through its rich depiction of the artistic process and the exploration of personal and gender identity. As an artist, Francesco engages with the Imaginary by creating frescoes that blur the boundaries between reality and imagination. This artistic creation allows Francesco to navigate their complex identity, using art as a medium to explore and express their multifaceted self. The frescoes serve as a mirror through which Francesco examines and reconstructs their identity, illustrating how the Imaginary allows for continuous reimagining of selfhood beyond societal constraints. This narrative highlights the role of art in shaping perception and identity, providing a space where characters can engage with the Imaginary to explore new possibilities of existence. Francesco del Cossa's narrative explores the artistic process and the fluid nature of identity:

“Canvas is different from wall, I said. Fresco is always much lighter looking. Materials can make things darker”. (p.143)

This illustrates how art blurs the boundaries between reality and imagination, allowing Francesco to explore their identity.

The Symbolic

The Symbolic order is the realm of language, law, and social structures that shape human interaction and govern the formation of identity. It is within the Symbolic that individuals assume their roles in society, adopting language and social norms to navigate reality. The Symbolic provides the framework through which individuals understand their place in the world and interact with others. In *How to Be Both*, the non-linear narrative challenges the conventional Symbolic order, reflecting the disruption of linear time and traditional storytelling. The novel's structure and the characters' struggles with language and societal norms illustrate their attempts to find meaning and identity within this framework.

George's Narrative

George's story highlights her interactions with the Symbolic order as she grapples with the loss of her mother and the expectations imposed by contemporary society. She struggles to find meaning and identity within the Symbolic order:

"What's the point, what's the point of it? What's it got to do with anything? What's the point of art?". (p.228)

Her journey through grief and societal expectations underscores the tension between personal desires and the constraints of the Symbolic, as she navigates her grief and seeks to understand her identity in a world shaped by the Symbolic. George's engagement with language and social expectations illustrates her struggle to reconcile her inner desires with the roles and norms dictated by the Symbolic order. Her narrative emphasizes the challenges of finding personal meaning and identity within a framework that often prioritizes external conformity over individual expression.

The Real

The Real, according to Lacan, represents the ineffable aspects of existence that lie beyond language and representation. It is the domain of experience that cannot be fully articulated or captured by the Symbolic order, often manifesting as moments of rupture or trauma that disrupt

the stability of the symbolic framework. The novel's exploration of time as a fluid and non-linear construct echoes the concept of the Real, as characters encounter moments that defy linear progression and challenge their perceptions of reality. These encounters highlight the chaotic and often indescribable nature of existence that resists linguistic representation.

George's Journey through the Real

George's experience of grief and her encounters with art and memory bring her into contact with the Real, where she confronts aspects of identity and existence that transcend conventional understanding. The ineffable nature of her grief and the emotional impact of her mother's death disrupt the Symbolic order, challenging her ability to articulate and process her experience through language. Through her engagement with Francesco's art, George accesses the Real, finding a space where the boundaries between past and present, memory and reality, are blurred. These encounters allow her to explore the deeper dimensions of identity and existence, illustrating how the Real shapes her understanding of self and the world.

Dual Narratives and Identity

Ali Smith's *How to Be Both* employs a dual narrative structure that intricately weaves together themes of identity, memory, and time. This structure reflects Lacanian duality and the interplay between the Imaginary and the Symbolic, offering a multifaceted exploration of how identity is constructed and deconstructed across different temporal and cultural contexts. The novel is divided into two parts, each following a different protagonist: Francesco del Cossa, a Renaissance artist, and George, a contemporary teenager. This arrangement allows for multiple readings and interpretations, emphasizing the fluidity of identity and the interconnectedness of past and present experiences. Through these dual narratives, Smith challenges readers to consider how personal histories and artistic expressions influence the formation and reformation of selfhood.

Francesco del Cossa

Francesco's narrative delves into the life of a Renaissance painter navigating the complexities of identity and artistic expression within a rigid societal framework:

"I am a different person, I said". (p.144)

The act of creation allows Francesco to challenge societal norms and embrace the fluidity of selfhood beyond the constraints of their time. This narrative is steeped in the Imaginary, as Francesco uses art to explore and express selfhood beyond societal norms. The act of creation serves as both a mirror and a canvas for Francesco's exploration of gender and identity, allowing for a dynamic engagement with the Imaginary.

Artistic Exploration and the Imaginary

Francesco's frescoes, central to both narratives, symbolize the timeless nature of artistic expression and its capacity to transcend temporal boundaries. These artworks serve as conduits for exploring identity, reflecting the Imaginary's focus on images and representations. Through the process of creation, Francesco navigates the fluid boundaries of gender and selfhood, challenging the rigid norms of the Renaissance period. The frescoes blur the lines between reality and imagination, offering a space where Francesco can continuously reconstruct and reimagine identity. This artistic engagement reflects Lacan's concept of the Imaginary, where the self is formed and reformed through identification with images and the creative process.

Challenging Societal Norms

Francesco's narrative illustrates a resistance to the restrictive gender norms of the time, embracing a fluidity of identity that defies conventional categorization. Through art, Francesco explores the multiplicity of selfhood, highlighting the tensions between personal identity and societal expectations. This exploration of gender and identity through the Imaginary allows Francesco to challenge and transcend the limitations

of the Symbolic order, using art as a medium for self-expression and liberation.

George

George's narrative unfolds in the aftermath of her mother's death, exploring themes of grief, memory, and self-discovery:

“In the back, Henry snuffles lightly, his eyes closed, his mouth open”.
(p.189)

Her interactions with Francesco's art serve as touchstones for understanding her identity and reality. Her story is intricately linked to the past through her engagement with Francesco's art, which acts as a bridge between different temporal and emotional landscapes. George's narrative reflects the fluid nature of time and identity, emphasizing the role of memory and desire in shaping self-perception and reality.

Memory and the Real

George's journey emphasizes the role of memory in accessing the Real, where she confronts aspects of identity and existence that transcend conventional understanding. Her introspective reflections and engagement with art blur the boundaries between past and present, allowing her to navigate the complexities of identity in a non-linear, fluid manner. Through her interactions with Francesco's frescoes, George accesses memories that evoke the Real, challenging her perceptions of reality and selfhood. These encounters with art and memory enable George to explore the ineffable aspects of existence that lie beyond language and representation.

Self-Discovery and Temporal Fluidity

George's narrative highlights the fluidity of time, illustrating how past experiences and artistic influences shape her identity and understanding of the world. Her journey of self-discovery is marked by a desire for connection and coherence in the face of loss, reflecting Lacan's notion that desire is structured around a fundamental lack. By engaging with art and memory, George finds solace and understanding in the timeless

connections between past and present, illustrating how personal histories inform and redefine contemporary identities.

Temporal Fluidity and Narrative Structure

Ali Smith's *How to Be Both* intricately challenges linear perceptions of time through its innovative narrative structure and thematic exploration, effectively illustrating time as a fluid, subjective, and dynamic construct. The novel's structure invites readers to engage with the story in a way that mirrors the complexities of human perception and experience. By allowing for a non-linear reading experience, Smith emphasizes the interplay between past and present, highlighting how these temporal dimensions are intricately woven into the fabric of personal and collective identities.

Non-linear Storytelling

The novel is divided into two narratives, each offering a different temporal perspective: one following Francesco del Cossa, a Renaissance painter, and the other focusing on George, a contemporary teenager. This division allows the narratives to be read in either order, disrupting traditional linear storytelling and encouraging readers to experience the story as a series of interconnected moments rather than a fixed sequence.

Challenging Chronology

By presenting dual narratives that can be read in either order, Smith disrupts the conventional progression of time, inviting readers to reconsider the nature of chronology and its impact on narrative understanding. This approach emphasizes the idea that time is not a strict linear progression but rather a collection of moments that interact and influence one another. The non-linear storytelling allows readers to draw connections between the narratives, exploring the echoes and resonances that transcend temporal boundaries. This structure reflects the fluidity of time and highlights the interconnectedness of human experience, encouraging readers to engage with the story on multiple levels.

Subjective Experience of Time

The novel's structure mirrors the subjective experience of time, illustrating how personal histories and memories shape individuals' perceptions of the present. By juxtaposing the two narratives, Smith highlights how the past continuously informs and redefines the present, underscoring the dynamic nature of identity and reality. This subjective experience of time challenges readers to consider how their own perceptions of time influence their understanding of identity and reality, inviting a deeper engagement with the novel's themes.

Art as a Temporal Bridge

Art serves as a central motif in *How to Be Both*, acting as a timeless medium that bridges the gap between Francesco's Renaissance world and George's contemporary life, the past and the present:

“Art makes nothing happen in a way that makes something happen”.
(p.229)

The frescoes, which are central to both narratives, create a dialogue between the past and present, emphasizing the interconnectedness of human experiences across time.

Interconnectedness of Time

The frescoes symbolize the timeless nature of artistic expression and its capacity to transcend temporal boundaries. Through art, Francesco's and George's stories are interwoven, highlighting the enduring influence of creativity on personal and collective histories. Art serves as a temporal bridge, connecting disparate narratives and illustrating the fluid nature of time as a series of interconnected moments. This connection invites readers to reconsider conventional understandings of time as a fixed sequence and instead view it as a tapestry of experiences that influence one another across different periods.

Multiplicity of Interpretations

The novel's structure allows for a multiplicity of interpretations and experiences, reflecting the diverse ways in which art can be understood

and appreciated. By emphasizing the subjective nature of art and its interpretation, Smith illustrates how creativity transcends temporal constraints, offering insights into the complexities of identity and reality. The frescoes, as artistic representations, challenge readers to engage with the narratives in a manner that reflects the fluidity of time, encouraging an exploration of how art shapes and reshapes understanding across different contexts.

Memory and the Real

Memory plays a pivotal role in shaping the characters' perceptions of reality and identity, serving as a crucial element in the narrative's exploration of temporal fluidity and self-conception:

“Barto was sure, he said, of a good way to rid oneself of bad dreams and painful memories both”. (p.144)

Through art and memory, both Francesco and George navigate the complexities of identity and reality. In Lacanian terms, memory functions as a bridge to the Real, where characters confront aspects of existence that lie beyond the confines of language and representation. The novel's portrayal of memory highlights its vivid and immediate nature, which collapses the distance between past and present, revealing the ineffable dimensions of experience that shape identity.

Memory as a Bridge to the Real: Vivid and Immediate Memories

The immediacy of memories in the novel collapses temporal boundaries, allowing characters to relive past experiences and emotions with striking intensity. This vivid recollection blurs the lines between past and present, illustrating how memory serves as a conduit to the Real—Lacan's domain of experience that resists articulation through language. By accessing the Real through memory, characters engage with the deeper dimensions of identity and existence that transcend conventional understanding. This engagement allows for moments of insight and transformation, challenging traditional notions of self and reality. Both Francesco and George navigate the complexities of identity and reality through their

interactions with memory and art. For Francesco, memories of their artistic endeavours and personal experiences inform their exploration of selfhood, highlighting the dynamic interplay between the Imaginary, the Symbolic, and the Real. For George, memories of her mother and their shared experiences with Francesco's art serve as touchstones for understanding her identity and reality. These memories evoke the Real, prompting George to confront the ineffable aspects of loss and existence that challenge her perceptions of self and the world.

Transformation through Memory: Moments of Insight and Transformation

By engaging with memories that evoke the Real, characters experience moments of profound insight and transformation. These encounters with the Real disrupt the stability of the Symbolic order, revealing the limitations of language in capturing the full complexity of human experience. Through their interactions with memory, both Francesco and George undergo journeys of self-discovery and transformation, illustrating how memory shapes and reshapes identity in dynamic and unpredictable ways.

Desire and Identity

Desire is a central theme in *How to Be Both*, influencing the characters' experiences and shaping their identities in profound ways. Lacan's concept of desire, structured around a fundamental lack, provides a lens through which to understand the characters' quests for identity and fulfillment. Desire drives the characters to explore new possibilities of self-expression and identity, highlighting the tension between personal aspirations and societal constraints.

Artistic Desire and Expression: Francesco's Artistic Desire

For Francesco, artistic desire is a driving force behind their exploration of identity and the pursuit of a coherent and authentic self:

“If it were only dreams, it'd be easy, I said. I could deal with only dreams”.(p.144)

This desire reflects the tension between personal aspirations and societal

constraints. The desire to create and leave a lasting legacy reflects the complex interplay between personal aspirations and the societal norms that seek to constrain them. Through art, Francesco navigates the challenges of self-expression and social norms, using creative desire as a means of exploring and redefining their identity in a world that often resists such fluidity. This artistic engagement illustrates how desire propels the exploration of selfhood, challenging conventional boundaries and embracing the multiplicity of identity.

Tension between Aspiration and Constraint

Francesco's desire to transcend societal constraints highlights the tension between personal aspiration and external limitations. This tension reflects Lacan's notion that desire is structured around a lack—a fundamental incompleteness that drives individuals to seek fulfillment through various means. The desire for artistic expression allows Francesco to engage with the Imaginary, using creativity to explore and articulate aspects of identity that resist categorization within the Symbolic order.

Desire and Self-Discovery: George's Desire for Connection

George's narrative is shaped by a deep desire for connection and understanding in the wake of her mother's death. This desire influences her engagement with art and memory, prompting a journey of self-discovery and emotional growth. The interplay between desire and identity emphasizes the dynamic nature of selfhood and the ongoing negotiation between personal aspirations and external influences. George's desire for coherence and stability in the face of loss drives her exploration of identity, leading her to embrace the transformative power of art and memory.

Conclusion

Ali Smith's *How to Be Both* offers a profound exploration of identity, time, and reality through its dual narratives and temporal fluidity, examined through a Lacanian lens. The novel's innovative structure challenges conventional storytelling by illustrating identity as a fluid, dynamic construct shaped by the interplay between the Imaginary, the Symbolic,

and the Real. Art and memory serve as central motifs, acting as conduits for exploring selfhood beyond societal norms and bridging past and present experiences. The characters' desires and interactions with art reveal the transformative power of creativity in navigating personal and collective identities, as they confront and reconcile the tensions between personal aspirations and societal expectations. By inviting readers to reconsider the boundaries of identity and reality, Smith's novel contributes to contemporary literature's discourse on psychoanalysis and narrative innovation. The novel highlights the interconnectedness of past and present, illustrating how personal histories and artistic expressions continuously inform and reshape individual and societal identities. Through its rich thematic depth and narrative complexity, *How to Be Both* affirms the power of literature to illuminate the intricacies of the human condition, encouraging readers to embrace the fluid and ever-evolving nature of selfhood. Smith's work challenges us to consider how art and memory can transcend temporal constraints, offering nuanced insights into the ways in which identity is constructed and experienced across time and culture.

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Evolution of Indian English Poetry

Suresh Pande

Introduction

“Poetry has been with humans since the beginning of time/civilization. And will remain with humanity until the last human breath is stilled” E/J.

Evolution of Poetry occupies a rich/complex historical perspicacity extending over thousands of years championing plentiful of cultures from ancient oral {*} traditions/rites to modern written art forms. The emergence of modernism marks a definite break from the past to lead further a new and innovative variety of poetry. Eventually, poetry qualifies for an unbroken process of change and an uninterrupted growth simply to provide a platform for diverse voices from diverse landscapes / environments. More particularly, the poetry of post-millennial era corresponds to the novelty of nuances expressly by wielding contraption for coving varied cognitive and emotional overtones identifying a sort of literature intended to cultivate self-assurance, referentiality, epistemological or moral relativism, pluralism and irreverence merely to associate with the schools of thought, such as: deconstruction, intertextuality and post-structuralism. What goes ahead leaving behind the constraints of post-modernism—owns a curious traction which aims to describe contemporary phenomena tersely termed- Meta-modernism. That is why, Indian English Poetry in its present form appears more or less a literary style: mythical, mystical, religious and spiritual having amorous, romantic and subjective features, lyrics aspiring to attain/gain fecundity and excellence.

As far as the lineage of IEP is concerned, it goes back to Henry Louis Vivian Derozio (1809-1831) considered as the first and the foremost rebel/dissenter. In spite of having a short life-span, he experimented

using innovative techniques/a new aesthetic to disseminate western learning/science among young Indians— additionally calibrated precedents for patriotic poetry. His followers brought a great intellectual revolution culminating into what we now know as **Indian Renaissance** or **Young Bengal Movement**. Michael Madhusudan Dutt (1824-1873) a literary titan, a polyglot , a catalyst and a well-known admirer of classical European literature bestowed on humanity his radical-views. That is why, in contemporary literary world he became astonishingly popular in a little while because of his introduction to free-verse, cultural conflict and Byronic sonnets. Namita Gokhale's{**} play-**Betrayed By Hope** as a tribute to M.M. Dutt extraordinarily lays bare the then India's deep-seated contradictions on life and art. Immediately after Taru Latta Datta more popularly known as Toru Dutt a progressive girl prodigy of British India astoundingly came to grace graciously using themes of loneliness, longing, patriotism and nostalgia as founding – figures of Indo-Anglian literature and to bridge the gap between east and the west. R.N. Tagore (1861-1941) best known for poems ,short-fiction, plays , paintings ,novels and essays was the first Non-European to be awarded Nobel Prize for his magnum-opus **Gitanjali** (1913). Tagore's music had a perfect fusion of the Lyric and the Raga. Musical expression therefore had the purest and the most unimpeded form of creative idiom. Sri Aurobindo (1872-1950) originally spelled Aurobindo Ackroyd {1} Ghose descended on this earth as brilliant yogi, visionary, spiritual revolutionary, maharishi, poet, philosopher, journalist and a staunch nationalist. He was one among the influential leaders during British colonial rule who disseminated revolutionary ideas for India's independence by editing - **Bande Mataram** : an English Language Journal founded by Bipin Chandra Pal in 1905.

Notwithstanding cultural renaissance of Bengal commemorating rich heritage of India competently embracing new western ideas prominent literary figures such as—R.N. Tagore, B.C. Chattopadhyay and S.C. Chattopadhyay with their poetic brilliance and social commentary sought ever-present cultural synthesis. Consecutively, Harindra Nath Chattopadhyay (1898-1990) gave to poetic genre a new habitation and

a name. He besides being a poet, dramatist, stage-director, musician, actor and the then Member of Parliament contributed almost every branch of IEW. His sibling Sarojini Chattopadhyay-Naidu (1879-1949) educated from King's College London actively participated in India's freedom movement. Later became follower of M.K. Gandhi and his ideals of Swaraj, Civil Disobedience and Quit India. Gokhale was her Guru-the preceptor. Subsequently, She was the first woman to be the president of Indian National Congress (1925) and after India's independence the Governor of United Provinces (1947). As a poetess she gained the sobriquet-**The Nightingale Of India**. In 1919 Edmund Gosse called her –"The most accomplished living poet in India" {2}. Most often she practiced with traditional English poetic forms such as Sonnets and Odes to explore Indian themes and imagery, alliteration and rhyme. Post colonial Indian English Poetry witnessed crucial developments because many prolific poets influenced the entire generation of Indians and contributed immensely. Prominent among them is Nissim Ezekiel (1924-2004) of Jewish origin.

The advent of Nissim Ezekiel witnesses a clear shift from the romantic/lyric poetry to the modern and then prefigures post modern era in IEP. Shiv K. Kumar (1921-2017) an Indian English Language poet, playwright, novelist, short-story writer gave a new dimension to creative writing in English. A.K. Ramanujam (1929-1993) a poet, scholar, linguist, philologist and folklorist taught linguistics in the University of Chicago and Illinois in United States. Jayant Mahaparta (1928-2023) popularly known as JM was a bilingual-Odia and English poet of national/international renown. His poems such as "Indian Summer" and "Hunger" are regarded as classics in post-modern Indian English. Purushottam Lal commonly known as P. Lal (1929-2010) acted as a poet, author, translator, professor and publisher. He was the founder of well known Publishing House-Writers Workshop Calcutta (Kolkata). Adil Jussawalla (1940-) with a distinctive voice is an influential presence in IEP. Arvind Krishna Mehrotra (1947-) contributed as a poet, anthologist and a literary critic and with the collaboration of Adil Jussawalla established a new Mid-20th Century Indian modernist poetry in English. Arun Kolatkar (1932-

2004) wrote both in Marathi and English. His English poetry is a skeptic journey towards spiritual nothingness. Dominic Francis Moraes popularly known as Dom Moraes (1938-2004) appeared in literary scene as editor, essayist, biographer, inveterate traveler and poet. R. Parthasarthy (1938-2020) had effortless blend of science, philosophy and religion. Knowledge for knowledge's sake was the *raison d'être* for his existence. Dilip Purushottam Chitre (1938-2009) a poet and a translator won world wide popularity by his English translation of 17th century Marathi Bhakti poet **Tukaram**. Gieve Patel (1940-2023) a polymath— poet, painter, playwright, physician and environmentalist. The tribute event held at NCPA in Mumbai was multilingual and memorable—local as well as global. K.N. Daruwalla (1937-2024) is a leading figure in Indian poetry in English. Kamala Das (1934-2009) also known as Kamala Surayya or Madhavikutty was a significant voice in Modern Indian poetry in English. As a poet she merits a place among the best women poet's of 20th century. Prithvi Nandy (1951-) is a versatile whizkid—a poet, painter, journalist—once editor/publishing director of The Times Of India, Nandy came off as a parliamentarian that is Rajyasabha member from Maharashtra, animal activist and Film maker. Vijay Seshadri (1954-) is an Indian diaspora who came to Brooklyn-United States at the age of five. Later he won Pulitzer Prize in poetry. Suniti Namjoshi (1941-) was born in Mumbai-India later she shifted to Canada and at present she lives in southwest of England with English writer Gillian Hanscombe. Her poetry has been translated into Spanish, Italian, Dutch, Korean, Hindi and Turkish. Meena Alexander (1951-2018) was an Indian-American poet, scholar and writer. Vikram Seth (1952-) son of a Judge and a businessman : Seth was raised in India and London. His poetry has significantly innovative traits in an age of free verse that is why his poetry is named polished poetry. There are ample of diasporic writers from India who are more dedicated to fiction than poetry. Therefore, I do not deem it fit to mention their oeuvres/credentials for my concern is only with poetry.

Stretching from late 19th century to the middle of 20th century, modernism reached its pinnacle in-between 1960-80. As poetic movement

modernism came into being as a reaction/response to the monotonous, sapless, downright adolescent poetry of pre-independence period with its excesses of romanticism, slavish imitation of British models and feudal attitudes to life. What is more, modernist poetry as it does exist seems predominantly to discard traditional concerns. Its inventive use of language, allusions and inclination for establishing new rhythms and idioms imparts a unique flavor and fragrance. A revitalization/renewal of life and civilization that viewed contemporary art, politics, philosophy and science in changing perspectives of the age—exhilarates. To produce something drastically new by using spanking imagery, faultless mode or medium, heuristic method or means—as a matter of fact, was ante of the poets.

Post-modernism in IEL refers to the works of literature a tad before and critically after 1980. The term post modernism is credited to Jean Francois Lyotard because he was the first to use it in philosophical context. In India, English poetry after 1980 is legitimately brisk. It resounds a clear-cut precise class. Poets, almost all appear self-assured in their creative opus and in their line of attack{3}. Being Indian they in their technique and tactic slobber in quest of notions pertaining to man, life, existence, identity and prefer to portray social, economic, political, religious, philosophical, spiritual issues so on and on...! As such the new crop of IE poets seems to have ensured that their poetry is growing/has grown as a living and breathing literary genre. In tandem, from the turn of the century that is 2000 onwards, Indian English Poetry holds in maiden ventures new poets who have myriads of promises for future. So much so that Pritish Nandy's poetic collection-**Lone Song Street** (1991) was made into an LP record and was a huge hit with Anglophonic youth including teenagers and preteens making him to rise into a household name. Likewise, P. Lal's Writer's Workshop did astounding work by publishing creative/trans-creative genres of young, promising and budding Indian poets of the epoch. Not only this but also he brought out a journal "The Miscellany" for encouraging less known or even least known young talents in creative writing. This trend firmly ensured that IEP was a living and breathing literary genre of that period. By and

by the number of publishers who produced lucrative/ significant work of arts from small townships to metropolitan urban-bases amplified. Contemporary literary aesthetically athletic poets with meager resources started their own publishing/printing houses to bring out their own poetry-collections and some others by soliciting world-wide contributions brought out Journals/periodicals of international yardstick. This proclivity tended the number of readers and gave rare opportunity to new, budding as well as inveterate poets from distance corners of the country/world. It is that form of poetry which succeeded in Indianizing English by means of revealing nuances/shades of Indian culture/s. Syed Ameeruddin (1942-2020) took IEP to new heights by exploring culture, existential dilemma alongside human conditions. Being founder and president of the world reputed Literary Organization—Intercontinental Poets Academy: Madras-Chennai-Tamil Nadu, Syed Ameeruddin's academy proposes to organize international seminars and symposiums on World poetry. It also proposes to institute the best poet award annually. It's official organ-Intercontinental Quarterly is devoted to lofty literary criticism and world poetry. He was the poet who established and brought out the trend of Poetry Anthology. Although the trend of compiling anthologies goes back to pre-independence era Ameeruddin along with six poetry collections published three reputed anthologies on World Poetry. Sequentially, seven Indian English Poetry anthologies were published from abroad. In 1950 two anthologies, in 1960 one, in 1970 thirteen, in 1980 ten chief among them being –Indian Verse By Young Poets, New Dimension In Indo-English Poetry, Modern Trends in Indo-Anglian Poetry, in 1990 nine anthologies, in 2000 twelve, in 2010 twenty-two including M. Fakharuddin's –World Poetry-2013, in 2020 ten, incorporating S.L. Peeran's-Golden Anthology Of Poems from Bengaluru (India) bejeweled Indian literary Scene. International Sufi Centre from Bengaluru again for a second time brought out a beautiful Indian Poetry Anthology-**Diverse Voices** -2023. Indian English poetry thus is gaining World-Wide reputation and avid readers are expecting more and more corpus for times coming ahead. Adapting and modifying with changing time-schedule the trend of bringing out anthologies created beauty and

variety in the ambit of Indian English Poetry which enraptured indigenous as well as extraneous readers, additionally encouraged them to contribute in their own regional-Indian line of attack. A brand-new genre indeed. Likewise the role of publishers who encourage poets by offering lucrative overtures is worthy of attention so overtly substantial.

O.P. Bhatnagar (1932-2001) a poet noted frequently, studied widely, covering the encyclopedic range of Post-colonial literature essentially deals with the prism of political life reflecting many aspects and problems those agitate man's conscience. A prominent voice among Indian gay liberalism is the gay poet Hoshang Merchant (1947-). Today's well known poets are: H.S. Bhatia (1936-), I.H. Rizvi (1936-2015), I.K. Sharma (1932-2018), R.K. Singh(1950-), Som P. Ranchan (1932-2014), M.K. Kaw (1941-2019) PCK. Prem (1945-) D.C. Chambial(1950-), T.V. Reddy (1943-2020), Ranjit Dutta (1957-) Manas Bakshi (1954-), R.C. Mukhopadhyay (1947-), S.L. Peeran(1950-), C.L. Khatri (1965-2019), Anil K. Sharma (1957-2021), Biplov Majumdar (1966-) S.C. Pande (1955-) K.V. Dominic (1956-), Gopi Kottoor (1956-), Makarand Paranjape (1960-).Among contemporary women poets — Meena Kandasamy (1984-), Nandini Sahu (1973-), Tishani Doshi (1975-), Gauri Deshpande (1942-2003), Mahasweta Devi (1926-2016), Eunice De Souza (1940-2017) are prominent. The list of poets sans gender is so long that it is almost beyond the scope of this write-up to include one and all. However, I have tried to accommodate those who are rather intimately known to me.

What supplements the scope of IEP is its experimental motif. The etiology reveals newest poets in pursuit of self —expression /self discovery. It is further entrenched in the study of oriental culture consequent upon consummation of Indian ethos and beliefs, thereby to ameliorate/civilize the lesser breed rampant in the politico-social set up in the breadth of a nation or country. Dalit poetry is a sort of literature which is the product to protest against hunger, discrimination, humiliation and exploitation—an exposition of human bondage formed to humiliate man by man .By now it has become a separate, different and significant genre and an

invaluable, dynamic contribution to the literatures of the world. Besides, more recent trends pervading throughout the new millennia uncover poetry as the soul of the society. Many poets reflect succinctly and mirror profusely the wounds, agonies, distress and sufferings of the people of the soil/ terrain of their homeland: the place where they were born. Contemporary meta-modern poetry of present decade being close to Indian reality frequently deals with the awareness and acuity of nihilism/ existentialism/postmodernism. Therefore, elements such as – randomness, playfulness, fragmentation, meta-fiction and inter-textuality form still the veritable characteristics of this era. Concurrently, it has evolved with features like-disrupted or unkempt syntax, irregular stanza structure and lacking rhyme schemes. However, most of the poems are limericks or in lyric like structure.

Another ingenious form of poetry is- Node Poetry. The node form lets poets arrange lines into tree-like shape with first line forming the trunk and the subsequent lines disbanding like branches and twigs. Love forms the main theme in latest poetry collections of poets writing up-to-date. Erotic imagery by unmasking guilt, by devising simultaneous, temporal, tangible and geographical simile/s elevates the act of lovemaking to a celestial level. The flame of love now and then appears in a bright sign as though an all pervading, all consuming fiery deity. Perversely, there are chilling poems those narrate the horrific tales of married-life rife with domestic violence incorporating aspects of dramatic monologue. Another side covers both long and short poems tilting the axis from love to profound spiritual experiences fathoming mysteries of the universe. Poets of this category are known as transcendentalists. Theme of despair, death and of metempsychosis is dealt at length by poets called psychologist. It is indeed amusing, amiably satisfying to welcome and behold the garden of Indian English Poetry thriving with multiple blossoms of stunning variety congregated from different parts to form a unified symphony of diverse voices. What is more, man has destroyed triangular ecological balance/harmony among trees, wild –animals and humans. Today, the challenges are manifold. In order to greet growing challenges humanity has to espouse a new philosophy : Neo-humanism

—to rescue nature denatured by galloping modernity. Likewise, to calm-down the frayed nerve most of the poets today practice meditation and other procedures such as—askesis. In reality, the present situation of contemporary IEP is under dark clouds, its growth has been marred by lack of recognition by local reader and media. Nevertheless, it allows us to communicate our fears and passions, joys and memories in a way that preserves them, honors them and lets other people interact and share in those moments too. As it sheds a sideways light on the world the truth sneak up. Poetry conciliates the ideal and the real by stimulating the imagination, by making more creative/original appeal. It also affects psychological wellness by increasing levels of emotional resilience or on a more existential level by giving meaning to our lives. Conversely, the scope of IEP is so much belittled that nearly 12% people read/recite poetry or listen to it online on regular basis.

Bought less, sold less the dilemma of this genre of poetry today is really non-pareil. It is a matter to be poked about for being polymath most of the poets do not prefer tradition but prefer innovation. So it is hard to clamber or board into it sans neutrality : not here ,not there-**Neti-Neti**. This concept is qualitative and refers to an individual state of non-interference in the affairs of other regional academics. Also it is a pivotal concept in Hindu spiritual practice, particularly within **Advait-Vedanta** to focus on non-dualistic thinking. Truth can only be reached by the negation: not this not that. It describes the undifferentiated and ineffable nature of absolute reality-the **Brahman**. Linguistic features of Indian English likewise demand a prudent inquiry on behalf of researchers for English in most Indian states widely differs being second to mother tongue. Over the years, a lot of study has been done on morphology, lexis, syntactic constructions and sound systems. Acoustic phonetic research is increasingly becoming a norm. By now, Indian English is characterized by a particular accent based on region-wise speech patterns: an outcome of the contact of English with local vernaculars. So much so that the recurring live-in relationship between English and Hindi converges into bitter wrangles eventually heading into divorce called—Hinglish. Also referred as linguistic hybridity. Moreover, the

way English mixes/interacts with regional varieties of Indian languages so as to capture the sense, essence, sensibility, spirit and spirituality has presented a greater challenge to academics/instructors. Being a network of multiple varieties existing in every nook and cranny of India today we have an extraordinarily complex linguistic panorama. Nonetheless, Indian poet's writing in English for English speaking real world outside India meticulously concentrate on earning the favor, approval and special attraction on behalf of their western counterparts. That is why, they justifiably long to be at the center of English language. Most of the poets by dint of their merit or assiduousness settle down either in England or in America. Known as Indian Diaspora some of these poets have gained recognition in English literary universe and have also got their works translated into other languages of the world. There are two categories of Indian Diapora poets :Those who have lived/spent a good number of years in India before migrating to the west and those who are born and brought up outside India. The genre called poetry offers nuanced portrayals of a diverse range of perspectives to critically assess issues such as gender, politics, generation gap/conflict, race, class and transnational encounters. It serves a powerful medium for preserving/showcasing rich cultural heritage of India to the world. This in brief is the evolutionary summation of IEP nudging forward/ onward and advancing everyday with a new face to carry out influences and experiments.

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Oral {*}: It means spoken rather than written. It's tradition or lore is a form of human communication in which knowledge, art, ideas and culture are received, preserved and transmitted orally from one generation to another. This practice of verbally transmitting a culture's wisdom, stories and history is categorized into many types, such as—legends, myths, folktales and memorates.

Gokhale Namita {**}, *Betrayed By Hope*: New Delhi—Harper Collins (India) 2020.

When Aurobindo was born, one Miss Annette Ackroyd happened to be present at the Christening ceremony. Accordingly, Aurovindo's father Dr. K.D. Ghose Christened him with an English name-Ackroyd. Later at St. Paul's and at Cambridge Aurobindo was registered as Aurobindo Ackroyd Ghose. But Sri Aurobindo dropped Ackroyd from his name before he left England and never used it again {1}.

In 1919 Edmund Gosse called Sarojini an accomplished poet to introduce her into the ever widening realm of world poetry. Gosse himself was a poet, critic, translator and literary historian {2}.

Social transformation has a long history of poets who have risen as agents against established dogmas of their times. Some poets lived by what they preached so have become legends. U.R. Ananthamurthy (1932-2014), Faiz Ahmad Faiz, (1911-1984), Kazi Nazrul Islam(1899-1976), Kadammanitta Ramakrishnan (1935-2008) and Daya Pawar (1935-1996) are names who have provided evidences to attest- "Pen is mightier than the Sword". Modern history of the world is also filled with poets who stood against oppression and used their pen as a mighty weapon {3}.

Exile and Identity: The Role of Political Displacement in the Novels of Rohinton Mistry and Bapsi Sidhwa

Poonam Verma and Ravi K. Mishra

Introduction

Exile and identity are deeply intertwined themes in postcolonial literature, particularly in the works of Rohinton Mistry and Bapsi Sidhwa. Both authors hail from the Parsi community, a minority group in South Asia with a long history of migration, having fled Persia centuries ago to escape religious persecution. Their novels reflect this historical displacement and the subsequent marginalization of their community in their adopted homeland, India. Additionally, the political upheavals of postcolonial South Asia—such as the Emergency in India (1975–1977) and the Partition of India in 1947—further intensified the feelings of exile, alienation, and identity crisis for individuals and communities alike.

This paper examines the portrayal of political displacement and its impact on identity in the works of Mistry and Sidhwa, with particular focus on how the Parsi community's historical exile informs their literary depictions of modern political turmoil. Drawing on close readings of Mistry's *A Fine Balance* (1995) and Bapsi Sidhwa's *An American Brat* this paper explores how characters struggle with both physical and emotional exile, and how political forces shape personal and communal identity.

The Parsi community, originally Zoroastrians from Persia, fled to India in the 8th and 10th centuries to escape Muslim persecution. Over the centuries, they integrated into Indian society while maintaining their religious and cultural distinctiveness. In colonial India, Parsis thrived, especially in Bombay (now Mumbai), where they became a successful, influential minority. However, postcolonial India presented new

challenges, as the Parsi community faced a dwindling population, marginalization, and a sense of not fully belonging in the new, nationalistic India. This sense of historical exile serves as the foundation for the novels of Mistry and Sidhwa. In their works, characters often grapple with their marginal status in society, negotiating between their cultural identity as Parsis and the political realities of the larger Indian or Pakistani society they inhabit. The Parsi community has been in diaspora from the time of their fleeing from Iran in 850 AD in order to escape forcible conversion to Islam. During the time of British colonialism they enjoyed an exclusive status on par with the ruling English. In 1947, during the partition they were forced to choose either India or Pakistan as their home, therefore causing them to become a Partition Diaspora. Since the 1970s, they, like many educated Asians, have chosen to migrate to the West forming a Western diaspora. Since the Eighties, several of them have contributed in a big way to postcolonial diasporic writing from the subcontinent.

In *An American Brat*, Sidhwa explores the complexities of being Parsi, of being a Pakistani, and of migration to the West while carrying the other two identities. Feroza, a Parsi teenager is packed off to America by her parents Cyrus and Zareen Ginwala, in order to escape the increasing fundamentalism in Pakistan. Nilufer Bharucha reveals the reason for Parsi migration to the West in "Reflections in Broken Mirrors: Diverse Diasporas in Recent Parsi Fiction." She observes: "It is this distance between the Parsis' elite consciousness and their downgraded position in postcolonial India that the migrant Parsi is trying to escape. This end-of-Empire unease in the Indian diaspora is a reason for the Westward movement by many Parsis in the 1950s, 60s and 70s. However, there is a certain degree of guilt connected with this Western diaspora, which is a voluntary one, unlike the feeling of self-esteem generated by the forced diaspora from Iran.

This paper will examine Sidhwa's *An American Brat* for its representation of history and for the depiction of the current political process in the once colonized subcontinental nation, seeing it as typical

of expatriate Third World women's preoccupation with history and politics in their writing. The women writers' work does not merely reflect the difference between colonial and postcolonial contexts but also reflects a feminization of history. To feminize cultural information means to detach it from its active role within a historical field and to ground its meaning in a private sphere of gendered consciousness.

Sidhwa, in her novels, deals with history—past and present—and seeks to feminize it in the above fashion, with an active interrogation of the woman's position in that historical/political situation. Her novel *An American Brat*, like Meena Alexander's *Nampally Road*, is preoccupied with the failure of democracy and the general anarchy that has overtaken the newly formed nation states of the subcontinent. Like other immigrant novels, it is concerned with the socio-political situation in the writer's home country, in this case Pakistan and draws on subcontinental religious and political history which forms the back drop for the narrative. The novel, like the earlier *Ice-Candy-Man* and *The Crow Eaters* talks of the small Parsi community, and discusses the lives of Parsi characters as members of a marginalised minority community in Islamic Pakistan. *Ice-Candy-Man*, is needed to put *An American Brat* in perspective. In *Ice-Candy-Man*, the author contrasts the Parsis of 1945 who were confident of their own place, identity and religious mores in Pre-Partition Pakistan, and the newly formed states of India and Pakistan, with the Pakistani Parsis under General Zia ul Haq, forty years later. In a comment on the novel, Sidhwa writes in the *Indian Review of Books*, "Not that the book lacks a darker side. You cannot comment on politics anywhere in the world, or on the politics within the community itself, without presenting a fairly grim picture." The novel is socio-political critique of a bleak society which suffers under political instability, military suppression and increased Islamic fundamentalism.

An American Brat talks in detail of the increasing feeling of unease that the Parsi community feels in Pakistan. Sidhwa talks of how there is a general descent into authoritarianism in the name of religion and how

even the non-Islamic communities like the Parsis were affected by the increasing fundamentalism. Zareen complains about her daughter's attitudes being affected by the laws. She says:

She objected to my sleeveless sari blouse! Really, this narrow-minded attitude touted by General Zia is infecting her, too. I told her: "Look, we're Parsee, everybody knows we dress differently."

When I was her age, I wore frocks and cycled to Kinnaird College. And that was in '59 and 60__fifteen years after Partition! Can she wear frocks? No. Women mustn't show their legs, women shouldn't dress like this, and women shouldn't act like that. Girls mustn't play hockey or sing or dance! If everything corrupts their pious little minds so easily, then the mullahs should wear burqas and stay within the four walls of their houses!

This then is a comment on the regression in social mores that has taken place in Pakistan since Independence, in the name of religion. Women, it is seen, are most affected by the dictates of narrow religious sanctions which propagate gender segregation. The narrator goes on to add:

That their most trivial conversations took a political turn was not surprising. In Pakistan, politics, with its special brew of martial law and religion, influenced every aspect of day-to-day living.

The novel narrates how a sense of betrayal straddled the country and how, bottled up for thirteen years of martial law, their dreams had soared "like genii" with Bhutto's electoral victory. The return to democracy under Bhutto's liberal leadership had made Pakistanis feel proud again, a part of the modern world community. This elation was not to last as Bhutto did not live up to his promises and invited the army to supervise law and order, only to find himself jailed and awaiting death. Zareen talks of the freedom that Bhutto momentarily brought to their lives:

"I was really hopeful when Bhutto was elected. For the first time I felt it didn't matter that I was not a Muslim, or that I was a woman. You remember when he told the women to sit with the men? That took guts!"

The novel thus shows how political changes affect every aspect of life in Pakistan and also indicates that as a result the economy was also in shambles. The novel being concerned with the politics of religion, Sidhwa significantly talks of how fundamentalism was a new and intolerant strain of religion in a subcontinent where all religious groups have co-existed over several generations. Zareen worships at the shrine of the Muslim saint Data Gunj Baksh despite being a faithful Zoroastrian. The narrator says:

“Given the medley of religions that exist cheek-by-jowl in the subcontinent and the spiritual impulse that sustains them, people of all faiths flock to each other’s shrines and cathedrals. They came to the fifteenth-century sufi’s shrine from all over Pakistan, and before Partition they came from all over northern India.”

This then highlights the incongruity of religious fundamentalism in a region where coexistence has been the norm. The novel also serves to highlight the fact that religion is frequently misinterpreted by political forces to suit the unscrupulous needs of politicians.

The novel describes the general political scenario in the country following the arrest of Bhutto, and the fears of the people regarding the enforcement of martial law in the country. The general horror at the arrest, the fears over his fate, and the horror at his final hanging despite international pleas for granting him amnesty are all chronicled in the novel. The author blends fictional and historical persons and describes the Bhutto family and the democratic, liberal, human face that they gave to the nation. At the shrine of the Muslim saint where Zareen and Feroza go to worship, they see Bhutto’s sister, who also comes there to pray.

That politics and political figures form part of the fabric of subcontinental life is obvious from the crowd’s response to Bhutto’s sister’s pain:

Some men shouted, “Bhutto Zindabad” . . . and old women, bandy legged in their loose shalwars, with labored crablike movements, lumbered up the steps to pass their gnarled hands over his sister’s shawl and sign, “We pray for your brother. Don’t fret, he will be free.”

This episode brings out the country's desperate need for a messiah who would lift them out of their miseries, best symbolized in post-Partition Pakistan by Bhutto and his liberal ideas.

The reactions of the minority Parsi group to these major political changes and their paranoia on the increased Islamization of the country are explicitly described. Feroza, who is in school is confused by all the political debate that went on during dinner parties and all gatherings, about Bhutto's deed and misdeeds, the Islamization of state institution by Zia, and the way in which the verdict in the Bhutto trial would go. It affects her behaviour and it is this which makes Zareen decide to send her to America. The death sentence of Bhutto hangs heavily over the action of the narrative and Khushwant Singh the Indian journalist-novelist arrives in Lahore to report the hanging as fact and fiction mingle in the text, once more.

In America, Feroza finds that she is far more politically aware than the average American who cannot acknowledge any country beyond the American nation. She sees in her flat-mate the typical American who believes as gospel everything that she sees and hears on television, without questioning the news as did Feroza and most Third Worlders to whom life was seen in relation to the global context. Unlike the Third World citizen who is directly affected by the policies of the powerful USA and the former USSR who bullied the weaker nations, the typical American is unconcerned with the greater political drama which involved large masses of humanity which were removed from her. Sidhwa observes that in Pakistan politics concerned everyone—from the street sweeper to the business tycoon—because it personally affected everyone, particularly women. The novel is a vocal call against exploitation of the nations of Asia by the powerful West. While it is appreciative of the freedoms that the United States granted to the migrant South Asian, the novel is critical of the American press and its biased reporting of news from the Third World news that is uncritically swallowed by the average American. In a telling political comment on American policies, Sidhwa writes:

Like her parents, Feroza had a politically acute and rest less mind. . . . And living with Jo and watching TV also gave her a disturbing insight into America's foreign policy, into the nature of the fissure that existed at the core of America's political heart which . . . was divided into darkness and light with no room for the gray that other older and poorer nations had learned to accommodate . . . the schizophrenia she perceived at the core of America's relationship of its own citizens and to those in poor countries like hers continued to disturb her. She eventually came to the conclusion that it troubled her because America was so consummately rich and powerful, and the inconsistencies of its dual standards, the injustices it perpetuated, were so cynical and so brazen. Not that Pakistan or other countries were paragons, but then no one expected and better of Pakistan_it had no claim as the leader of nations, the grand arbiter of justice and human right.

Rohinton Mistry's *Such a Long Journey* delves into the Nagarvala Case, *A Fine Balance* captures the internal Emergency imposed by Indira Gandhi, and *Family Matters* addresses the aftermath of the Babri Masjid riots in the 1990s. This paper examines how Mistry, particularly in *A Fine Balance*, critiques the false promises of the government and highlights the suffering of ordinary citizens during the Emergency period. The Emergency led to the suspension of fundamental rights guaranteed to Indian citizens by the Constitution. The novel spans from the declaration of the Emergency in 1975 to the assassination of Indira Gandhi in 1984. Against this political backdrop, Mistry weaves the intertwined lives of Dina Dalal, her tailors Ishwar and Omprakash Darji, and her lodger Maneck Kohlah. Their shared struggles to survive in Mumbai during the Emergency illustrate the harsh realities of life under political oppression. He Emergency, as portrayed by Mistry, is rooted in the government's attempts to subvert the law and cling to power through unlawful measures. In *A Fine Balance*, Mistry presents the perspective of Avinash, a student union leader, to convey the underlying causes of the Emergency. Avinash explains the political manipulation at play, stating, "The Prime Minister was found guilty of cheating in the election. Instead

of obeying the court's ruling, she imposed Emergency then all this ...this becomes a museum of cheap tricks, rather than the living, breathing law that strengthens the sinews of society"...suspended the Constitution and jailed the opposition." Through Avinash, Mistry highlights the government's desperation to retain control, showcasing how political corruption and lawlessness led to the erosion of democracy during this period. While depicting contemporary political situation in the country the novelist exposes prevailing caste differences in India. Dukhi Mochi's story takes the readers to the time of independence struggle in India. The intensity of caste problem among the Indians can be felt in this episode. Dukhi belongs to Chamaar community whose traditional job is removing the carcasses. The upper caste people are not able to tolerate the fact that Dukhi has got two sons- Ishvar and Narayan. They complain, "What is happening to the world?. Why two sons in an untouchable's house, and not even one in ours? What could a Chamaar pass on to his sons that the God should reward him thus? Something was wrong, the Law of Manu had been subverted" (FB 100). The oppressed people had to digest all kinds of human right violations for survival. Mistry has recorded some of these incidents in his novel. Bhola, a Chamaar's left hand fingers are chopped for stealing which was not proved. The affected could not protest against this but they had to content "Bhola is lucky...Last year Chhagan lost his hand at the wrist. Same reason" (FB 96). In another incident, Buddhu's wife "refused to go to the field with zamindar's son, so they shaved her head and walked her naked through the square" (FB 97). In the world of the novel, the upper caste people take the law in hand to humiliate the oppressed. A close reading of *A Fine Balance* reveals how individuals, despite their own suffering, often oppress those lower in the social hierarchy. Dukhi's family, as members of the Chamaar caste, endure significant hardship and discrimination. However, even within this marginalized group, Roopa, Dukhi's wife, perpetuates the same cycle of oppression by mistreating a member of the Bhunghi community, considered lower than the Chamaars. Roopa's disdain is evident when she says, "**I will not let a**

filthy Bhunghi touch my pots, they are unclean!” This instance highlights the deeply ingrained caste hierarchy, where even those at the bottom of the social order find someone else to subjugate, reflecting the pervasive nature of caste-based oppression in Indian society.

Both Rohinton Mistry and Bapsi Sidhwa use their novels to explore the intersection of political displacement, exile, and identity. Mistry’s focus on the Emergency and the moral decay of postcolonial India, and Sidhwa’s depiction of the Partition of India and its aftermath, reveal the far-reaching effects of political upheaval on individuals and communities. The Parsi community’s historical exile from Persia serves as a powerful metaphor for the characters’ experiences of alienation and marginalization in the face of modern political events. Through their exploration of these themes, Mistry and Sidhwa offer profound insights into the nature of exile—not only as a physical displacement but as an emotional and psychological condition that shapes identity and belonging in an ever-changing world.

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Introspecting the "other" in Kalki Subramaniam's *We are not the Others*: Charting the trajectory of Identity through the Intersectional Approach

Srima Nandi

I speak
because we need
to be heard,
I write because we need
to be understood
I dare,
because we need
to survive.” (Subramaniam17)

With these powerful outbursts of emotions, Kalki Subramaniam breaks all barriers, shatters silences around her marginalized experiences and writes her community's story with bitterness and anger. It is her personal narrative spoken from her perspective of the “other” to the hegemonic power that has established the binary narrative. The themes of ‘silence’ and ‘voicelessness’ will be examined through the theory of intersectionality that intersects with sexuality, gender, and heterosexuality. Here these identity categories are influenced by patriarchy. Patriarchy though not a personal identity like class, gender and sexuality, it is a system of power that influences identity by assigning roles, expectations, and privileges based on gender.

Kalki Subramaniam's memoir *We are not the Others: Reflections of a Transgender Activist* (2014) offers a poignant narrative of self-discovery, navigating the complexities of gender identity in India. Through

Subramaniam's experiences as a trans person, this paper examines the construction and negotiation of identity in relation to the "other."

Subramaniam's journey from self-identification to social recognition challenges traditional notions of identity and otherness. The memoir highlights intersectional marginalization where class, gender, sexuality, heterosexuality etc. intersect to exacerbate exclusion. Resilience and belonging emerge through community formation and activism. *We are not the others* examines the construction and negotiation of identity, particularly in relation to the "other." Through a critical lens, this study analyzes how Subramaniam's experiences as a trans person in India intersect with the societal norms, challenging traditional notions of 'self' and 'other.' By charting the trajectory of identity formation, this research highlights the complexities of belonging, marginalization and resilience.

This paper will also introspect on the "other" aligning with the themes of "silence" and "voice" through the intersectional approach. And through this approach, I shall explore how Kalki Subramaniam shatters silences around her marginalized experiences and reclaims language, and challenges societal norms and expectations and ultimately offers voice for the voiceless.

I

I begin this paper by defining the term intersectionality. The term "intersectionality" was introduced by Kimberle Crenshaw, an African American theorist in 1989 (Yuval-Davis 44). It is basically a sociological theory that examines how the socially and culturally constructed categories of inequalities and discriminations operate and interact on multiple and often simultaneous levels and how they combine to create an organized and a systematic social inequality. Society is structured on hierarchies and the stratification creates divisions in society. These divisions are based on disparities in income, wealth, education, housing, occupation and social benefits. The foundation of existing disparities lies in the various socially, culturally, and politically constructed social identities like class, caste, race, gender, sexuality, and so on. As a

framework for this research, I have employed the intersectional approach which is being used increasingly by many feminist critics and which can be used widely in other spheres of marginalization as well.

Most of the studies on inequality have been exercised on one single identity category. Many researchers have worked on class, or caste, or gender independently but intersectionality will look into all these identity categories intersecting simultaneously in a person’s life. The basic premise of intersectionality understands that all variables—such as race, class, caste, gender, sexuality and other identity categories keep working together rather than individually. As a result, there is an interlocking system of agencies that perpetrates layers of oppression. The intersectional approach is interested in exploring how different parts of the “oppressive machine” work together in unison to create a strong and durable powerbase and exploit marginalized sections of society. I will use some insights provided by some intersectional theorist like Kimberle Crenshaw, Nira Yuval-Davis, and Patricia Hill Collins to interpret and introspect the dynamics of “other” as evident in Kalki Subramaniam’s the memoir *We are not the Others: Reflections of a Transgender Artist*.

I begin with Crenshaw’s metaphor of the crossroads. It explains how multiple differences intersect in the lives of the marginalized or the “other.” She explains the metaphor in this way:

Intersectionality is what occurs when a woman from the minority group...tries to navigate the main crossings in the city....The main highway is “racism road.” One cross street can be Colonialism, then Patriarchy Street. She has to deal not only with one form of oppression but with all forms, those named as road signs, which link together to make a double, a triple, multiple, a many layered blanket of oppression. (Crenshaw, qtd.in Yuval-Davis 47-48)

Interpreting Crenshaw’s metaphor of crossroads in the Indian context and with reference to Kalki Subramaniam’s *We are not the Others*, we observe Subramaniam’s transgender community trying to navigate the main crossings in the city. Here, the main highway is the “heterosexual

road” and then there are several roads of which one is “Patriarchy.” Subramanian’s first outburst is at Patriarchy and she says, “To hell with patriarchy” (Subramaniam 110, 156).

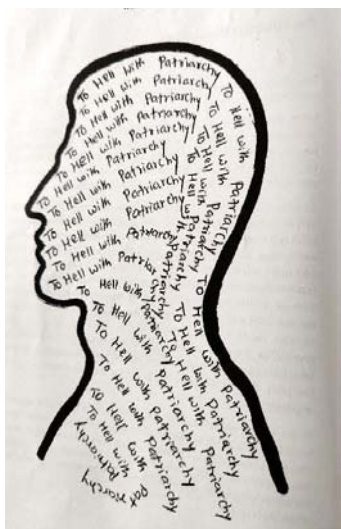


Figure 1 (Subramaniam 156)



Figure 2 (Subramaniam 110)

She further fires at patriarchy and advises her community people in this way:

...Arise!

topple him of your body!

He is the agent of insults

that strip you off your dignity,

stamp your foot on his throat

reveal your Kali face. (Subramaniam 50)

These lines suggest a great struggle of self-empowerment and resistance against those who seek to diminish the dignity of the marginalized. She urges her community to rise up against all oppressive forces, and patriarchy (that she detests), to claim their dignity and unlock their true potential. The line “Arise! /topple him of your body!” — is a powerful

awakening call, urging all transgender community to shake off the forces that have taken hold of their being. The image of Kali is a sort of reclaiming control and dominance over the forces of patriarchy and uproot their audacity. She gives a challenge to Patriarchy as well as to Heterosexuality and directly confronts them that she would tear them apart and topple them from their dominance. The strong divisions of sexual borders and oppressive means have always excluded them and termed them as ‘deviant.’ These labels make Subramaniam’s “wrath [to] rise and pounce like a tigress/ on those morons, / tear their stomach and draw out their bowels” (Subramaniam 111). She hurls curses at them for creating these rigid sexual boundaries that have slain them apart.

Here, we observe what Eve Sedgwick talks of the rigid sexual boundaries and exclusions that were established. Moreover, she also notes how “the oppressive, homo/heterosexual system was generated on the basis of repeated decentering’s and exposures” (Toni Purvis 439, qtd., in Waugh).

Now looking into Crenshaw’s metaphor of the crossroad, it has been argued by Yuval-Davis as an “additive intersectionality” model. This additive model has remained to be problematic. It is problematic because this approach “often remains at one level of analysis” (Crenshaw 49) without considering other levels during analysis of other categories. Here each street remains isolated from the other and which may not intersect. So Yuval-Davis understands this additive intersectionality model as adding up one identity with the other. I interpret here with Kalki Subramaniam’s memoir as heterosexuality + class + gender/ sexuality which looks upon these categories as independent body of their own. Since this additive model becomes irrelevant here, Patricia Hill Collins suggests a model of intersecting oppressions that uses the “metaphor of interlocking identities” (qtd. in Ryle 51) rather than the “metaphor of the crossroads” because intersectionality examines multiple forms of oppressions simultaneously.

The model of interlocking identities best express the situatedness of Subramaniam's community. They are marginalized not only of their gender in society but also of other identity categories

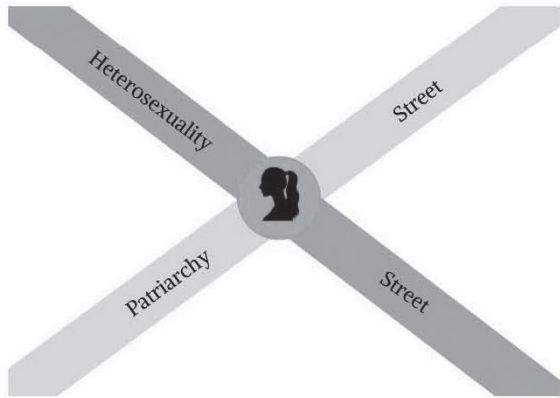


Figure 3: Metaphor of Crossroads

like class, caste and heterosexuality that is dominated by patriarchy. The transgender community as shown in Figure 4 best explains their interlocking identities within the intersectional diagram. They experience all other identity categories simultaneously within the powerful interlocking grid. From within this complex grid they are under constant bully and sarcasm.

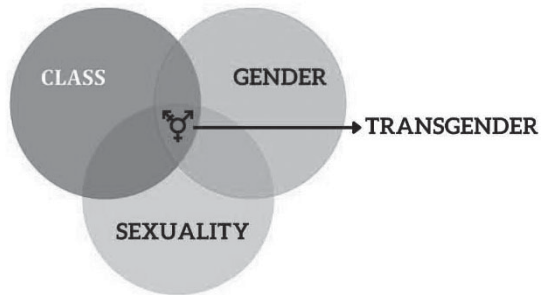


Figure 4: Metaphor of Interlocking Identities

Kalki Subramaniam's experiences as a transgender woman have enmeshed her into serious intricate problems where she undergoes excruciating pain and distress. She is tired of the society's attitude towards a transgender woman like her. She wishes to "smash the bigotry" (Subramaniam 32) and come out of the interlocking grid that has trapped her into experiencing all other social identity categories simultaneously. A few lines from her memoir — "Don't tell me that" will illustrate her helplessness and agony and a strong sense of disorientation from the mainstream society:

I am tired of you
telling me
how I don’t look like
a transgender woman.

...

I am tired of you
telling me
everything is perfect
except my voice
which could be more feminine.

I am tired of you
asking me
when was the first time
I felt that I’m a transgender.

...

I am tired of
your stare.

...

I am tired of you
asking me
to bless you.

...

I am like you
I am human too. (31-34)

This is her struggle and this is her survival. She is enmeshed within the interlocking grid, experiencing all other identity categories simultaneously and fighting for her existence in a society that denies her voice and freedom.

Having understood both the metaphors of crossroads and the metaphor of the interlocking identities, I shall now analyse the concept of ‘silence’ and ‘voicelessness’ and subsequently their outbursts of voice to resist patriarchy and heterosexuality.

II

“Voice “and “silence” are the most talked about concepts while researching on the marginalized people of any society. This calls forth Gayathri Spivak’s essay on “Can the Subaltern Speak?” Spivak says “she ‘spoke’, but women did not, do not, and ‘hear’ her. Thus she can be defined as the “subaltern”—a person, without lines of social mobility” (Spivak 28, qtd., in Ashcroft et al). Kalki Subramaniam renders voice to her community people and says “I speak because I need to be heard” and she does without fear and inhibitions. She directly charges at patriarchy and erases silences as a strategy for resistance. She uses “language” to voice the truth of her identity. She pronounces:

I’m not your brother,

I’m not your son,

I’m not your nephew.

I’m not him

Don’t call me he.

I am your SISTER

I am your DAUGHTER

I am your NIECE

I am HER.

Call me SHE. (Subramanian 144, emphasis original)

She selects her identity—daringly and boldly by breaking the silence and urging her community people to speak out and say “It’s my body and I have the right to decide on my gender” (Subramanian 150).



Figure 5: Transgender

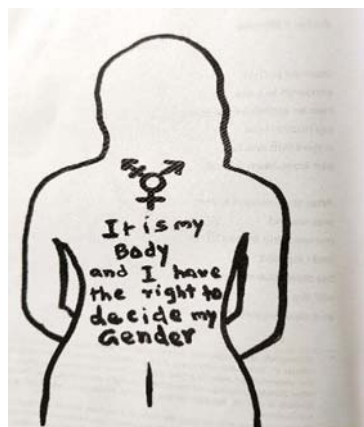


Figure 6: (Subramanian 150)

She begins to question into the critical insights of the nature of the body and the question of sexual identity. She clamours that every person has the right to choose their sexual preferences and that their identity is their own. The right to own their body, the right to love their body, the right to proclaim their dignity and above all the right to acknowledge their presence in this world that tries to erase them and push them to the periphery. As Nayar observes that the common commitment of these marginalized people is “to centring the marginalized, emancipation for the oppressed and social justice is what brings them together on one platform (Nayar 184).

Their marginalization and deviant nature of their being has made them trapped into depression and leading them towards committing suicide. They encounter derogatory remarks that have always made them vulnerable. She observes one such remarks:

...Then one of them hollered,

“What a shame

you call yourself woman?

you stand in front of us

slipping your saree?”

My eyes reddened
 and veins throbbed,
 I stand my ground
 to prove my womanhood,
 with tears rolling down
 I remove my saree.

...

“See me you wretched whore’s son
 I am not a man
 I AM A WOMAN”
 I beat my hands

Ferociously on my femininity. (Subramaniam 112, emphasis original)

Kalki Subramaniam expresses a complex intense and conflicted sentiment regarding her gender identity. She defies traditional patriarchal norms and boldly asserts her feminine identity. The use of language like “wretched whore’s son” is an outright derogatory remark the patriarchal society, where she uses her ‘voice’ to indicate the social stigma on her community. Using her voice she is able to display her frustration and anger that is directed at her by the society towards her transformation. Here, Subramaniam performs her identity, thus exploring the fluidity of gender and challenging traditional binaries and norms.

The ‘loss’ and ‘absence’ equated to *silence* and, ‘gain’ and ‘presence’ to *speech* become strong opponents in the dialectics of speech and silence. Patty Duncan in her *Tell this Silence* observes:

Invisibility, loss, absence, repression, oppression, the unspoken, the unknown—these concepts continue to be equated with silence, while visibility, gain, presence, liberation, and “truth” are equated with the act of speech itself. (Duncan 7)

The application of Duncan’s observation on speech and silence is very relevant to Kalki Subramaniam’s memoir. She notices that her community

needs “to find a voice”, a need “for speaking out” a need to “break the silence.” One observes that the norm is male, heterosexual and the subject while the female, homosexual, and the other are “others.” Since language originated, “language” has been “always” a male discourse. Adrienne Rich, an American feminist observes that “women [are] groping for language in which to express what is on her mind, sensing that the terms of academic discourse are not her language trying to cut her thought to the dimensions of a discourse not intended for her” (Adrienne Rich, qtd. in Duncan 8). Similarly Kalki Subramaniam gropes for language, yet in her poem on “My Perfectly Imperfect Vagina,” she breaks the silence and encounters challenges and annihilation in her expression of having a vagina. In utter distress, she says:

“it took half a lifetime for me to have a vagina” (123). She recalls after many years of desperation that “many thousand voices like mine began to raise for our rights, we were finally heard...to be transformed, the get rid of what we didn’t want and embrace the gift we had been waiting all of our lives for.” (123)

She lacked a voice and she recalls:

You see. We don’t *talk* (emphasis mine) about vaginas with the public, especially our own. So I think you have minimum luck. May be you should wait for them to “talk” about it. If at all I get to meet those doctors my life again..., I would kick their balls till they faint in pain. That I certainly will do. (126)

These strong repercussions on the revelation that the doctors who played “a big joke” (125) on them after she observed that their vagina was all “improper,” “out of shape,” “extra skin hanging loose,” wrinkled and ugly.” That is how those idiot doctors I should call them smart doctors learned to do reassignment surgeries” (126). She challenges stereotypes, shatters limitations and transcends constraints to reach out to make prominent her identity. She asserts her identity, makes known to public what and who she actually is. She reasserts her unique ‘self’ not as the ‘other’ but a person with a unique self— is an amazing invigorating proclamation of the reflections of “transgender activist” as “not the other” but the “self.”

The intersectional nature of identity and Subramaniam's experiences, focus on the intersecting identities of gender and sexuality that shape her experiences. She is optimistic about the future of her community. She comments:

In the future, we realize that diversity in gender and sexuality is natural and there has been injustice done to homosexual population and transsexual population over holding into centuries of outdated law across the world. Gender justice will prevail, men women, transgender people and non-binary will be treated equally and enjoy their rights. (155)

She looks beyond the horizon for a promising tomorrow and encouraging prospects when she says "the future is non-binary" (155). She aspires for inspiring possibilities when she is confident that "the future is the expansion of gender and sexuality. ... It truly is"(155). She further foresees:

What has become of now for transgender people will see a revolutionary change in the next 25 years. In 2050, Transgender people will matter, their contributions will matter not only for the country they live in, but for the entire world. One of the greatest discoveries in science will be by a transgender person. (155)

With great hopes and confidence, she as an "artist" (Activist + Artist = Artist) looks forward for a better world with equality and acceptance of all people with whatever gender identity they belong to. Her constant reminder to patriarchy, heterosexuality and all other identity groups that "the future belongs to us trans people. The future is non-binary" (158).

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Second Language Learning through New Generation Malayalam Films - An Inquiry

Chandrasekharan Praveen

Films have been considered a great source of entertainment, but they can also act as a language learning medium if we are prepared to change our perception about it.

-Kieran Donaghy

Introduction

Using films to teach English may sound rather unconventional, but the fact remains that feature films are usually rich in diverse contexts where language is spoken. Interestingly, the popular actress Salma Hayek, hailing from Spain learned her English by watching close-captioned English movies. Experienced teachers know that regular watching of movies in a particular language can help one develop ones vocabulary, pronunciation, fluency and even gain an understanding of colloquial language which one seldom gets an opportunity to learn through formal classroom instruction. There are several studies which have looked into the effectiveness of using movies in English to develop the speaking skills of learners of English as a Second Language. (Pavithra & Gandhimathi, 2024, Sanchez-Aunon et al., 2023, SciSpace, 2022-2023, Olcay & Amri, 2021)

Background

The investigator, a teacher educator by profession with a specialization in using films for English language teaching was recently intrigued by a sudden spurt of interest in youngsters to learn English through the use of Malayalam films. This prompted the investigator to review a few YouTube channels which teach English using Malayalam films. (1) In most such videos, the producers attempt a translation into English of Malayalam dialogues in feature films produced in the Malayalam

language. As an avid lover of films, the investigator was familiar with the rise of New Generation Malayalam films which are extremely popular with the youngsters in Kerala. (2) And what is peculiar about the New Generation Malayalam films is that the contexts are mostly urban homes and they capture the life styles of the current generation who make a profuse use of English in their daily conversation. The dialogues which appear in such films are natural too because it matches the tendency among young city dwellers to code switch. The investigator had also in 2020 served in a supervisory role of a dissertation on New Generation Malayalam films. Following a general preview of the film clips from Malayalam films released between 2019 and 2021, five films scenes were chosen by the investigator to study the nature of English language use in the film clips.

Rationale for the study

Studies on the use of films are on the rise in universities in Kerala. Most film-based studies are theme based or genre-based. But studies on the use of English dialogues in Malayalam films are rare. The quality of the spoken English found in the films are fine resources for use in the English as Second language class room. Even through casual viewing of scenes where the characters use English of a very good quality, the scope for acquiring language is very high. But a close study of the dialogues in English in Malayalam feature films is extremely limited.

Research Questions

The New Generation Malayalam Films abound in dialogues in English. In order to identify its usefulness in Second Language acquisition among college students, the following research questions were framed.

- A. What is the nature of the English language found in the films clips from New Generation Malayalam films?
- B. In what ways can the dialogues in English in New Generation Malayalam films be tapped for Second Language acquisition?

Methodology

Of late, the youth in Kerala State, particularly college-going students have begun to show a keen interest in watching New Generation

Malayalam films. These films follow a character casting and presentation style quite different from traditional commercial film formats. From the perspective of Second Language acquisition, these films are a rich source for English Language acquisition because they abound in dialogues in English. So the researcher attempted a review of select New Generation Malayalam films and identified scenes from five films with English language use. Tape scripts of such dialogues were prepared and they were analysed for identifying usefulness in teaching/learning language functions in context. This formed the main tool for the study. The study is empirical and qualitative in nature and is aimed at identifying and analysing the dialogues in English in New Generation Malayalam films from a pedagogical perspective.

Brief Review of studies

Monaco (2013) in his fairly comprehensive study attempted to look at film from several vantage points. This included among others, the possibilities of film as a medium and art. Monaco also explored how films try to convey meaning and underscores the fact that films try to communicate in its own way.

Istanto (2009) in an article based on a study conducted in the National University of Singapore discussed how films can be used as an effective platform to immerse themselves in the culture of a target language.

Mirvan (2013) discussing the advantages of using films to enhance reading comprehension referred to the efforts of English language teachers who keep searching for motivating resources. The investigator also affirmed that many perceive film as a media that attracts students' attention, and helps present language in an interactive way.

A recent study by Hariati (2022) found that English movies can improve speaking skills. Several studies have explored the use of movies as a language learning tool. All such studies tend to facilitate second language acquisition, something Krashen (1982) affirmed in his hypothesis of the subconscious acquisition of language. In fact, more than a decade later, Kaufmann (2018) in an article on the subconscious process of learning languages observed that vocabulary, the acquisition of words and phrases is the key task in language learning.

As per the insights from five top papers published during 2022-23, using movies in the classroom, is perceived by students as a helpful tool for improving speaking skills. They allow learners to visually acquire knowledge and understand different life styles and cultures, improve vocabulary and also enhance linguistic and social skills. (SciSpace) A post published recently in Clapingo (2024) also affirms the scope for developing speaking skills by watching films.

The brief review of studies on the use of films for learning English reveals that films can be made use of for Second language acquisition. The possibilities are immense and it is up to the teachers of English to explore the creative use of films for nurturing the ability of learners to communicate effectively.

Brief review of dialogues in English in five film clips

Film: Sudani from Nigeria (2018)

Film scene:

A doctor arrives to diagnose the injury of Samuel.

Samuel:Are you Brazil fan?

Doctor: Oh! No...no...no...Just a T-shirt...I brought from there...Why? Are you an Argentine fan?

Samuel: No...Never...I am from Nigeria...We play World Cup...Not like this...

Doctor: (laughs)...Actually...There is no World Cup for Sevens...If there was...we would be the champions...

Manager: (laughs)

Samuel: (laughs)

Language analysis:

Language Function	Vocabulary
Asking for confirmation: Are you a Brazil fan?	Sports related vocabulary: Fan World cup Championship

Film: Uyare (2019)

Film scene:

While attending class, Pallavi receives a phone call from her obsessive lover and this disturbs the instructor who is explaining a topic.

Instructor: A... $M = 0.6$...B $M = 0$... (Buzzing sound of phone) 0.8

Waves approaching from front... (Buzzing sound of phone)

Is my class disturbing you?

Pallavi: No Sir...I was...

Instructor: Should I stop my class so that you can continue talking...

Pallavi: Sir I was putting it on silence...

Instructor: No...You were messaging...

Pallavi: Yes.

Instructor: Boy friend?

Pallavi: I think that is a very personal question to ask...

Instructor: Then I guess I will stick to first questions...What is V_2 ?

Pallavi: $T \cos \theta$ speed

Instructor: And what is the relationship between V_S and V_2 ?

Pallavi: V_2 is equal to or greater than 1.

Instructor: What is V_x ?

Pallavi: Angle of climb

Instructor: V_y

Pallavi: Rate of climb...

Instructor: What is?

Pallavi: This is a question from a chapter we haven't been taught yet.
But I think it is an oscillatory instability...

Instructor: Do you know mobile phones are not allowed in the class?

Pallavi: I am sorry Sir...

Instructor: Leave the class...So I was telling you...sudden increase of pressure...plane is approaching from...

Language analysis:

Language Function	Vocabulary
*Providing explanations for answers using technical vocabulary *Using polite language “I’ am sorry”. *Apologizing and leaving the class Expression of possibility: I think	Vocabulary related to aviation: Angle of climb Rate of climb Oscillatory instability *Technical vocabulary: Pressure *General vocabulary Boyfriend Personal Message Class

Film: Trance (2020)

Film scene:

Joshua escapes his attempted murder through a miraculous psychedelic trance and he re-negotiates his deal with Solomon and Isaac.

Medium: I am back...Join the party eh.....The Mega Miracle Fest...80 percent...Nothing less...Nothing more...Nothing else...Because I don't live in your reality...I'm from the heavens...And it is going to cost you...

Person A: No...

Language analysis:

Language Function	Vocabulary
*Expressing opinions and emotions Join the party eh! *Making a claim or assertion *Nothing less... Nothing more... Nothing else *Using persuasive language Because I don't live in your reality *Using figurative language I'm from the heavens... it is going to cost you...	Mega: huge, enormous, gigantic Miracle: a remarkable or extraordinary event Cost: (in this context used figuratively)... will have an emotional impact on someone

Film: Kilometres and Kilometres (2020)

Film scene:

Cathy, the American traveller commences her journey across India on a bike ridden by a handyman Josemon who is addressed as driver

Big man: Kantheevanam (?)...This is our way of ...Traditional...

Waiter: This is pooja for better start...

Traveller: Oh...Ok ...done...Thanks...

Waiter: Mam...

Traveller: Hey driver...I wanna look around...I wanna see...like mountains...villages...temples...ok...

Driver: Eh?

Traveller: I want to see mountains...see temples...

Driver: Madam...you talk slower...

Traveller: What

Driver: You talk English?

Traveller: Yeah!

Driver: You talk slow motion...Slow I understand...speed I don't understand

Traveller: So I want to see mountains...and temples and small villages...Ok

Driver: You want...Nature beauty...Scenery...

Traveller: Ah!...

Driver:..

Traveller: And driver...which way do we cross the border?

Driver: Eh?

Traveller: Which way do we cross the Kerala border?

Driver: Kara...Kerala border?

Traveller:

Driver: Cross?

Traveller: Ahh...

Driver: Athirapally...Pollachi...Sholayar...

Traveller: I don't know what you're saying...

Driver: Kerala cross...Tamilnadu...

Traveller: So what is our next destination?

Driver: Desti...nation

Traveller: Place...Our next place...

Driver: Next means...Athirapalli...Athirapalli...water jumping...

Traveller: Water jumping?

Driver: Mountain...(gesticulating) jumping...water jumping...

Traveller: Waterfalls?

Driver: Ah!...Waterfalls!...

Traveller: What...

Driver: Madam...Nothing official about it...

...Shall we move?

Traveller: Its working...come...

Why do we stop?

Driver:...Madam...dust...sun...Madam...can you please give one cooling glass?

Traveller: No...I don't give my things to other people...

Driver: Eh...slow motion...Talk slow

Traveller: Ok...I don't give my things to other people...These are very expensive...Sorry driver...

Driver:...Cooling glass....

Traveller: What?
Driver: Nothing official about it...Ah ha...
Driver:...cooling glass...
...
Traveller: Excuse me.
Driver: Nothing official about it...
Traveller: Why do you keep saying that over and over again?...Are you making fun of me?
Driver: Your cooling glass...my cooling glass...price...
Traveller: Stop saying that nothing official thing.
Driver: Ok madam
Traveller: Ok.

Language analysis

Language Function	Vocabulary
Expressing gratitude (Thanks) Apologizing (Sorry driver)	Vocabulary related to travel: Mountains, villages, border, destinations, Waterfall

Film: **Brahmam** (2021)

Film scene:
A pinao player (PP) leads a life by pretending to be visually impaired, gets an offer to play a concert in the house of a rich man. The day for the concert is the rich man’s wedding anniversary and the rich man had planned the concert as a surprise for his wife. The player arrives but unknown to him the rich man has been murdered by his wife’s lover. The wife pretends to behave as though nothing has happened even as the piano player pretends to be blind.
PP: Thank you...
...(Calling bell rings twice)

Wife: Coming....

...

PP: Hello Mam... I am Ray...Ray Mathews from Symonds...

Wife: OK.

PP:... Private piano concert...

Wife: ...

PP: ...By the way...Happy Wedding Anniversary.

Wife: Thanks...

PP: ...As you must have noticed...

Wife: OK...Come in...

PP: Thank you.

Wife: You are welcome...

Wife:... Oh! is it...How sweet...see you soon...

PP: Its ok Mam..

Wife:

PP: No...Under 14 cricket...ball...fast bowler...optic nerve damage...

Wife: Sorry to hear that...

PP: That's all right..

Wife:...

PP: No ...nothing..

(Plays piano)

PP: Wow...It sounds like a really expensive piano...Can I play something

Wife: Sure...

... (plays piano)

Wife: (clapping hands) Wow...wow...it was so wonderful...Uday had given such a good surprise...Uday is quite romantic you know...

Language Function	Vocabulary
Greetings and introductions: Hello mam...I am...	Formal language:
Social small talk: By the way...Happy wedding anniversary	Hello Mam
Apologizing and showing sympathy:	Thanks
Sorry to hear that	You are welcome
Making request: Can I play something?	Descriptive vocabulary
Showing appreciation: Wow it sounds like a really expensive piano.	Expensive
	Wonderful
	Romantic
	Vocabulary related to music:
	Piano
	Concert
	Vocabulary related to sports:
	Cricket, Fast bowler

Findings

- During the selection of film clips it became clear to the investigator, that a discrete selection of the film clips from New Generation Malayalam films is essential as some clips available on YouTube were found to have only a minimum of pedagogic value.
- One obvious advantage of tapping films dialogues for Second Language learning is that it lends scope for introducing learners to authentic and varied language use. The language functions and the vocabulary used in the scenes lends scope for exposing students to natural expressions and natural flow of speech. Perhaps the greatest advantage is that focussing on film dialogues can enable learners to understand more by interpreting the language in full visual context.
- The preparation of films clips of the dialogues and exhibiting them in a language class was found to create an interesting environment for Second Language learning. This then reiterates the findings of an earlier study by Mini (2020).
- The dialogues in English in the New Generation Malayalam films were found to be suitable for acquiring language from specific contextual use. They can also be easily adapted for teaching language functions.

- Watching scenes in which there is a profuse use of English dialogues in the New Generation Malayalam Films lends scope for familiarizing learners with Non-verbal aspects of communication which is seldom taught in ESL classrooms.
- The film clips chosen for the study were basically based on Malayalam, but the characters in the film clips made use of English. So they can be easily used in classrooms with Malayalee speakers and the film clips will not in any way affect comprehension.
- Most New Generation Malayalam films portray urban life and is naturally accompanied by intermittent use of dialogues in English. College students in urban campuses are accustomed to growing up in such a setting and are found to have a special liking to the use of English dialogues. The inclusion of dialogues in English is not likely to causes discomfort for the viewers. More significantly, for students given to the habit of consuming a large chunk of videos in English particularly through the social media, the use of Malayalam films which they watch for entertainment becomes more gripping.
- The theme and action of the films are quite interesting and can easily evoke the interest of the youngsters. Hence they are capable of providing an immersive learning experience and it helps sensitize them to sentence structure and pronunciation.

Implications of the Study

The film clips with dialogues in English in New Generation Malayalam films can be used as authentic materials for Second Language learning. They can help viewers familiarize themselves with ways of using the English language in conversational situations. Aspects of Non-verbal communication which the teacher in the classroom often ignore are found to dominate in the films and can be easily grasped. There are also phrases which learners may not come across in their Course Book, which finds real world application in the dialogues used by the characters. That is to say, if properly used the dialogues in English in the New Generation Malayalam films can turn out to be an effective strategy for improving the communication skills of ESL learners.

Limitations of the Study

Today, the way in which modern day audience access films from their own homes have dramatically changed. But studies on how the shift to digital media has affected the way viewers experience film and how it has further opened up pedagogic possibilities are extremely rare. Availability of such studies would have enabled the investigator to study the topic on a broader canvas. Further, the films identified and the film clips analysed for study being few, it is not possible to fully generalize the findings of this study.

Scope for further Study

There are films belonging to different genres. Historical movies for instance may have complex narratives and may not be classified under the category of New Generation films. But the difficulty level of the dialogues in English in films belonging to such genres may be slightly high. But they too can be used for providing interesting learning experiences for youngsters. Studies aimed at identifying and exploring their use in the classroom for learners of English as a second language may be attempted.

It is a fact that traditional teachers may not be receptive to the unconventional way of using films in the English language classroom. But this study has tried to highlight the advantages of using dialogues in English from New Gen Malayalam films. Perhaps research aimed at identifying the real reason for the reluctance to use films, and research aimed at identifying strategies to make such teachers embrace new ways may be undertaken.

Summing up

This study has tried to find out the nature of dialogues in English in New Generation Malayalam films and also identify its usefulness for Second Language acquisition. They are in no way a substitute for actual practice which is considered essential to develop fluency. But for picking up the nuances of pronunciation and a variety of vocabulary, the dialogues in

English can be of immense help. So given the fact that such dialogues expose students to natural conversation in an interesting way, teachers may explore the possibilities of using New Generation Malayalam films in the English as a Second Language classroom.

Notes

1. English WoW, a recently launched YouTube channel which focuses on teaching English through Malayalam films has over 65 K followers and most of the videos uploaded have over 10 K views. Another channel, Spoken English Malayalam with 133 K subscribers had recently uploaded a video entitled ... Learn English Through Movies
2. The 2010's saw the rise of a new kind of Malayalam film which tried to overcome the dependence of the film industry on superstars and the insistence on story element. There was a difference in treatment of the individual in a modern sense and also in the use of technology. (Ramesh)By 2012, over a hundred films of the evolving category were released which in turn brought about changes in the film viewing pattern of Malayalees.(Kadavath)

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Filmography

Brahmam (2021) Director: Ravi K.Chandran

Simi hides Uday's corpse | Bhramam Movie Scenes | Prithviraj | UnniMukundan
| Mamta Mohandas

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-LlefQmcARY>

Kilometres and Kilometres (2020) Director: Jeo Baby Tovino Thomas | Basil
Joseph

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J3nOfGH2a3c>

Sudani from Nigeria (2018) Director: Zakariya Mohammed

Sudani from Nigeria Movie Scenes | Best Scenes part 1 | Shoubin Shahir |
Samuel Abiola Robinson

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gAA7evKGYLk>

Trance (2020) Director: Anvar Rasheed

3 Rules to follow - Fahadh Faasil-Trance-Amazon Prime

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3w92A2283tw>

Uyare (2019) Director: Manu Ashokan manoramaMAX | Uyare

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fXivDd9Izv>

Human Psyche and Emotional Turmoil in The Novel of Ruth Praver Jhabvala: *The House Holder*

R.K. Krishnaveni and K. Maheshwari

Ruth Praver Jhabvala's work as a novelist, particularly her novel "The Householder". Here are some key points that can be extracted: Jhabvala is considered one of the greatest Anglo-Indian writers in English literature and was awarded the Booker Prize for her novel "Heat and Dust" in 1975. Her concern as a novelist is to portray the middle class society in urban India, showcasing her awareness of the complexities and varieties of post-independence Indian society. Jhabvala achieves her objective by creating incidents that highlight the essential traits of her characters, such as Prem's statement about the life of a householder, which emphasizes the importance of family and responsibility.

"The Householder" (1960) is a unique novel among Jhabvala's works because it is set exclusively among the lower middle class people, which is a departure from her usual focus on introducing characters from this class and background in her stories. The novel's atmosphere is distinct in that it is humorous and sympathetic, rather than ironic, which sets it apart from other works by Jhabvala. The novel is set in Delhi, which provides a backdrop for exploring the aftermath of Independence and Partition, as well as India's industrial development, which is now a concrete reality. "The Householder", which highlights her unique perspective on Indian society and her ability to craft engaging characters and stories.

"The Householder" by Ruth Praver Jhabvala, focusing on the themes of identity, social change, and the struggles of young adulthood in India. The author highlights the protagonist Prem's struggles as a young teacher,

struggling to find his place in the world and provide for his family. Prem is torn between his desire for independence and financial security, and the societal expectations placed upon him as a young man. The passage also explores the theme of Indian tradition and the changing social dynamics in the 1960s. The author notes that the traditional joint family system was beginning to break down, and young men like Prem were forced to navigate new responsibilities and adapt to modernization. The study aims to analyze Prem's struggle to balance his emotions, responsibilities, and desires as a householder, highlighting the challenges faced by young men in India during this period. The character descriptions of Prem and Mr. Chaddha provide insight into the personalities and motivations of the characters. Prem is portrayed as a weak and indifferent individual who is struggling to come to terms with his financial situation, while Mr. Chaddha is depicted as a figure of fun who uses his words to flatter and parade his knowledge."The Householder", highlights the complexities of Indian society during this period.

Prem, a teacher of Hindi is well versed in the classics, whose ideas about marriage have been shaped primarily by his mother's exemplary deference to her late husband that applies ancient rule and childhood memory to present experience with amusing results. Returning home rather late to find the house dark and silent and Indu asleep, he reflects that: It was not right for a wife to go to sleep before she had served her husband however late he might come. He considered for a moment whether to wake her up and tell her so (The Householder 62).

The novel portrays the difficulties in the relationship between Indu, the protagonist, and Mrs. Seigal, an older woman who is married but still relatively young. Indu, being newly married herself, is speaking about marriage and its problems to Mrs. Seigal, but it's clear that they don't understand or relate to each other well. The novel "The Householder" as a coming-of-age story that follows the development of a single protagonist from childhood to adulthood.

The protagonist is portrayed as a young man who goes through various stages of life, from childhood to adulthood, and the novel explores his

growth and transformation refers to the stage in life where one sets up an independent home and starts earning a living. This stage is often challenging, especially for young adults who are navigating the transition from adolescence to adulthood. “The Householder” provides its own frame of reference. The dominant Hindu view of life, which took shape during the ten centuries that are generally believed to have elapsed between the composition of the Upanishads and the formulation of the codes of Manu and Kautilya roughly 500 B.C. to A.D. 500, classifies the stages in Aryan life.

This highlights the tendency of the Indian character to moralize and philosophize, which is reflected in Prem’s behavior. Initially, Prem wants to be treated as “another son” by Mr. Seigal, indicating a desire to be seen as youthful and innocent. However, his attempt to assume the role of a mentor or guide to Romesh, as perceived by Mr. Seigal, reveals a contradictory aspect of Prem’s personality. This paradox suggests that Prem is struggling to reconcile his own desires and expectations with his self-image. On one hand, he wants to be seen as young and foolish, which would allow him to maintain a sense of innocence and vulnerability. On the other hand, he is drawn to the idea of being a mentor or guide, which implies a sense of authority and maturity.

This ambivalence reflects the Indian character’s tendency to moralize and philosophize, which often leads to complex and nuanced personalities. The novel suggests Prem is grappling with these conflicting desires and expectations, ultimately revealing a more multifaceted and introspective character. In that assumed role Prem comments:

In our ancient writings it is written . . . that there are four stages to a man’s life. When he is young, he is a student, learning from his father and his teachers . . . ‘After that comes that life of the householder . . . In this stage a man must raise a family and see to their needs . . . (54).

This provides further insight into the character of Prem and his struggles with identity and self-image. The author highlights how Prem, as a householder, is obsessed with a sense of failure and uses references to

ancient Indian scriptures to justify his own feelings of inadequacy. The mention of the four stages of life in Hinduism (Grihasthashrami, Vanaprastha, Sannyasa, and Moksha) serves as a metaphor for Prem's own struggles. His skipping of the fourth stage (renunciation) suggests that he is not ready to let go of his desires and ambitions, but rather is seeking to cling to a sense of purpose and identity. The novel also explores Prem's difficulties in coping with his new life as a householder. His problems are rooted in his own insecurities and lack of experience, which makes him feel like a "child" despite his age. He attempts to compensate for his weakness by adopting a stern authoritarianism, similar to that of his father, who was a respected principal.

The contrast between Prem's father's success and his own failures is highlighted through the example of his father's status as a principal and Prem's inability to find a good job as a Hindi teacher. The fact that most job vacancies are for engineers and draftsmen, while there are few opportunities for Hindi teachers, adds to Prem's sense of frustration and inadequacy. The novel provides insight into Prem's inner struggles and his attempts to find meaning and purpose in his life. The author's use of Hindu scriptures and the four stages of life serves as a backdrop for Prem's existential crisis, highlighting the themes of identity, self-image, and the search for meaning thus, "If they did, they wanted him to be a first class M.A. with three years teaching experience, not a second class B.A. with only four month teaching experience such as he was" (10)

This author highlights the significance of poverty and want in understanding the protagonist, Prem, and the social milieu in which he lives. The statement "Poverty and want are two terrible things" serves as a catalyst for exploring the deeper issues and struggles faced by Prem, including his financial problems, marital dissonance, and difficulties in establishing himself as a husband, father, and teacher. Jhabvala presents the theme of financial insecurity, which is a recurring problem for Prem throughout the novel. His failed attempts to ask for a raise in salary and his inability to reduce his house rent reflect the difficulties he faces in making ends meet. This insecurity also affects his relationships

with his wife, Indu, and his mother, who are forced to approach their landlord for a reduction in rent.

The novel also delves into the theme of marital dissonance, highlighting the struggles faced by Prem and Indu in their relationship. Indu's desire to maintain her individuality and lively outlook is at odds with the expectations of her role as a married woman and housewife. Her desire to be a credit to her parents and Prem is admirable, but her inability to fully conform to societal expectations creates tension in their relationship.

The householder also touches on the theme of identity, highlighting how Prem struggles to establish himself in his various roles. His desire to be a respected teacher, husband, and father is rooted in his insecurities and fears of failure. The novel suggests that Prem's struggles are not unique to him, but rather are reflective of the societal pressures and expectations that many individuals face. which provides insight into the complexities of Prem's life and the societal pressures that shape his experiences. The author's portrayal of poverty and want serves as a backdrop for exploring themes of identity, relationships, and social expectations, highlighting the novel's exploration of the human condition.

The formal and impersonal nature of Prem and Indu's relationship at the beginning of the novel. Prem's expectations of his wife's subservience are rooted in societal norms and values, which he has learned from his elders. This expectation creates a power imbalance in their relationship, with Prem holding the upper hand and Indu expected to be obedient. The actual quarrel between Prem and Indu takes place when they receive letters from their respective mothers, which serves as a catalyst for the tensions that have been building in their relationship. Indu's low voice as she refers to her mother's letter suggests that she is hesitant to share her thoughts or feelings with Prem, indicating that she may not be comfortable with the expectations placed upon her.

The quarrel likely stems from the fact that Prem and Indu have different values and expectations from their relationship. Indu may be seeking a more equal and harmonious partnership, while Prem is stuck in traditional notions of gender roles and relationships. The letters from their mothers

may have reinforced these expectations, leading to the tensions that erupt between them. The theme of communication breakdown in the relationship. The fact that Indu speaks in a low voice and Prem may not be fully listening to her suggests that they are not communicating effectively, leading to misunderstandings and conflicts. This lack of communication is a recurring theme throughout the novel, highlighting the importance of effective communication in relationships which clearly expressed in this novel:

She (Indu's mother) wants me to come home.' Prem had no comments to make. It did not, he thought, greatly matter to him whether she stayed or went. Indu confessed, 'I wrote to her about . . .' and Yes, Yes,' said Prem in some irritation. 'That is why she wants me to come home' (28).

My mother is coming to visit us,' Prem said. After thinking thus over for a while, Indu said, 'Then she will be able to look after you here when I am gone.' How can you go away when my mother is coming to visit us? Why not? Indu inquired. The innocence of her voice as she asked this made him quite angry. He shouted, 'what do you mean why not? Have you no sense?' She looked at him with her eyes wide in amazement. He had never before shouted at her (29).

The novel provides insight into the dynamics of Prem's family and his relationship with his mother. Prem's mother, lacking knowledge of human psychology and relying on instinct and precedent, attempts to exert her authority over Prem and Indu, making them dependent on her. This behavior creates a sense of sadness and frustration for Indu, who ultimately leaves home without informing Prem. The Prem's emotional state, as he feels lonely and frustrated after Indu's departure. He turns to his friend Raj, but is unable to discuss his marital issues openly, as he is hesitant to reveal his vulnerabilities. Instead, he tries to deflect attention by talking about his own problems and family, indicating that he is struggling to cope with the challenges of married life.

The author suggests that Prem is still learning about marriage and is unsure of how to navigate the complexities of a relationship. He wonders if other men's wives behave similarly, implying that he is seeking reassurance and guidance. This uncertainty is causing tension in his mind, as he grapples with the expectations of being a husband, father, and son. The theme of loneliness and isolation is also evident in this novel. Prem is struggling to find support and understanding from his friends and family, which is exacerbating his feelings of frustration and sadness. The novel hints that Prem may be struggling with feelings of inadequacy and failure as a husband, which could be contributing to his emotional turmoil :

He began to feel like crying himself; already a tear was trembling on his cheek. He brushed it aside with his hand and the feel of it made him want to cry more. He felt so alone and lonely, shut up in this small ugly flat with Indu who cried by herself in the sitting – room while he had to lie and cry by himself in the bedroom (32).

Though most of the time Prem spends with his friend Raj and Sohan Lal, but he does not allow his routine schedule of attending college and of attending the domestic needs to get disturbed. Once when he gets home late in the night he feels that his wife would not sleep but he finds Indu lying on the bed fast asleep, he gets angry and in hunger he thought, "It was not right for a wife to go to sleep before she had served her husband however late he might come". (62)

Jhabvala is exploring the complex dynamics through the character of Prem's relationship with his wife Indu. Prem is often frustrated with his wife Indu because she is pregnant and he feels like he can't provide for her properly. He earns only 175 rupees a month, which is not enough to support his family's needs. He feels like she is uncooperative and sulky, and he wants her to help him with his problems. However, when Indu returns from her visit to her parents, their relationship undergoes a transformation. The fact that they are alone together creates an atmosphere for them to re- connect and rediscover their love for each other. This leads to a happier life for them that Prem's love for Indu helps him overcome his negative emotions and find a sense of fulfillment.

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Chetan Bhagat's Five Point Someone: An Acute Assessment on Our Indian Education System

R.M. Samraj and M.P. Ganesan

Indian English Literature has started around the period of British ruling over the nation. Regarding the influence of their language on our people and to educate them their ideas, science and culture, they have started to write in English but later this literature has become a medium of speaking the various culture of India and flaws to be rectified. At first, this is supposed that this literature's footstone has been laid up by two writers called: Henry Luis Vivian Derozio and Michael Madhu Sudan Dutt. Here Henry Vivian Derozio is poet and has been Head Master of Hindu College of Kolkatta. He has contributed to the Indian English Literature significantly by his poems. He is remarkable for teaching the youngsters of Bengal in those days science and western learning. Michael Madhusudan Dutt is also from Bengal. He has devoted his works as plays and poems. Especially by his plays he contributes to the growth of this literature.

In Indian English Literature, writers with the aspiration of social development are some. The late writers Krish Karnad, Vijay Tendulkar and Jayanta Mahapatra etc are instances for dealing with social flaws. In the same way some present writers also are prone to such development of the society, so they have shown their exasperation over the flaws of the society through their writing. Mostly they deal with the Brutality of caste system and society's view on women. Their works seem so valuable to the society to correct the path for the betterment.

Chetan Bhagat, Aravind Adiga, Vikram Seth, Arundati Roy and etc are still contributing writers by their unique styles of narration through their works they earn lot of readers and reinforce the Indian English Literature.

In them Chetan Bhagat is a generation x writer who has been born on the 22nd of April 1974 and eminent novelist. His five novels: *2 States*: *The Story of My Marriage*, *Five Point Someone*, *The Three Mistakes of My Life*, *One Night at The Call Center* and *Revolution 2020* are considered his great novels. Still now he is devoting his works out of his charisma. His remarkable feature is being a connoisseur of narration and selection of the characters in favor of youths.

Chetan Bhagat's novel "*Five Point Someone: What not to do at IIT*" is the ground breaking and Seminal novel against the Boomers' ideologies about education and life. It delineates the generation X aspirations and their challenges in their juvenile stage. This novel has three Characters: Hari, Alok and Ryan who are pivot here. The story built surrounding them expounds the well-grounded ideas for the youngsters' great future and society's betterment. The real education is that which makes a man to adapt himself to the dynamic nature of the society to be member and step-stone to the development of him and the society he belongs. This same idea has been shared by the great Greek Philosopher Aristotle. He says,

"Education is the process of training man to fulfill his aim by exercising all the faculties to the fullest extent as a member of society"

M.K. Gandhi says,

"Our system of (Basic) education leads to the development of mind, body, and soul. The ordinary system cares only for the mind"

-The Voice of Truth – 409.

By the utterances of Aristotle and M.K. Gandhi, over all the education is the sum up of mental, physical growth by the proper training to make him/her to shine in life and be a good citizen. Here like M.K. Gandhi's concern on ordinary education (current education), it gives whole and sole importance to memorization. The students are expected for marks through mugging only. They are refused to understand and study and to innovative ideas. Due to this issue, the youngsters are not shown to the

rational and innovative learning. This has been shown here by the Character Ryan who with his other classmates in this story has been asked by Prof Vohra to draw a car jack with basic screw type.

Ryan drew this ‘modified screw-jack’, in which one did not manually have to open and raise the jack...

He said, hence one could attach a motor on the traditional jack and hook it up to the car battery. If one switched on the car ignition, the motor could drive power ...

Is this an electrical engineering class? (Professor Vohra’s saying)

Five Point Someone -117

Ryan has made an innovative car jack that works with a motor in the jack joined by a wire connection to the car battery to avoid manual work. The professor, despite it is appreciable, irritated by his innovative thought, scolds him badly and compels him to copy what he has drawn on the board. This situation makes Ryan to hate the particular course. Simultaneously in today’s education too (especially in India) pupils are expected to mug up for scoring marks only. The persons who can memorize blindly and write, only are considered toppers and encouraged. The others that are with real skills related to the courses are mattered little.

Like M.K. Gandhi’s saying about the education as development of mind, body and soul, here the students are not viewing the education. Most of the youngsters do not care their health, even if they are studying well. Regarding them, Education is just memorizing for exam marks. Here by portraying two antithetical characters: Ryan Oberoi and Alok Gupta, Chetan Bhagat sheds light on the real education.

“Ryan Oberoi, Mechanical Engineering, Rank 91, sir,” Ryan said...

Now here was a guy you don’t see in IIT too often; tall, with spare height, purposefully lean and unfairly handsome... -3

Ryan’s body was flawless, man, he was a hunk; muscles that cut at the right places and a body frame that for once resembled the human body shown in biology books. - 4

Ryan Oberoi who is introduced here not only with good academic achievement but with good health state with toned build body and is capable of tackling the emotions and indeed, he is mentioned in athletic body type. By him, the author portrayed the ideal student. Additionally, by the character the author emphasizes the true education rather than this aesthetic sense. By his many dialogues, the readers understand the right view that the students must have about the education.

In fact, I hated myself for being a cheat. And for everything else—agreeing to duplicate the keys, being a part of Operation Pendulem and bringing my life to this. How did I get here? I was a topper in my school all my life. That is how I got into IIT, right? But then am I now a low performer, five point something cheat sitting on the insti roof at midnight, unsure of my future? **-205**

The School education is a base for enhancing the basic skills which one needs necessarily in the society, subsequently, here the college courses are for making them professionals. They teach students a profession based on his/her uniqueness and make him to shine in his related field—being novelty. Conversely in our country both educations are concerning solely the marks through exams and it consequently makes the students as mark maniacs. Therefore those who cannot get marks, involve malpractices in their course. The words mentioned above are the thought by Hari who along with his two friends try to steal a question paper before an exam. But they get caught red-handed. Hari seems concerning about marks he has got in his school days and by what he brags of himself as topper and mentions that he has been selected to study in the IIT College. This IIT College locating in Delhi is considered one of the best colleges of India. The author delineates our embarrassing education system by illustrating Hari's mentality by his thought in his hardship

“Get this. Today I got a GPA of 5.88. Damn it, a 5.88. Over 200 students have done better. Do you know in my twelve years in school I never even got a second rank.” **-63**

My grades are important to me. My future is important to me. Does that make me sick. **-65**

“Hmmm...5.48 overall, what Happened?” He looked into my eyes.
-251.

The dialogues said by these characters of the novel reveals that our educational field and subsequently other fields in interviews for the selection of the candidates give the first priority to marks. The students' education for novelty in their responsive fields gets forbidden. Even though the students are so skilful except marks, our society gives no opportunity them so they cannot get proper place for them. Their skills are mattered to nothing. This scenario portrayed well here, in the final Part of this novel. The Three characters go and attend campus interview there the two: Hari and Alok, get job but Ryan does not get. These both seem crammers, notably Alok in them seems so wild on marks and GPA. His effort on aiming marks and GPA is exposed well by his dialogues which have been said above. In later days his score increases little bit, significantly “the lube project work” headed by Ryan Oberoi becomes turning point to the three especially to Alok. He gets job in Delhi then for six months in US, therefore his life style and family's poor condition changes to good.

It's hard for him. He is only 5.01, and the last in class. It is difficult for him to get placed,” Alok said.

“But he is so smart. I mean, the lube project is basically all his,” I said.

“GPAs matter,” Alok said and walked away. -254

Ryan despite having good knowledge and head of the successful lube project (Research on engine oil to increase better mileage), he has a little GPA rather than the two, as a result of this, he fails in the campus interview. This scene resembles the current situation prevailing in our country. Even Hari who fears of viva and interview gets job. The above said dialogues by Hari explain his wisdom related his course and profession.

The character Ryan stands here for all the youngsters who have field oriented skills but not good marks and GPA. If the pathetic education and selection systems change, our nation's all fields will come to the stage of competing with developed nations.

But the bright boy stayed behind. Because he had principles. He did not want to use his education for selfish personal gain. -259

Here the author exposes the rudiments of education by the words of the character named Cherian. An educated person is in selfless nature; he works dedicatedly and honestly not only for his family but for the humanity and the society which he belongs. E.V.R. Periyar considered as one of the revolutionists of Tamil Nadu, says,

“There is no use of simply acquiring titles or amassing wealth if one has no self-respect and scientific knowledge.”

Collected Works of Periyar. E.V.R – 511

Here Periyar despite mentioning mainly about equality, through this phrase “Scientific knowledge” means logical studying and study with understanding for the betterment of ourselves and for the society which we belong. If one has no such academic performance, he will be no worthy, despite being topper (title) of his batch. In a Country which has the right education system, he cannot shine in his field what he has studied the higher education for. Ryan stands for such scientific knowledge, but the malfunction of the education in our side which gives sole important to good marks and grades but not to skills related to the field developed in the tertiary level, makes him failure. Instead of here, if he has been in any developed society, he would have come great.

Chetan Bhagat’s novel “Five Point Someone” exemplifies the poor structure of Indian Education. In the final chapter he makes the boomer character called Cherian who has wanted his son to come good in IIT like himself but finally has lost him, to talk about the real value of education(259) which has to make one to be suit and successful in the society and the society also to be developed.

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Voices Unbound - From Shadows to Statements: Exploring Select Female Protagonists in Manju Kapur, Shobhaa De and Githa Hariharan

T. N. K. Kavitha and M Rajaram

During the postmodern era, the Indian English fiction is totally dominated by women novelists. The women authors belonging to this period have accomplished a specific maturity in outlining socio-psychological matters and concerns of women showing a steady progression from modernism to postmodernism. The writings in this period unveiled the entire of the Indian ethos that resonates with the components of multiculturalism and cosmopolitanism. The women of modern era think on different lines and that is what is depicted in the novels of Indian women writers. Feminine subjectivity plays a crucial role in Indian women's writing, as it offers a unique perspective on the experiences of women in India. The fight for gender equality has been ongoing throughout history, and even in modern times, there are many issues faced by women that remain unaddressed to. Indian women authors writing in English cover a broad spectrum of themes, often intertwining personal and political narratives to reflect the complex social, cultural, and historical landscapes of India.

In the enormous majority of literary works, women characters are represented as fighting back for self-identity and dignity. They depict how the affluent and malevolent mistreat women and let them suffer as a result of their social standing. Shashi Deshpande, Arundathi Roy, Anitha Rau Badami, Kavery Nambisan, Indira Ganeshan, Dina Mehta, Meena Alexander, Githa Hariharan, Manju Kapur, Chitra Divakaruni, Jhumpa Lahari, Shauna Singh Baldwin, Nina Sibal, and Shobhaa De are a few

notable female writers of the new age. These writers play a significant role in challenging and deconstructing conventional and long-established male-centric narratives and stereotypes that have often been rampant in the artistic and literary world. They have shown the intricacy of both the internal and external worlds through their substance and description.

Let's analyse the boldness and assertiveness seen in a few of the protagonists of Manju Kapur, Shobhaa De and Githa Hariharan.

Manju Kapur portrays society in its actuality – women combating against conventional standards, challenging male centric society and struggling for their identity and existence. Manju Kapur's works contribute to some thematic concerns with postmodern literature, predominantly in her picturisation of women breaking free from traditional roles. They are open-minded, frank, honest, progressive and radical women forging their own identities. She touches on female issues with a forthright and liberal frame of mind. In her novels, *Difficult Daughters* and *Custody*, feministic vision, the liberation of women, the world of women and conjugal relations are dealt with more explicitly and with a broad perspective.

Manju Kapur's *Difficult Daughters* deals with the education and freedom of women. Virmati plays a prominent role in the novel. She rejects the bound status of womanhood as it keeps her in a position she abhors. Virmati is very aware that the freedom of women in the patriarchal set up is really difficult and impossible. The passions of women are never recognised and women are restricted to take any important role in the society. It is very obvious from the words of Virmati that women are considered to be not suitable even for possessing the spirit of nationalism and being an active participant against the social issues. Shakuntala, a cousin of Virmati leads a liberated life in Lahore. Her way of dressing, lifestyle and activities disturb Virmati and she strongly decides to be an independent woman. The visits of Shakuntala to Virmati's house sow the seeds of independency in Virmati. She wants to live like Shakuntala. Shakuntala encourages Virmati to become an independent woman. These two women try to break the old customs and traditions

followed by women. Virmati loses her identity and her struggle is a poignant and inspiring story of a young woman's journey towards self-discovery and empowerment amidst the patriarchal society and she fights against all odds to pursue her education. But she is very confident and her rebellious attitude gives her strength to oppose the professor's sexual oppression. Virmati uses her education as a stage to uphold her personality, to carry on with her own real existence. Despite being highly educated and financially independent, Virmati had to face societal pressures to conform to patriarchal norms and expectations. Determination and strong will power are necessary to assert one's self identity. Ida, daughter of Virmati, combats for her identity, dignity and self-confidence which Virmati also was short of. Ida discards the family customs and displays her hatred towards the male dominated society. Ida turns out to be an archetypal daughter of a 'Difficult Daughter', Virmati.

Ida symbolises the spirit of the post-independence generation, exemplifying qualities of resilience, fortitude, and a thoughtful radicalism that contrasts sharply with her mother's traditional values. Yet, despite these differences, Ida, like her mother, yearns for an authentic identity. Her role as a "transcendent creator" is significant, as she opposes society's tendency to marginalize her by constructing her own narrative—a narrative that seeks to both understand and redefine the past from her viewpoint.

Through her recounting of her mother's story, Ida not only sheds light on her mother's journey but also bridges the gap between generations. Her journey to reconstruct her mother's history is an act of reclamation, asserting control over a lineage often shaped by others. By piecing together her mother's fragmented past, Ida actively redefines her own identity within the framework of a rapidly evolving modern age, showing the importance of understanding one's roots to navigate contemporary challenges.

Manju Kapur's *Custody* deals with the battle between the parents for the possession of their children and the ways in which modern Indian

women try to assert their freedom. Shagun leaves her family and goes to live with Ashok, her husband Raman's boss. Manju Kapur favours independence and Shagun's character legitimises breaking unsuitable marriages. Shagun's decision to be with Ashok structures a new belief system of the choice of women. The society calls it as 'unfaithful' but she feels emboldened because of her strong decision. Manju Kapur brings in another burning issue in the story. Ishita is a humble and simple looking Indian girl who believes in traditional marriage and who wants to lead a peaceful life with her husband Suryakanta. Ishita fails to give birth to a child and is sent out of the house. She marries Raman and develops a beautiful bond with the daughter Roohi. Her new manifestation as a stepmother makes her more decent and respectable. Kapur gives a wonderful vision of adoring stepmother who achieves the kid's affection rather than the biological mother. Ishita wins the guardianship issue and gets the girl forever. Kapur gives her heroines a postmodern outlook which they deserve, breaking the deep-rooted conventional standards of male-dominated world. They are liberal, intense, frank and radical women creating an identity for themselves.

Shobhaa De depicts modern women as a companion to man living in the changing world of postmodern society. Some of the topics addressed by Shobhaa De comprise search for identity, cultural shifts, diffidence, feminism, lesbianism, liberalisation, disorientation, realism, tradition and modernity and fragmentation, to name just a few. Shobhaa De's work often explores deeply into the lives of urban, middle-class women, the central point on their evolving identities amidst societal anticipations. Her women protagonists, central to the narratives, grapple with complex issues of love, marriage, and sexuality, which often serve as obstacles to their aspirations and self-fulfilment. De's writing illustrates the gradual transformation of these women: they begin with a certain naivety but gradually gain a profound understanding of life's realities and the societal forces around them. This expedition is portrayed with a sense of resilience, reflecting the determination of the characters to carve out their own identities within the confines of traditional structures.

The battles of the characters reflect the wider challenges faced by women who seek meaningful lives yet find themselves constrained by cultural norms. De's portrayal gives voice to their resilience and aspirations, making her work resonate with readers who understand or empathize with these struggles.

The women of Shobhaa De are challenging and positive about achieving their aims and goals in life. De attempts to break the conventional picture of a woman and depicts her as fearless and self-confident. De's woman, alongside her freedom, makes the most of her career and marriage. De has influenced the Indian women to realise their potentials so that they can confront the difficulties in the male-dominated society. In her novels *Sisters* and *Sethji*, the protagonists Mikki, Alisha and Amrita are insubordinate modern women who question the conventionality of social taboos.

In *Sisters*, through Mikki and Alisha, Shobhaa De demonstrates how the concept of marriage and constancy in love has undergone a tremendous change. Mikki's encounters with different men aid her to progress into an independent woman who at the cost of her individuality finally holds back the Hiralal's Industries and overcomes numerous challenges. When Mikki loses her parents in an accident, she controls her emotions and handles the situation perfectly. With confidence and poise, she takes charge of the business of her father. Thinking marriage is a bed of roses, she marries Binny. Mikki has strong belief in the institution of marriage and holds affectionate feelings for Binny. Mikki tolerates his unfaithfulness. After Binny's accidental death, she becomes very assertive and emancipated. Alisha, the illegal daughter of Hiralal, grieves as she lost the opportunity of going to United States for higher studies. Alisha appears as an angry young woman. The main problem of her character is her conflict about her identity. For Alisha, wealth is more valuable than relation but for Mikki, relations are more imperative than money. Alisha leads a flirtatious life with men whom Mikki threw out. She develops intimacy and has sexual relations with Navin as a way of having revenge against Mikki. After Navin's mocking remarks about Alisha being less sexy than her sister Mikki, Alisha tries to kill

herself. Her life is saved by Mikki, who gives her blood during her critical situation in hospital. This incident brings them closer and they unite with each other. Another man Dr. Kurien, comes into Alisha's life with whom she intensely desires to have intimate relations. Thus we find Alisha's passion for sex continues till the end of the novel. Alisha, like Mikki, is a brave, strong-willed and confident character. Her effort to grasp her position in Hiralal's family vehemently as she can never get it legally reveals her strong will and perseverance. Shobhaa De's women who are unmarried too seem to be expressing their need for sexual freedom. Through her monologues and dialogues, Alisha also stands up for the liberation of women in sexual matters. Both challenge the male superiority and prove to be equally competitive in assuming powers and exercising them.

In the novel *Sethji* written by Shobhaa De, Sethji is the head of Azad Bharat Socialist Party, a vital coalition partner in the government. He is shrewd, ruthless and an old malicious fighter. He had begun his political career by taking a loan of five lakhs rupees from Amrita's father Seth Jamanlal and thought that adverse situation may also come. His daughter-in-law Amrita is beautiful, vicious and authoritative. She controls every aspect of Sethji's life. Amrita rules over Sethji's expansive colonial bungalow located in the centre of New Delhi. Her husband Srichand, Sethji's elder son, fails to fulfil the sexual desires of his wife. Amrita suffers in her life at each level. In her parental home after the death of her father, she experiences a catastrophic change. In *Sethji* Amrita's life is a perfect example of edginess and anxiety because she struggles from beginning to end for her survival. To settle with any relationship, she has to boil herself and then settle again adjusting with the new one. Developing a subconscious mind to positively and constructively acknowledge every problem or difficulty that arises can lead her to greater resilience and success in life. She accepts to live as a mistress to Sethji and considers him as a mentor as he possesses money, unlimited power and enormous wealth. She needs backing to progress in her life and to achieve power of politics in her life. Everyone has different dimensions to their personality, and it may take time and effort to truly

understand a person's multifaceted character and this is applicable to Amrita too. Whatever the work she does, she does very proficiently. She is ready to defeat all situations of her life with courage and boldness. It is important to recognise that Shobhaa De's women are such liberated and sometimes unconventional individuals in search of power through risk and illicit desires. They are the products of post-colonial culture.

Githa Hariharan's literary output attests to the manifold obstacles encountered by Indian middle-class women in their endeavour to adhere to customary societal conventions. Their inner conscience wants freedom from this phallogocentric world. The women of Githa Hariharan are aware of the limitations of their traditional culture and society. They rebel against the male – chauvinistic society but find themselves in a circumstance where they only have the option to adjust. The sea-saw of individual desire and social expectation never reaches a balance but may indicate the initiation of future change. Hariharan investigates the inner conscience of these women who want to achieve self-realization. Githa Hariharan, through her works, sheds light on the societal changes faced by Indian middle-class women as they seek to reconcile traditional cultural values and the emergence of a new woman who is true to her own self. Githa Hariharan, one of the champions of individual spirit, echoes that one's individuality gets crumbled under the materialistic pursuit of man negating the existence of humanness and spirituality. She has also used the postmodern method of magic realism in her work. Myths, legends, fairy tales, fantasy, fables, fragmented non-linear and multiple narratives, pastiche, metafiction, temporal distortion, irony and have all been used by her. The writer is able to give voice to the marginalised voices of women through the aforementioned postmodern fiction methods. She outlines the concept of individuality in her novels *The Thousand Faces of Night* and *In Times of Siege* effectively.

The Thousand Faces of Night paints a vivid picture of the complex struggles that Indian women face as they navigate societal expectations and personal aspirations, convention and modernity. Githa Hariharan meticulously captures the split consciousness through a set of representative characters with both their submissiveness and their

struggle for individuality. *The Thousand Faces of Night* is the story of Devi's pursuit for self-esteem. Having failed to define her identity within the framework of the male focused social structures, that is, as a wife in an arranged marriage or even as a rebellious love, Devi finally returns to her mother. It is in relationship with her mother that Devi hopes to find an identity for herself. The story of Devi, a woman in the process of 'becoming' on her own terms, is intertwined with the narratives of Sita, personifying perfect motherhood and Mayamma, whose motherhood is defined as failed in the society.

Mayamma, one of the main characters of the novel, provides another version of a woman's existence. The novelist uses the technique of juxtaposing the past with the present when the life of the lonely Mayamma, after Devi leaves her husband and Mahesh is on tour, is interspersed with her recollections of her past to provide us with an insight into her battered, violence-filled existence. Mayamma's agonizing story of her continued existence is told repeatedly. Mayamma's memory goes back to her own marriage. Mayamma is an old caretaker cum cook of Devi's in-law's house. She gets married at an early age of twelve and that too, with a useless drunkard and gambler who came to her every night, for physical pleasure alone. She knew no happiness in marriage. Mayamma survived her long suffering life as a wife, daughter in-law and mother.

Gandhari's story told by Devi's grandma reflects the life of Sita, Devi's mother. Before Marriage her parents taught her to play veena. She entered her husband's house with a veena as part of her dowry. After finishing the household chores, which was considered as the foremost duty of the housewives, she used to play veena. One day her father-in-law called her for performing some works before puja in the morning. She did not hear, as she was playing veena. The father in-law scolded Sita. "Put the veena away. Are you a wife, a daughter-in-law" (TTFN, 30). In an anger and frustration, she pulled out the strings of veena and vowed not to play the veena again and replied in a whisper: "Yes, I am a wife and a daughter-in-law" (30). The role played by society enforcing the virtues epitomizing the ideal womanhood can clearly be witnessed

in the character of Sita. Society allows enough freedom to men to develop their self, whereas women have to struggle at different stages while also bearing the responsibilities. They face difficulties at different emotional and physical levels. This social conditioning builds hurdles in self-development.

Thus through the stories of Devi, Sita and Mayamma, *The Thousand Faces of Night* brings forth the underworld of the lives of the Indian women and the individuality of the women. The novel deals with the experiences of three generations of women. Mayamma belonging to the older generation remains silent throughout her life understanding her inability to question patriarchy. But she indirectly helps in Devi's self-attainment by narrating stories of courageous women. Sita too displays the power of proclaiming her individuality and violating the myth of male superiority, in an elusive manner. Devi leaves her husband Mahesh because of misunderstanding, finds that true happiness lies in one's self only.

In the novel *In Times of Siege*, Shiv Murthy is a Professor of medieval Indian History. Meena, an outspoken young woman comes to his home for staying as her knee is broken because of an accident. Professor Murthy is accused of writing something controversial regarding the life of a great south Indian poet Basava and his lesson has hurt the sentiments of people. Meena supports the Professor completely by connecting her friends. She makes preparations for a Press conference, organises a TV show and prepares booklets. Meena as a committed activist becomes instrumental in directing the meetings and actions from home. Hariharan has portrayed Meena as a strong and bold woman who takes the situation in hand and formulates theories to tackle the problems. A liberated and confident woman, she knows to deal with socio-political issues.

In Times of Siege flows as gently as the river where Basava stands in contemplation. It begins in a lucid manner and strong visualization. The characterization is vivid and the narrative is quite realistic. Real life examples are a reminder of racial prejudices and horrific sense of bigotry among the religious zealots. Hariharan is not really interested in people

who are full of certainties. She has used male and female voices. Shiv's voice is not the typical male voice. It crosses all boundaries of gender bias. His ward Meena, a student activist with sectarian ideas, is visualized as a normal human being with normal desires at the end. Shiv has high flown ideas about liberalism but they remain theoretical. Hariharan feels that ideas can get tested only in times of siege. Hariharan's novel depicts the changing status of women in India. Women are shown as opening the windows and breaking the barriers. In *Times of Seige*, Meena is the voice of Hariharan. She is the one who forces Shiv to fight against the pseudo-secularists. Meena is developed as a feminist character that fights against communal forces. She is a woman with daring and confidence who is described as champion of feminism.

Hariharan has closely analysed all ups and downs in Indian society and she has observed that the struggle faced by Indian woman is of manifold nature. She has to understand the social systems around her and has to mark her pathway for bringing total change in her life. The approach of the novelist is individualist's feminism. She speaks about frustration of middle-class women. It emphasizes on liberating of women. This novel has depicted individualist feminism through the character of Meena.

In the view of the women novelists, a woman is unique when she has confidence in proclaiming her own character and disposition positively upon her own rights as a woman. This kind of 'woman' assesses and reflects upon her position essentially as a woman in the strategy of things that includes the social, moral, and spiritual spheres. In short, the writings of the women tussle with more foundational and basic problems of women and intends towards higher ideals of womanhood. Writers have begun writing about the strong women in their works. In recent years, a greater emphasis on coming together has encouraged exploration into the relationship among race, gender, religion, and class to further improve the importance of the acceptance of marginalized groups in literature.

The women of Manju Kapur, Shobhaa De and Githa Hariharan range from traditional, subjugated and marginalized to the extremely modern

and liberated women. Their novels take a leaf from the life and represent realistically an intimate side of woman's life, also revealing her plight in the present day society. Also, interesting is the way they highlight the role of a woman in the oppression and suffering of fellow women. Manju Kapur, Shobhaa De, and Githa Hariharan are outstanding Indian women authors who contribute to several commonalities in their works, though they each approach their themes with distinct styles and focuses. All three authors explore the complications of the lives of women, particularly the conflicts between traditional expectations and personal aspirations. They examine the roles that society enforces on women, whether in marriage, family, or career, often highlighting the sacrifices, frustrations, and acts of rebellion that women experience. Manju Kapur, Shobhaa De, and Githa Hariharan each explore the intersections of gender, identity, and societal expectations, using their narratives to remark on the struggles and resilience of Indian women. Their works offer a wide lens on modern Indian womanhood, from traditional family setups to the challenges of urban independence, providing a multifaceted critique of Indian society's treatment of women.

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Indianness in Anita Rau Badami's "Tamarind Mem" - A Diasporic Perspective

Swami Pushpaladevi Kanda and C. Chithra

Anita Rau Badami is the author of four critically acclaimed novels: 'Tamarind Mem', 'The Hero's Walk', 'Can You Hear the Night Bird Call?' and 'Tell It to the Tree'. She is one of the famous diasporic writers in Canada of Indian descent. Her novels though diasporic gives the detailed description of Indian family and social environment in India. Diasporic writers often deal with migration, immigration and cross-cultural identity, but while reading Badami's work we could smell the essence of Indian soil and imagine the picturization of each and every rituals, festivals and domestic chores as narrated by her in simple and readable English language with local Indian dialects and chutnification of words which would admire the Indianness of we Indians. Most of the story told by Badami portrays the rhythm of Indian life with its greenery of endless village, people of varied thoughts and their culture. "Tamarind Mem" portrays the story of two generation of women, the first half of the novel is shown through the point of view of Kamini as she narrates that how she feels lonely and alienated in Canada though she has come to pursue her graduation leaving her aging mother alone in Indian.

Through Kamini's narration which is mostly nostalgic, we come across interesting incident that she encounters as a daughter of Railway officer who migrate from one city to another every three years. Kamini's nostalgia in Canada shows her yearning to return to her motherland which she has left behind with lots of memories.

"I called my mother every Sunday from the silence of my basement apartment, reluctant to tell her how I yearned to get away from this freezing cold city where even the traffic sounds were muffled by the snow". (2)

The above lines show the yearning of Kamini and her talk with her mother continues with a memorable trip that they went and the conversation ends with an argument in which her mother wins, this shows the typical argument of Indian family in which they never give-up until the other person accepts though the fact is quite different from what happen-

"I sighed and change the subject. Ma still wanted to win every argument, she would never ever change".

Here we see a typical daughter who don't want to argue with her mother because she knows that her argument will have no fruits but end up in insulting her mother, so she changes the topic in due respect for her mother.

As we read the novel we come across lots of Indian words like *puri*, *aloo-dum*, *phulkas*, *pakodas* for food items and apart from these words few words which has English substitution is also mentioned in Indian languages such as "*Angreze*" for Britishers, *bilee* for cat, *besharam* for shame, *khusur-phusur* for gossiping and lot more. Indian diasporic novels have its essence when it is read with the taste of Indian words and dialects. Badami has justified to bring about the Indianness which makes us feel from the core of our heart. The below given lines justifies the picturization of Saroja by Kamini-

"Ma was a two-headed pushmi-pullyu from Dr. Dolittle's Zoo, or the Ram Leela drama woman with a good mask on her face and a bad mask on the back of her head, changing her from Seetha to Soorpanakhi in a single turn".

Kamini as a child is made to believe by her mother that if the lizard made a noise when you were saying something, it meant that your words would come true, as an Indian each and every child, grown-up and old people in India though they are born in east or west, north or south, or in any part of India believe this notion that words come true when lizard make a *tchuk-tchuk-tchuk* noise. Kamini as a kid tries it twice but none of her statement came true, she brings out this nostalgic memories and feels happy to find herself silly to believe this but we find

her inner self which still believe her mothers statement about lizard. Badami's writing has brought about the Indian superstitious belief with a comic taste.

In due course of time the novel gets a turn in its second half where we see Saroja (Kamini's mother) interpreting her life from her childhood till now. Kamini's point of view about her father, mother and her sister are over when she decides to go to Canada for further studies. Saroja is shocked because after the death of her husband and after her younger daughter Roopa's marriage there is no one left in her house except Kamini, but Kamini is fed up of the society who goes on to taunt her for not getting married though she is elder to Roopa. Here we come about similar story of Saroja who was also taunted by her parents due to social pressure to get married. In this point, Badami shows the problems faced by Indian women as they get younger. Indian women are subjected to marriage because the society thinks that it is the safer option for women. In one of the reminiscences of Saroja, she recollects the talk of her mother-

“A woman can read and study all she pleases; her words mean nothing after all. So why you are wasting your youth and our money? Get married. A woman without a husband is like sand without the river. No man to protect you and every evil wind will blow over your body. Listen to your mother.” (158)

The above lines show how women are suppressed in society and by her own parents. Saroja also adds that her dreams of becoming a doctor was shattered only because of her being a woman. But we see Saroja as a mother who values the education of her daughters. She always encourages both her daughter to get educated live their life with their own whims. Henceforth when Roopa decides to get married to the person whom she loves Saroja accepts and readily gets her married though as a mother she fears and argue with Roopa whether her choice is genuine. Saroja understands that how it feels to be in loveless marriage that she had with her husband who treated her as an object and took her all around India from place to place in name of transfer every three

years without her wish. Saroja is known for her sour tongue in the novel, she gives state-forward answers that - "My girls know how to pick their fruits." (148), to all the relatives who mock her for bringing up her daughter who are too independent to choose their grooms for marriage.

Through Saroja's reminiscence we come to know that society in which she lived was not so easy for women at all. One such incident which shows how Indian woman reacts to situation brings out laughter and makes us remember the story which our grandparents told to us in those days. When Saroja was in school she used to braid her hairs with jasmine flower string tucked in it. If the braids are not oiled it would attract all the loafers who stand near the corner shop and whistle at Saroja, so her mother was quite sure that Saroja applies oil and has a tight two braids. This shows that Indian women were very much aware of what goes outside the house when their daughters are sent to study. In other words, we could say mothers were too protective towards their daughter to save them from unnecessary problems which arise in Indian society. Saroja now in her old-age and travelling through train with her husband's railway pass is now a story teller. She shares all her reminiscence with the railway passengers who are travelling along with her. She herself is surprised with the life she led during her young age and after her marriage. In one of her letters to Kamini, she writes that all her life she travelled with her husband without any complaint and without any wish for the place she lived, but now she will travel to the place she wished to go and with all her whims she wants to do. Badami here portrays the inner-self and inner-yearning of Indian woman who want to live like a free bird in an Indian society.

When Saroja recollects the way, her marriage was arranged to Dadda (Mr. Vishwa Moorthy), we see the typical Indian family with their typical behaviour to find the groom who must be a teetotalter, kind, good-looking and with a secure job. Indian parents mostly prefer government job bridegrooms on those days because according to them their daughter must live safe and secure life without any financial problems in future. The demand for groom with Government or Central

Government job is aptly shown in the novel as we know that Saroja is got married to a Railway officer which comes under Central Government category. Indian's believe in Astrology to the extent that from birth to death we are determined by the horoscope which is calculated from the time we were born. Indians follow astrology to start any new business, marriage, tonsure, ear-piercing, baby shower, consecration, naming ceremony for new born babies, and lot more. Without consulting to an astrologer Indians never plan for any auspicious day and it applies to all the people born and brought up in India whether they are born in any part of the Indian States. Indians who are migrated or are immigrated in any part of the world also consult astrologer for their welfare. Henceforth, Badami as a diasporic writer has shown how imbued Indians are in following their culture and heritage wherever they live only to show their identity as an Indian.

In this novel Badami humorously shows the picture of Indians who sometimes match a bride and a groom with a date of birth or by names if the horoscope is not available due to some family circumstances only because either the bride or the groom is perfect for their family class wise and caste wise. Here we see Saroja who is 23 years old is got married to a man who is 15 years her senior. Saroja was the first daughter in her family and she got two younger brothers and sisters, so it was important for her parents to get her married to some person of good reputation, so that the next sisters of Saroja too would get good grooms. With lots of compromise Saroja accepts the offer by her parents to marry Mr. Vishwa Moorthy a Railway Officer whom she calls Dadda in all her reminiscent to the passenger with whom she is travelling and who are eager to listen to the story of Saroja with full enthusiasm. Saroja's husband was a responsible man, he was fatherless and motherless but he was taking care of his two sisters. One of his unmarried sisters stays in nursing home due to her mental illness and spends a month every summer with them. He also got a married sister whom he says as a headache which shows his generousness to bare that headache still now. Saroja compromise to marry this old man with all his responsibility only because her family thinks that her sour tongue would

spoil her married life and get her in trouble. Saroja's parents presume that if Saroja is married off in a joint family with all the in-laws staying together will end up her married life and she would not cope with the other members of the family.

Badami breaks the old notion of parents getting their daughter married to a person thinking that she would not manage in joint-family, but here we find Saroja as a responsible wife, mother and sister-in-law to her family. With no hesitation she readily accepts all the responsibilities of her husband and even gets used to his smoking habits. For instance, in one of the scenes in the novel when Saroja tells her husband that she doesn't like the smell of cigarette smoke, he bluntly replies that- "You will have to get used to it" (184). This scene happens only few days after her marriage when they are travelling by train to Ratnapur to start their newly married life. Badami through this scene tries to portray the character of Indian women who gets used to each and every situation posed by men. The starting point of her loveless life which Saroja discusses in later parts of her reminiscence in this novel shows the plight of Indian women.

Women in general plays many different roles in her life, for instance as a mother, daughter, sister and wife; whatever role she plays there is an equal and important contribution of her in a society. When we talk about women's character in particular it totally depends upon the parentage and the environment in which she was brought up. Some women are very bold in their decision as we can see Kamini who boldly states that she wants to pursue her further studies in abroad, and on the other hand we can see Saroja who compromises to marry an old man though her dream of becoming a doctor or to pursue her studies is devastated. Here Kamini who is the product of her mother Saroja is able to stand firm on her decision but as for Saroja who is bold and is known for her sour tongue gives up her dreams for family circumstances. Badami has beautifully developed her female characters showing their nature and situation for which they have changed. She (Badami) also portrays the generation gap between mother and daughter, hence it shows that women were known according to their parentage and the society in which they

lived. Women's are always remained a mystery, it is not easy to understand a woman, either she is from old generation or new. Women are the epitome of adjustment, whatever be the situation they are bound to adjust and imbue themselves in each and every phase of life.

Badami has given importance to family life in this novel. As an Indian she has aptly described the relationship between husband and wife, mother and daughter, father and daughter, sibling and so on. From Kamini's view point we could see how she understands her mother though she has a great love for her father but sometimes she feels that her father is not fair on his part. In one of her nostalgic talk she discusses about her father who goes for an official trip and never takes them along with him though her mother insists and the argument starts but as usual she is derogated by her husband who refuses to take them by giving excuses that official trip is not for family enjoyment. Her mothers yearning for trip is expressed in Kamini's nostalgia as,

“What is so special about these trips that you cannot take us with you even once?” Ma demanded just before Dadda left for Darjeeling, a hill station that my mother had been wanting to visit”. (44)

The above trivial dispute shows the tolerance and patience of each and every Indian mother. Kamini Further adds that she and her sister used to think that their mother would leave the house after the fight but nothing happens, their mother doesn't want to risk the future of her kids and dignity of her parents. In those days women though strong are made to believe that there is no identity for her if she leaves her husbands house. Badami has portrayed the character of Saroja who talks bitterly but is unable to withstand the society, for her family matters.

Badami has beautifully carved the relationship between the siblings in her novel. Kamini and Roopa both the siblings are shown fighting, loving and caring for each other which opens the door of an Indian family. Siblings favouritism is common problem among the parents though they never reveal their favouritism to their kids. Here we see Roopa as a mischievous brat who takes the advantage of her being younger; for instance, she picks the colour Kamini likes and then returns to her to

show her generosity and on the other hand Kamini's mother would pat her head and say,

"See Kamini, what a good little sister you have! Make sure you take care of her". (57)

Kamini humorously says in her nostalgic thought that she knows that she has been fooled by Roopa but still she has taken her mothers instruction seriously to the extend that if someone teases Roopa about her dark complexion she is ready to fight with them. Here Badami describes that the elder one is always given a responsibility to take care of the younger and the love of elder sibling is universal.

To the end of the novel we see a lonely woman who has lived her life according to the society. Saroja is a perfect example of a woman who has been a good wife, caring her husband and looking after her daughters, supervising the household, making sure that her husband has got his meals exactly on schedule; always encouraging her daughters and supporting them in their decision. But now when she needs her husband who could share her talking in old age is no more. The daughters whom she encouraged are far away from her and are on their own path; Saroja at last decides to travel far away and enjoy her life as a story-teller to the people whom she meets because there is no near and dear to listen to her in this old age; She calls herself as an old story-teller, a weaver of myths. She passes her time travelling and sending postcards to her both daughters and making phone calls now and then to describe the place she is travelling; in one such calls as described by Kamini we come to know that Saroja rubs the postcard with Nagpur oranges to make her daughter imagine the tanginess and smell of Indian Oranges. On the other hand, we find Kamini and Roopa worrying about their mother and requesting her to stay with them, but Saroja doesn't want to stay in one place, she wants to explore the places which she once yearned to go and hence denies the offer of her daughters and follows her own whims. She tells them that now she is free from all the responsibilities.

Conclusion

Badami as a diasporic writer attempts to focus on her woman character who is self-aware, independent and who is ready to evolve an identity of her own. The image of Kamini as well as her mother Saroja is projected as a woman who are intelligent, confident and assertive. The immigration of Kamini from India to Canada and the migration of Saroja during her husband's transfer from place to place all over India as he was a Railway officer is beautifully picturized by Badami in her novel. While reading the novel it seems that even we are travelling along with Kamini and Saroja digitally through the imagination of our mind. As a diaspora writer Badami has made her character so strong that each of the character as depicted in "Tamarind Mem" are strong and ready to compromise and accept the new environment. Through her diasporic writing Badami has brought about the Indianness as the central point to be discussed because as an Indian its not easy to change in due course of time in new place. As an Indian immigrant or as an Indian migrating female, its quite difficult to cope about and get imbued in the society because woman are the one who get affected by the problems in each and every strands of her life though it be her family or society, Badami has done justification in picturizing all the Indian woman as Saroja and Kamini.

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Intersectionality and Liberation in Alice Walker's *The Temple of My Familiar*

P. Vikaash and R. Kavitha

Alice Walker's novel in *The Temple of My Familiar* depicts womanism as a holistic approach for obtaining freedom and strength for women, particularly those from ethnic minorities. The goal of womanism in this novel is consistent with the overall goals of womanism as a social and political movement. The goal of womanism in *The Temple of My Familiar* is to highlight and validate the experiences, problems and successes of women from racial and ethnic minorities. Its goal is to resist the deletion and marginalisation of these women in popular feminist narratives. The novel investigates the complex intersections of race, gender, class and other identities. The concept of womanism in *The Temple of My Familiar* recognizes the interconnectedness of various forms of oppression and advocates for a holistic plan to achieve social justice that includes these intersections.

Objective

Womanism in the novel is concerned with the abolition of repressive institutions like sexism and racism which have an impact on the lives of women of colour. The novel emphasizes the importance of opposing and acting against repressive systems. It emphasizes the value of female companionship and cooperation. Womanism encourages women to stand together in their pursuit of freedom and empowerment. Womanism, as seen in *The Temple of My Familiar*, recognizes the cultural inheritance and spiritual beliefs of women of colour. The importance of cultural traditions and spirituality in creating resilience, healing and resistance is acknowledged.

Hypothesis

Alice Walker's novel *The Temple of My Familiar* employs womanism as a framework for exploring the connections between race, gender, class and spirituality. The identification of many forms of oppression, such as racism, sexism and classism, uncovers their complicated interconnections, necessitating a thorough understanding and collaborative efforts for effective resolution. The narrative depicts characters navigating various levels of subjection, stressing the complexities of their interactions. Women's solidarity and support, particularly among women of colour, are a strong catalyst for both society reform and individual emancipation. By investigating the relationships and connections formed between female characters, the novel explores the transformational power of sisterhood in confronting and overcoming injustice. Emphasizing the importance of embracing and appreciating one's cultural and spiritual roots is critical for both individual and collective strength. In the face of adversity, the protagonists in the story turn to their cultural traditions and spirituality for strength and endurance.

Methodology

The researcher has used feminist analysis to examine the novel's handling of gender issues, female empowerment and the intertwining of race, class and gender. This study will look at depictions of women, as well as how gender dynamics are depicted and contested in the text. Alice Walker's most significant work is her novel, *The Temple of My Familiar*. The narrative follows a womanist perspective from the beginning of humanity until the postmodern era.

Walker's *The Temple of My Familiar* shows the prevalence of sexist beliefs in the African American culture by focusing on select couples such as Suwelo and Fanny, Carlotta and Arveyda and the elderly pair Lissie and Hal. Suwelo and Fanny, as a couple, are significant figures in the story because they represent the African American middle class. Alice Walker in an interview with Claudia Deifrus has said: "I'm ...Literarily tryingto reconnect us to our ancestors. All of us. I'mtrying

to do that because I see that ancient past as the future, that the connection that was original is a connection; if we can affirm it in the present, it will make a different future" (31). Suwelo is an African American historian, while his wife, Fanny, is an African American literature instructor. The novel *The Temple of My Familiar* investigates how a woman's assertiveness can confront and question the existence of sexist males, therefore strengthening her status in both her personal life and society as a whole.

Walker shows how male chauvinists like Suwelo do not tolerate a woman's sexual independence. When Fanny returns from Africa, she proudly asserts herself and advocates an egalitarian relationship between them. She wants to be independent in her sexual choices and Suwelo believes Fanny's offer implies she is attracted to women. Because of the high concentration of lesbians in Oakland, he feels insecure about his manhood. He tells Lissie and Hal: "Beautiful, beautiful women, quite a lot of them, ... They'd left us! Hell, these bitches were so tough they'd left God! This was when they were just discovering the Goddess, and it was all the time Goddess this and Goddess that..." (241). These people are so strong that they have outlasted even God's strength. They are in the early phases of investigating the concept of the Goddess and it dominates their conversations, with several references to the Goddess. As a man, he believes that lesbian women intimidate, question and influence his sexual orientation. Fanny goes through personal growth and transformation as she realizes her actual identity, confronts Suwelo's discriminating beliefs towards women and establishes her own position and significance. Suwelo recognizes and respects Fanny's sexual freedom as he develops a higher degree of compassionate consciousness, which improves their relationship.

Walker has depicted the semblance of autonomy that African Americans experience in the novel through the character of Fanny. Fanny warns her father Ola that the United States has a frustrating concept of freedom that is not based on reality. It is always dynamic, unequivocal and irrevocable. Many critical issues depend greatly on the elected officials picked by the white majority. The black people frequently endure the

strange impression of constantly exerting effort without achieving any progress. She overcomes this unethical and strange sensation by following Ola's advice, communicating with her sister Nzingha and immersing herself in black history. Nzingha informs Fanny that learning from the elderly does not lead to a negative viewpoint: "Learning from one's elders does not permit pessimism. Your day is always easier than theirs. You look at them, so beautiful and so wise, and you cannot help trying to emulate them. It is courage given by osmosis. I think..." (316). It motivates Fanny to learn the talents she needs to lead a more fulfilling life. Furthermore, Fanny follows her father, Ola's orders. He instructs Fanny on how to harmonize her emotions and encourages her to overcome her self-pity. Fanny experiences a shift as a result of his guidance. Walker wants America to exemplify genuine freedom, defined by uncompromising egalitarianism.

One of the primary goals of womanism is to raise women's awareness and assist them to understand their own responsibilities and positive traits. Alice Walker stresses the significance of this through Fanny, a heroine who joins a consciousness-raising organization. Fanny's spiritual vitality and previously latent sexuality are revived as a result of her engagement in an entirely female consciousness-raising organization. Fanny's sexual and spiritual vigour is restored after she joins the aforementioned organization. She frees herself from Suwelo's stifling sexual parasitism and discovers her sexuality on her own. Her participation in the group helps her to discover her own essence. Her sexual orientation's flexibility helps her to overcome life's problems, providing as a path to completeness. Walker depicts unfettered sexuality in the story as a way for women to find pleasure and discover their true selves. As a growing womanist, Fanny investigates her sexuality in her relationships, giving her the opportunity to completely understand herself. It allows her to understand her own strengths and weaknesses, which empowers her even more.

Walker investigates how the character Suwelo represents white culture's power and control, as well as white hegemony over black people, even within popular culture. Suwelo defines his masculinity as utilizing his

sexuality to dominate Fanny. According to Fanny, he is ignorant that the works and books he has watched and read have influenced and shaped his sexuality. Walker's portrayal of Fanny exemplifies men's colonization and commoditization of women's sexuality and she urges women to transcend the effects of colonization and commoditization. Walker explores autoeroticism and lesbianism as potential avenues for self-discovery.

Walker elucidates the phenomenon of women being misrepresented as someone they are not and implores women to discontinue this act of misrepresentation. Carlotta rectifies her life. She establishes a connection with her previously undiscovered familial lineage and ancestral legacy, which aids her in overcoming the emptiness in her life. Carlotta comprehends the distressing history of her mother and seeks to mend their relationship. She pardons Arveyda and Suwelo. She harbours no animosity towards anyone. She acknowledges that she cannot assume her own identity and encounter only emptiness. At a certain juncture, Carlotta assumed her own identity and indulged in it. She has informed Fanny thus: "I was a female impersonator" (384). Gradually, she reveals herself to be somebody who possesses a liberated and unencumbered mindset. However, upon recognizing her error, she undergoes a transformation and adopts a womanist mindset, becoming a different individual altogether. She comprehends the necessity of becoming self-sufficient. All the characters in the narrative, including Carlotta, come to understand the significance of ancestral connectivity and reverence. Walker proposes that exploring one's ancestral past can lead to the attainment of complete freedom. Bonnie Braendlin, while discussing the importance placed on genealogical links in the story, has accurately remarked:

In *The Temple of My Familiar*, Walker expresses her concern that the values celebrated in her previous works are at risk in the 1980s. She observes that today's women and people of colour who have achieved recognition in society are neglect their past and the important message of building a caring community, which is now more vital than ever, given the imminent dangers of human and global annihilation.

Carlotta has a transition from her prior state when she recognizes the need to combat and win over patriarchal expectations and the imposition of conformity. She overcomes her concerns and discovers a blissful dynamic within her family, including Arveyda, Cedrico and Angelita.

Walker's character, Lissie, conveys the idea that personal redemption is impossible without a genuine understanding and connection to one's parents and ancestors. Prior to her death, Lissie has advised Suwelo to meticulously investigate the intricacies of his parents' lives, as they serve as his unifying force. Dieke points out: "The cumulative effect of Lissie's story is that she achieves something resembling a Universal soul, a transcendent harmony with the entire Universe ... Lissie represents for walker this eternal spirit, a kind of womanist elan vital. She hopes that some of us well someday become Lissies" (511).

Walker presents the womanist viewpoint that the establishment of sisterhood and amicable connections among women is crucial for jointly overcoming challenges in their lives. The efficacy of this womanist argument is demonstrated through the cultivated sisterhood between Carlotta and Fanny. They ultimately become close friends and form a strong bond of sisterhood over time. They resolve their past injuries through their interaction. There is no hostility between them. They have transcended selfishness and possessiveness in both their own life and their interactions with others. They set out on their quest to become enlightened advocates for women's rights and empowerment. Fanny and Carlotta recognize that a woman who fails to experience the period of communal growth among women also fails to fully mature and develop in a rich and abundant manner. Carlotta also acknowledges that both Suwelo and herself were victims in their own unique ways as they attempt to find redemption through their physical bodies, while neglecting the development of their spiritual selves. Fanny and Carlotta mutually enlighten each other through their individual insights of life. The young couples Suwelo and Fanny, as well as Arveyda and Carlotta, become aware of each other's errors and unite for the first time with improved

comprehension. They come to the realization: "is the very afro-diasiac of love" (322). Furthermore, Walker's novel *The Temple of My Familiar* as follows:

...love, in all its forms; love for spirits and spirituality, love for the land and plants, love for all people regardless of colour, sexual preference and age and love for all living things. It is about compassion for the oppressed, the grief of the oppressors, acceptance of the unchangeable and hope for everyone and everything. (Martz 413-414)

Walker highlights the disparities in privileges experienced by white women and black women. Fanny's acquisition of womanist consciousness leads to the realization that black women must actively advocate for their own rights. Walker has explicitly expressed the subordinate position assigned to black women in her novel. It appears as follows:

It is, apparently, inconvenient, if not downright mind straining, for white women scholars to think of black women as women, perhaps because woman (like man among white males) is a name they are claiming for themselves and themselves alone. Racism decrees that if they are now women (years ago they were ladies, but fashions change) then black women must, perforce, be something else. (While they were ladies, black women could be women, and so on. (376)

It encourages both black and white women to work hard for their liberation. Walker highlights the disparity between white feminists' attitudes towards black women and their false claim that they are afraid of black women's wrath, which they use as an excuse to avoid engaging in meaningful conflict with them.

Walker portrays women who have a sense of empowerment or they are in the process of achieving it, through a revitalized awareness of womanism, which serves as a means of restoring completeness. They understand that achieving success is contingent on their ability to advance in life, surmounting any impediments that cross their path, both alone and in cooperation with other individuals of African descent. They go on a fresh start with renewed enthusiasm.

Walker adeptly portrays the pervasive bigotry experienced by individuals of African descent, regardless of their nationality, through the figure of Nzingha. Nzingha serves as Ola's subordinate at the ministry of culture in Olinka, an African nation depicted in the novel. Nzingha's time studying in France has led her to conclude that Western education lacks a comprehensive understanding of truth. She deems it to be racist and departs from it. She manages both her work at home and the ministry of culture independently, while her spouse Metudhi provides no assistance. Nzingha notes that black males frequently focus on a white man's capacity for causing harm, while disregarding the needs of their own community. Consequently, they ultimately succumb to the cycle of destruction that has been set in motion by the white man. She asserts that males are equally affected by the system as women, but they are the ones responsible for its creation. "Yes ... The difference is that they help create it. At least the part of it that oppresses women" (253). She refers to the aspect of society that specifically subjugates women. Nzingha comprehends the predicament faced by a lady of African descent in the global context. Observing the fate of martyrs like her mother, who have been exploited and discarded by male-dominated societies, she comprehends the necessity for women to be completely self-sufficient and independent. By the conclusion of the novel, all the female characters acquire a womanist consciousness, which enables them to extricate themselves from the peculiar predicaments they find themselves in.

In the work, Walker portrays various white characters who come to recognize the heinous acts committed against black individuals in the name of racism by members of their own race. Individuals such as Tonya Tucker, EleandraBrunham, EleonoraBrunham, Bessie Smith and Lance, who are of Caucasian descent, exhibit empathy and care towards individuals of African descent. However, the white supremacist culture, in which they are included, prohibits them from improving the living conditions of black individuals. Whites tend to ostracize or look down upon individuals who associate with blacks, further marginalizing them. Tonya Tucker, a friend of Fanny, experiences the most severe form of

racism. She enters into matrimony with an African American gentleman as a form of defiance against the discriminatory beliefs held by her relatives. The marriage disintegrates when her spouse discovers this. The offspring resulting from this interracial union encounter challenges in gaining societal acceptance. They remain unfamiliar in a society that is controlled by white people and characterized by racism, as they are seen as emblems of interracial mixing.

Walker's *The Temple of My Familiar* emphasizes the need for collaboration among people of all races and genders to create unbiased society. Alice Walker effectively presents methods for overcoming this forgetfulness by fostering a sense of racial, cultural and historical self-esteem. In the latter portion of the novel, she proposes strategies for surmounting this issue through the creation of an equitable society in every aspect. She has introduced the readers to the imperative of eradicating racism and sexism by transporting them back to thousands of years in human history.

Alice Walker explores the theme of the collective pursuit of completeness, ultimately leading to the recognition of interconnectedness and a harmonious coexistence among all living beings. Walker envisions a vast and limitless cooperative community that encompasses all of creation, in which the state of the soul holds paramount importance and her womanist beliefs are fully explored and expressed in *The Temple of My Familiar*.

Walker consistently emphasizes in her novels that significant transformations, which have positive impacts on the world, originate from multiple levels. In her astute observation, Bonnie Brandelin highlights: "urges us to reflect upon our cherished beliefs and to consider other, countercultural responses to contemporary personal, communal, and global issues" (117).

In addition to Brandelin's statements, *The Temple of My Familiar* adopts a counter-hegemonic tone by challenging both explicit and hidden forms of patriarchal and Eurocentric racist dominance. It also advocates for the necessity of overcoming these forms of hegemony in order to improve

the condition of humankind on our planet, emphasizing the importance of womanism. At the conclusion of the story, the two pairs of young couples, Arveyda and Carlota and Fanny and Suwelo, adopt womanist principles and come to the understanding that they all have a mutual purpose in each other's life. They are a collective mechanism through which each individual will experience growth. Although seldom openly discussed, this sentiment is deeply experienced by everyone.

Alice Walker portrays the main characters as architects of a more ideal society. Walker has expressed the belief that we should consider all individuals as a part of our community. In order to ensure the greatest amount of freedom for ourselves, it is necessary for us to embody the perspective of "every person" in whatever situation.

In the work, Walker effectively demonstrates the intergenerational transmission of racism and sexism among African Americans in America and how it has undermined fundamental principles of compassion. In the work, the author has made a deliberate effort to contextualize and analyze the presence of sexism and racism, with a particular focus on how these issues have affected the perception of black individuals, especially black women, throughout American and global history. Alice Walker contends that the deep-rooted and dualistic evils of racism and sexism have generated divisions that are not readily resolved. Simultaneously, she suggests that there remains an opportunity to eliminate them through the joint efforts of both black and white individuals, facilitated by a strong sense of camaraderie.

Moreover, the historiographical portrayal of sexism and racism centers on the enduring impact experienced by black individuals due to historical injustices, as well as the imperative to transcend these challenges. The novel *In The Temple of My Familiar* portrays womanist ideas as strategies employed by women to navigate and cope with life's challenges. The text portrays black women's initial action required to resolve the sexist and racial turmoil in their lives. In this story, Alice Walker emphasizes the need of women recognizing their potential and strength in order to maximize their opportunities. She enables the female

characters to effortlessly transcend the challenges of sexism, racism and classism, while enhancing their inner resilience. In *The Temple of My Familiar*, Alice Walker conveys a powerful message that is both motivating and thought-provoking, as it incorporates the womanist ideas mentioned earlier. It also has the ability to inspire several women to rely on their own autonomy and create a desired reality on their own.

Walker emphasizes the need of women recognizing their strengths and weaknesses in order to create positive change for themselves and the broader society in which they reside. Womanism is closely aligned with the principles of second wave feminism and its influence is readily apparent in the work. In the work, Walker utilizes womanist polemics and arguments to assert that women, adopting a womanist perspective, should liberate themselves from patriarchal and racist influences and violence in order to achieve their full potential. The story argues that women must cultivate their resilience in order to triumph and contribute to the value of the black community. It encourages women to be self-sufficient in every conceivable manner. The novel conveys a powerful message that women who embrace womanism must unite and collaborate as a cohesive force, bolstering one another. They should also enhance the black community and usher in a new age of valued existence for both current and future generations.

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An Examination of Divorce on the Psychological Impact of Children: An Analysis of Manju Kapur's *Custody*

D. Sivaranjani and T.M.S. Maideen

Manju Kapur is a renowned Indian English writer. She has been likened to Jane Austen due to her astute observations and meticulously crafted depictions of characters. For a span of 25 years, she has been an instructor of English Literature at Miranda House College, Delhi University. Kapur started her writing vocation at 42 and has garnered several accolades, notably the Common Wealth Writer's Prize in 1999 for her literary work *Difficult Daughters*. Her further works are *A Married Woman*, *Home*, *The Immigrant*, and *Custody*, which inspired television serials *Ye Hai Mohabbatein* and *Pranayam*. In addition, Kapur has authored essays and tales, as well as served as the editor for the publication "Shaping the World: Women Writers on Themselves" in 2014.

The novel *Custody* takes place in the affluent setting of 1990s Delhi, where the influx of foreign investment occurred due to the government's adoption of globalization, privatization, and liberalization of economic policies in 1987. Furthermore, it depicts the stress and unease experienced inside Indian traditional families as a result of the clash between these policies and ideals and the Indian culture.

Raman is a Marketing Executive with promising opportunities at a global firm, and Shagun is his captivating spouse. With their two charming children - Arjun, who has a resemblance to his mother, and Roohi, who has inherited her father's traits - the pair seems to have an idyllic existence. However, when Raman's sophisticated and older employer, Ashok Khanna, comes into the scene, Shagun concludes that her

marriage is over. Consequently, the husband and wife engage in a hostile conflict over the *Custody* of their children. Amidst the uncertainty surrounding the *Custody* of the children, Ishita, who does not have any children of her own, is attracted to Raman due to the opportunity for family satisfaction and decides to marry him again. Shagun remarries Ashok Khanna for the second time and establishes a residence in a foreign country. Arjun has been awarded *Custody* to Shagun, while Roohi has been awarded *Custody* to Raman. A contentious *Custody* dispute for Roohi ensues between Shagun and Raman.

The concept of *Custody* may be analysed from a psychoanalytical standpoint. All the characters in the narrative undergo significant psychological stress and develop emotional instability. Shagun experiences an internal struggle between her unconscious and conscious mind. Raman becomes sick upon learning from the Lovely Detective Agency about Shagun's extramarital affair with her new boss, Ashok Khanna. Additionally, the children, Arjun and Roohi, struggle to adapt to their new surroundings and parents, leading to emotional instability.

In his article titled "Demystifying Mother and Daughter in Manju Kapur's novel *Custody*," Jitander Singh (2015) argues that the classification of women as Daughter and Mother serves as a means to separate them, despite their common experiences. Every mother is inherently a daughter, and conversely, every daughter is inherently a potential mother. Typically, there is a stronger social, psychological, or emotional bond between a mother and her daughters compared to that between a mother and her son.

In their analysis, V. Chanthiramathi and M. Rashmi (2016) see Manju Kapur as a keen observer of the social, moral, and cultural transformations taking place in contemporary society. Additionally, they propose that everything is always changing in the present day, making it unrealistic to anticipate individuals in this modern society to cling to traditional beliefs and dogmas fiercely. The character Shagun exemplifies this transition through her involvement in extramarital affairs, divorce proceedings, and *Custody* battles.

According to Nilam H. Gajjar and Dr. Hitesh D. Raviya (2016), Shagun's extramarital romance serves as a means to challenge and undermine patriarchal beliefs and norms. This work portrays the pervasive unease experienced by contemporary married individuals in Indian culture. Manju Kapur's characters challenge and resist the predetermined social, cultural, and ethical norms, resulting in conflicts as they strive to establish their own personal autonomy.

Simmi Gurwara (2016) states that women are compelled by their husbands to give up jobs and career advancement. However, contemporary women insist on equal rights, autonomy and space for them in marriage. If this requirement is met, the marriage thrives perfectly, and this principle applies to all relationships, including marriage.

During the course of the review, the researchers are able to get acquainted with the many theories and themes have been concerned with the analysis of human relationships, social moral cultural changes, patriarchal myths and values, voice for equal rights, psychoanalysis, domestic violence, women harassment, and divorce. No effort has been made to analyse psychological impact of children.

Psychoanalysis is a therapy technique developed by Sigmund Freud to address mental problems by analysing the interplay between conscious and unconscious components inside a patient's psyche. Freud and Dr. Josef Breuer conducted a study on Anna O, a woman who had both physical and psychological disorders. They used hypnosis as a means to comprehend her therapy. Freud's lectures on the genesis and evolution of psychoanalysis extensively drew upon the research and concepts presented in Anna's case. Freud postulated that the issues experienced by hysterical patients may be attributed to distressing childhood encounters that were inaccessible to conscious memory, imposing an impact on their emotions, cognition, and actions. These studies have made significant contributions to the advancement of Psychoanalysis Theory to analyse *Custody*. The novel *Custody* is analyzed using the Psychoanalysis Theory and Freud's fundamental principles to gain insight into the issues arising from the clash between Tradition and Modernity,

as well as the complicated nature of family life. The story of *Custody* explores new perspectives on the life of Shagun and the distressing impact on every individual within a family. Additionally, it investigates the potential harm to a nation's legacy, culture, and prosperity caused by these issues in contemporary society.

There is no concept of a broken family.” The concept of family is not determined by legal paperwork such as marriage certificates, divorce papers, and adoption forms. Families are built in the heart. A family becomes null when its emotional bonds are broken. By breaking such connections, those individuals are not part of your family. Establishing such connections makes those individuals part of your familial network.

Arifa Akbar views that significant changes are occurring in the family structure. Historically, the divorce rate was low. The presence of feudal principles in our culture caused this. An essential observation about our civilization is that semi-colonial and semi-feudal situations greatly influence its culture. If a family adheres strictly to traditional values, they consistently uphold feudal ideas in their everyday lives, and the same applies in reverse. If a family is very modern, they adhere to the contemporary concepts introduced into our society under the influence of foreign culture. The coexistence of traditional and modern cultures poses a threat to achieving a harmonious existence in our society.

A very few individuals support traditional values and adamantly oppose divorce and remarriage. However, the remaining portion of society is inclined towards adhering to traditional and contemporary norms based on their practicality. Our society has transitioned from being selfless to being self-centered, and the establishment of regulations has been influenced by the prevailing circumstances, particularly by males seeking to protect their authority.

As Darwin said, “One overarching principle dictates that the fittest survive while the least fit perish.” This comment aligns precisely with the contemporary conventional norms followed by the privileged males of the upper class or caste. Every regulation has been meticulously crafted to cater to the requirements of the ruling classes or castes.

Those directives are not intended for their adherence, but rather for the compliance of the intermediate and lower socioeconomic strata or social groups. The middle class and the impoverished cannot adhere to a single set of customs imposed upon them. The conflict between tradition and globalization is causing cognitive dissonance among individuals, leading to a palpable disorder in our contemporary society.

In contemporary culture, marital separation and divorce have become prevalent phenomena. Upon carefully evaluating the advantages and disadvantages of both the husband and wife, it may be difficult to assign responsibility to either parent in some circumstances. If things are going well, children grow, develop, and bloom. But if things are not going well, they experience some kind of mental discomfort.

An example of such a distressing situation may be seen in the child characters depicted in Manju Kapur's *Custody*. The novel starts with the arrival of an exquisite pair, Raman and Shagun. Raman is a diligent professional who firmly believes in the value of hard work. Shagun described an attractive daughter-in-law. Raman and Shagun's marriage was arranged conventionally, with Shagun being considered beautiful and Raman having promising future prospects. Shagun's aspirations transformed marriage. Her whole life transformed her marriage, as she became the proud mother of both a boy and a daughter.

In his heart, Shagun had a distaste for this uninteresting life. Upon the arrival of Ashok Khanna, Raman's superior, there was an immediate and unplanned shift in Shagun's thinking. Ashok, an Indian gentleman, was affected by the cosmopolitan culture of foreign free-thinkers. Upon first sight, he was captivated by Shagun's enchanting allure and instantly fell in love with her. Shagun also develops romantic feelings for Raman's superior.

Raman devoted most of his time to tirelessly working for his international corporation throughout the day and into the night. Shagun felt compelled to spend time in an enclosed environment with her children. Shagun perceives herself as an attractive lady, receiving several opportunities to pursue a career in modelling. However, her marriage is a strict

boundary that limits her choices and actions. Similar to Sita, Shagun too breaches the Lakshmana Rekha.

Shagun's life takes a new direction after her extramarital affair with Ashok. Ashok gives Shagun much autonomy, allowing her to express her opinions openly. Raman, Shagun's husband, is similarly affectionate. However, Shagun - the unfaithful spouse/the spouse with attractive appearance is a one-dimensional figure. She is a morally dubious figure who betrayed her husband and her marriage. Compounding the situation, she engages in an extramarital relationship with her spouse's employer. Shagun seemed to possess audacity, entitlement, and self-centeredness.

In spite of the fact that Raman's mother always had doubts about the daughter-in-law. Mrs. Kaushik thought to herself, "How breathtakingly beautiful she is." Such a lady could be a homemaker" (Kapur, 22). On the other hand, the son never stopped trying to convince his mother that everything was alright. Following the wedding, Shagun moved into a separate residence but mother-in-law did not give permission. Throughout their whole relationship, Raman's mother believed that Shagun had built a wall between them as a mother and son combination."A pretty daughter-in-law, a son who would dance in attendance on her, an unhappy and dissatisfied mother" (Kapur, 23). When Raman's mother sees Nandan's loving family, her feelings of misery are heightened to the point of destruction. The happy togetherness in her brother-in-law's family showed Raman's mother how much she was missing, and she took this knowledge badly, blaming her daughter-in-law for her loneliness. The misery in her heart can be understood through these particular lines:

"As a result of her marriage to Nandan, Rohini perceives the home of her mother-in-law to be a sacred place. Rohini said that she had the impression that she was living in a palace since her new residence was so magnificent. This prompted her mother-in-law to quickly wrap a green chilli around her head and then place it in the fire in order to protect her from the negative effects of the evil eye" (Kapur, 25).

“Shagun, I was unable to sleep during the whole night. What will happen to you? To the children? What about Raman? His family has the utmost importance in his life (Kapur, 40) Shagun responds with a remarkable retort, “Mother, cease your incessant rambling.” It is already over. “Must I remain married to Raman due to your intense love for him?” (Kapur, 40) Raman has chest pain upon discovering Shagun’s adulterous affair, yet she remains determined despite seeing his distress. Conversely, she departs from her spouse and seeks solace with Ashok. Subsequently, she divorces Raman and enters into matrimony with Ashok.

Each individual has their own views, desires, and motivations throughout their life. In marriage, two distinct individuals often merge to coexist to live a life. Although individuals have distinct family origins and cultures, a shared characteristic is that they will inevitably become parents, which should always be present in their thoughts. An individual prefers to live a self-reliant lifestyle. Consequently, they are compelled to sacrifice the common happiness in a family. In this scenario, the children are silent observers of the conflict between the father and the mother.

Raman has profound dissatisfaction at learning about the disparity between himself and Shagun. He attempts to mend the friendship between them. Raman was uncertain about his thoughts. During the period of dispute between Shagun and himself, he had a profound sense of emptiness at the core of his existence. “However, the requirements of his job compelled him to spend extended periods of time abroad, weakening the bond between them” (Kapur, 31). Nevertheless, Shagun was completely under Ashok’s sway, relishing the liberty he afforded her. Ashok successfully convinced Shagun that his life lacks fulfilment without her, as he expressed a desire to learn more about her daily activities and how she occupies her time” (Kapur, 14).

Raman strives to exhibit conventional behaviour in order to alter his wife’s perspective and foster her comprehension of the profound significance embedded within their twelve-year-long relationship. However, Shagun harbours deep resentment against Raman, consistently cultivating negative thoughts about her husband. The lover facilitated

this by providing a foundation for comparison. The discontent often seen in many relationships is not easily resolved; instead, she actively sought justifications for her infidelity.

Shagun desired independence and thus abandoned her children. “Children from divorced families deviate from the norms that apply to typical children, as they are exposed to instability and conflict at an early stage of their lives.” Arjun is more mature to comprehend the circumstances, but Roohi is a delicate little girl. Both children experience psychological distress as a result of the marital pressures imposed by their parents. The significant impact of the divorce between Shagun and Raman might be depicted vividly as follows:

Arjun and Roohi - the unwitting participants in the grand theatrical spectacle of their parents’ separation. Arjun, at the age of 10, had a profound impact on his family life due to his parents’ separation. He discontinues his attendance at school due to the widespread awareness among his fellow students of his imminent divorce. His academic performance starts to decline, and he longs for his father, from whom he is being separated. Subsequently, Arjun is enrolled in a boarding school, the same institution that Ashok attended. This signifies the termination of Arjun’s bond with his father and is very distressing. Roohi, a child when her parents divorced, matures without any recollection of a period when her family was together. Raman and his newlywed wife Ishita jointly care for Roohi, and he has a deep affection for Ishita akin to that of a biological mother.

Conclusion

Through her novel *Custody*, Kapur provides an insight into the elements like unimagined uncertainties of matrimony; the crescendo of divorce and Custodybattle in all its legal and psychological ugliness. The conflicts that are found in this novel are that all the major characters Shagun, Raman, Ishita and Ashok Khanna become self-centred where they forget about the children’s future moral and psychological well-being; and the psychological turmoil of the children is revealed indirectly through the

characters Arjun and Roohi who are the victims of their parents' divorce and Custody cases. The cost of adopting western principles is the production of young individuals like Arjun and Roohi who experience chaos and confusion in their childhood which makes their childhood awful and unpleasant to be remembered and cherished. This paper has brought forth the psychological trauma and alienation experienced by the two children Arjun and Roohi as well as how this trauma is communicated by the children through dreams and their false illness and behaviour.

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Emotional and Material Conflicts in Sudha Murty's *Gently Falls the Bakula*

B. Manoj Kannan and D.S. Bindu

Introduction

Generally women writers blame the men for women's sufferings. Sudha Murty also shows this conflict but she does not only blame the men for it but other women of the family in equal part. She shows the tug of war between daughter in law and mother in law. Modern girls do not give in for family and society. Anthony Brandt points out: "Other things may change us, but we start and end with the family" (Strathmore University). Sudha Murty pictures the eroding effects of money on the close relations. Her female protagonists are rare combination of tradition and modernity. They fall in love and marry their lover with their parents consent. Yet they do not lead a happy life.

Sudha Murty's art of characterization has a fixed pattern. She can portray the psychological upheavals in her female characters as well. It seems that she knows the female psyche more than the male psychology. As Sudha Murty believes in the traditional Indian value system, good people win and bad people lose. Sudha Murty is well acquainted with the various customs, conventions and traditions of the village life. She is familiar with the habits and hobbies of the village people and one can see that she has made use of this knowledge in the plot, story and action of the novels.

Sudha Murty's second part of her novels are set in the cosmopolitan cities like Bangalore and Bombay. Sudha Murty has set all her novels in rural and urban centers. Generally the boy and the girl come from rural background. They have their roots in the social, cultural and economic activities of the villages. Sudha Murty's narrative technique has a predictable pattern of straightforwardness.

The most significant aspect of Sudha Murty's writing is that she has freed the traditional politicizing issues in feminism. It is true that condition of the women in India was pitiable hundred years ago. Not only the women from lower caste but those from upper castes suffered at the hands of men arrogance. It is true that women in India were discriminated against, at times ill treated. They were restricted to their houses. Women were held responsible for the misfortune that befell their men.

Sudha Murty believes in the ancient values like love, affection, sacrifice, reverence, compassion, consideration etc. Naturally, she includes all these principles in her writing. Sudha Murty shows considerable sympathy for the deprived and derelict sections of the society like poor people, women and senior citizens. Sudha Murty has also written on the man woman relations in modern India. She is closely linked with the old and new in India which makes her Indian English writing real in sense.

Themes

Gently Falls the Bakula is the skewed marriage of a young couple. After achieving excellent grades on the tenth standard board exam, Shrimati and Shrikant become the school's rock stars. Despite living next door, they don't talk often. They fall in love while they are in their upper secondary class. The mother of Shrimati forewarns her that the mother and sister of Shrikant will never accept her as a daughter-in-law. Despite all of her challenges and misgivings, Shrimati only marries Shrikant for the affection. Shrikanth has been faced with the difficult decision of whether to pursue a fulfilling marriage or pursue a great career. He fails to recognize his wife's inner struggle and pursuit of happiness because he believes that his career is more significant than hers. Because she doesn't feel rooted or grounded, Shrimati longs for her husband's comfort and attention which she has not received. In addition to missing the company, her mother-in-law has made fun of her and calls her a barren woman. In the novel's epilogue, it is ultimately shown how she breaks free from her husband's selfishness and escapes that frustrated atmosphere. She at last deserves to be happy.

Shrimati finds it unable to accept her husband's deceit. She battles the emptiness that envelops her and won't accept the actual state of affairs in her life. Alienation is the outcome of factuality and deceit and it symbolizes the ridiculousness of her existence. The sea is her sole friend in her married life. She believes that the sea is the only place she can express her emotions when she is alone and can see it from her balcony. In this case, Shrimati is desperate to get away from the traditional married life. From an existential standpoint, this escape from the ordinary human predicament is portrayed by the novelist in the novel.

It is impossible for a typical Indian woman, the character attempts in a different way to reclaim her old ideals. As a result, Shrimati attempts to fill the void in her life by recalling her time spent with Shrikant. Because of her love of history, Shrimati takes Professor Collins on a tour of several historical sites during his long-awaited return to India. Professor Collins is aware that Shrimati's enthusiasm for history has not diminished. She exhibits the same devotion, enthusiasm and wisdom as years past. Professor Collins notices the deep sadness that is evident in her expression and understands that this is the typical Indian woman's willingness to forgo her passion and career in order to pursue her marriage. This is completely at odds with the statement made by his daughter Dorothy.

Who says that the ultimate aim of woman should be marriage? If marriage is only for togetherness, then aren't we together now? As soon as you get married, expectations rise and it may or may not be possible to meet all the demands. It could result in divorce... I am happier this way. (50)

Shrimati makes numerous attempts, but is unable to adequately communicate her struggles to Shrikant. Though Shrimati has all the luxuries of life, her physical and psychological estrangement from her spouse is a reflection of her loneliness. She is therefore greatly impacted by her alienation from other people. The novelist does a fantastic job of illustrating the distinction between true love and materialistic necessity.

Shrimati is dissatisfied with her materialistic luxuries and yearns for her husband's affection, empathy and company. She states: "The foundation of my happiness is not the digits that you earn, but the digits of your love, affection and companionship" (63). She only wants her ambitious husband to give her the attention she deserves. She is greatly impacted by the mother-in-law's dejection. She is fully aware that her mother-in-law, who will not accept her as the daughter-in-law, will never say anything nice to her or offer her support. She is aware that money cannot buy or teach love or affection. A really affectionate sentiment need to originate from the heart. It makes no difference if the individual is intelligent, wealthy or attractive. In her situation, even though it is a pointless exercise, she has held out hope that things might improve eventually. M.P. Ganesan points out: "The women should also abide by the traditional and conventional values and should try to find the solutions to the problems they face without breaking or ignoring those values" (5861)

Shrimati is shown quite effectively from an existential perspective, wherein her thoughts and deeds are illogical. Shrikant, on the other hand, is realistic and successfully carries out his objectives to advance his financial situation and career year after year. Similar to Som and Billy, Shrimati too appears to be acting irrationally. She does not prioritize materialistic concerns; instead, she simply values sentiments and emotions. Their exchange of words reveals their mindset.

Freedom

In the West, a woman has the freedom to choose her spouse and her schooling at any time, but not in our traditional society. Since she is certain that Shrikant will never alter his outlook on life, Shrimati gives up their argument. At her most awake, Shrimati wonders about her roles as a wife, a daughter-in-law and a history student. They consciously choose the fundamental search for existence, but they experience existential struggle when they are unable to realize it. In the same way, Shrimati struggles with the decision of whether to care for Shrikant or continue her historical studies. She has a great deal of stress when she realizes that she is her husband's personal secretary.

Therefore, Shrimati might be understood as an existentialist lady who yearns for a better life and a goal that is both ludicrous and unlikely in the real world. Her life is completely destroyed by the loneliness she feels. She becomes ill and her health deteriorates. She even goes so far as to believe that she will pass away alone. She claims that nobody would even know if she is passed away. Regardless of all the wealth that Shrikant has amassed, she feels so empty and lonely. She worries that no one will understand, comfort or share her thoughts, which makes her feel uneasy. She avoids expressing her opinions to her spouse since she feels distant from him.

For the first time, Vandana, Shrimati's closest friend, feels sorry for her. In Vandana's opinion, Shrimati is completely comfortable and in contrast to her, is not burdened financially. Conversely, she lacks a suitable spouse to look after her, a mother-in-law to provide for her and a kid to help her feel less alone. In her opinion, her existence is miserable in comparison to Vandana's. Sudha Murty attempts to stress throughout the book that material luxuries are not always important. A kind and sincere person ought to be present to offer love and affection. She states: "Today more than ever she appreciated her luck and was grateful that her life was a million times better than Shrimati's. There was so much love, affection and kindness in her life unlike Shrimati's" (107).

The lives of Shrimati and Shrikant provide insight into the idea of money versus relationships. Despite dedicating her entire life to advancing Shrikant's career, Shrimati receives no credit for his accomplishments. Despite having a great deal of promise, Shrimati's sacrifice is disregarded and she has wasted her life. She gives up her life to ensure that Shrikant will be happy. She believes that Shrikant's happiness is what matters the most in life. When she looks back, she has nothing. Her life is empty. "A house is made up of four walls. But a home is where there is love, affection and a meaningful relationship. When that was not there it was only a house and the best thing was to get out of it" (152). She begs Harish to keep her illness from becoming known to Shrikant. She is aware that it will impact his mental condition and make it difficult for him to focus on his work. Harish thinks about, how Shrikanth would

have succeeded in a short period and the answer was simple. “Someone like Shrimati, who never ever demanded anything from her husband, was rare” (142).

Married Life of Shrimati

In her married life, Shrimati struggles with feelings of hopelessness, annoyance, loneliness and poor physical and mental health. Prof. Collins asks Shrimati how she does when they first have met. It can be really gloomy at times. Professor Collins advises her to pursue her doctorate in order to help her maintain her enthusiasm in the field and to help her cope with stress. He notes that there is a great deal of helplessness and melancholy. This demonstrates how she battles the nothingness all around her. She feels alone in her own house, like a foreigner and has nothing in her life.

When Shrimati tries to talk to Shrikant, he seldom listens to her and doesn't seem to be interested in what she has to say or how she feels. Despite her best efforts, Shrimati is unable to communicate her sentiments to him. Shrimati is worn out, both physically and mentally. She feels compelled to leave the house. She is unsure of her destination. She turns the corner to Juhu Beach without realizing it. Shrimati contrasts her current life with the one she has prior to getting married. She has nothing but love, affection and sweet words from her husband back then; now, all she hears is Shrikant's official talk. She believes that there is no longer any love, affection or sharing of hopes and ideas. He doesn't speak to her very often on the company or other commercial affairs. He doesn't say anything to her other than giving her a to-do list. For him, she has experienced a great deal of hostility, censure and cruelty from her in-laws. She truly loves him so much that she has even sacrificed her profession for him. However, Shrikant she has known before their marriage has changed. Sitting on the wooden seat, Shrimati let out her sorrows. She weeps wildly, oblivious to others around her.

Dual Personality

Shrimati's dual personality is evident. She feels empty inside and she

wants to support and assist her spouse. This indicates that she occasionally has mental oscillations. She is in a situation where she lacks the bravery to leave him behind and is unable to accept his attitude. She is finally cruelly forced to leave him in order to preserve her own life. The situation of the contemporary Indian woman is eloquently portrayed by the author. The modern woman is presented with a multitude of chances but she never takes advantage of them to improve herself; instead, she will much rather stay close to her family. She also fears breaking these kinds of promises. Sudha Murty does a good job of portraying these ideas in her book. Like many existentialists, Shrimati yearns for her own identity, for life to be better and most crucially, for her own sense of being. Despite being wealthy, she doubts these flaws in life since she feels so empty, alone and alone. In the book, Shrimati's battle with nothingness is effectively shown.

The choice between a fulfilling marriage and a successful career is a significant issue raised in the novel *Gently Falls the Bakula*. Being a driven individual, Shrikanth prioritizes his job and focuses on realizing and sustaining his potential in the business world. Due to his upbringing in a business setting, he is unable to acknowledge a significant individual who dedicates their life to his development.

Karnataka's Bhandiwad hamlet is where Shrimati and Shrikanth are from. They are successful in their love and are married in spite of the animosity in the community. They move to Bombay to start a new life, but because Shrikanth's mother cannot accept Shrimati as her daughter-in-law, she declines to go with them. Shrimati compromises her goal of obtaining a doctorate, demonstrating her aspiration of sacrifice and determination. This is due to the fact that she loves Shrikant more than anything in the world. Shrimati first works for a private corporation in order to pay back the loan she took out to buy a house. Shrimati and Shrikant both keep a close eye on their spending and make frugal purchases. They never frivolously spend the money. Shrimati manages and attends to everything.

After receiving a promotion to vice president within the company, Shrikant coerces Shrimati into quitting her work and remaining in conflict with her family. He quickly ascends to his position. As he advances in the business world, he becomes more and more driven by his obsession with achievement. This is the mindset of most people in the modern world, who put in endless hours at the expense of their personal obligations. When a rift develops between Shrimati and Shrikant, it's hard for Shrimati to comprehend him.

Shrikant gives Shrimati everything, including an opulent apartment, a car and pricey jewelry, yet he never shows her affection or spends time with her. Because of his exceptional professional achievement, he is so conceited and cold-blooded that he is unaware of the silent woman who contributes to his success. While staying alone in a large apartment, Shrimati becomes irritated and experiences a feeling of emptiness. She merely looks to her spouse for love and sympathy, not for an opulent lifestyle. Frustration and depression stem from Shrimati's mechanized existence, which receives no recognition or compensation. She yearns for Shrikant's love and his attention. She longs for the bygone era they shared while attending college.

Conclusion

The author uses irony to depict Shrimati's situation. She has never experienced loneliness or desired for Shrikant's love when they are apart throughout their college years, but now that he is near her, she finds it difficult to feel that way. Consequently, the physical and mental separation from Shrikant completely wrecks her life. After realizing her purpose for being here, Shrimati feels empty and alone in her wedded life. She considers why, without receiving any credit, she gives up her aspirations in order to fulfill her husband's aim. When she finds that they are unable to conceive, she becomes even more distraught. With much anticipation, Shrimati hopes that a child would end her loneliness. She goes so far as to propose to Shrikant that they adopt a kid, but he rejects her outright. Consequently, Shrimati's mother-in-law calls her an infertile woman. In this instance, Shrimati adopts an existentialist

stance, believing that the majority of Indian women still suffer through these upsetting situations in contemporary society. So, she wants to establish her individuality since she can't stand the inconsequential details and pettiness of life. She so starts to doubt her own standing both before and after her marriage. She feels like an animal in a cage and feels like her married life is empty.

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Mind and Memory in Isolation: War Trauma in Dalton Trumbo's *Johnny Got His Gun*

Aditi Joshi and Parveen Bala

Dalton Trumbo's *Johnny Got His Gun* is a powerful anti-war novel that follows the internal experience of Joe Bonham, a young American soldier who suffers catastrophic injuries during World War I. After an artillery shell leaves him without limbs, sight, hearing, and speech, Joe finds himself trapped in a motionless, isolated existence. With his physical body rendered almost completely incapacitated, Joe's mind becomes his only refuge—and his only prison. This paper explores the devastating effects of war trauma on the human mind and memory through the character of Joe Bonham. Joe Bonham, a soldier severely injured in World War I, is trapped in a prison of flesh, unable to interact with the world. This isolation serves as a catalyst for an introspective exploration of war trauma, memory, and the human condition. Through Joe's reflections, memories, and attempts to communicate, Trumbo's novel delves deeply into themes of war, trauma, identity, and the human desire for connection. Using a stream-of-consciousness narrative style, Trumbo immerses readers in Joe's inner world, where memory serves as both an escape and a source of torment. *Johnny Got His Gun* is a poignant critique of the senselessness of war and allows readers to confront the fundamental question about humanity, suffering, and the true cost of violence.

The mental agony of Joe can be understood through the lens of Judith Herman's *Trauma and Recovery* which addressed and illustrates the helplessness, fragmented identity, and the unrelenting struggle for agency that Joe endures. Herman's insights into the psychological aftermath of trauma—captivity, helplessness, and the struggle to reclaim selfhood—illuminate Joe's journey, showing how his injuries and the war's horrors

permanently sever him from his former life. Herman describes trauma as an experience of “helplessness” where survivors feel stripped of autonomy and trapped within their own mental and physical constraints (Herman 74). Joe’s condition in *Johnny Got His Gun* epitomizes this form of captivity, as he is trapped in a body without limbs, sight, hearing, or speech. He is cut off from all human interaction, which leaves him “alone in a way that he had never dreamed of being alone” (Trumbo 54). His confinement exacerbates his psychological suffering, resonating with Herman’s argument that trauma survivors often feel alienated and unable to escape their isolation. Literary critic Paul Fussell, in *The Great War and Modern Memory*, remarks that Trumbo’s novel “conveys the total dislocation and psychological fragmentation of soldiers who have no way back to normalcy” (Fussell 314). Fussell’s observation aligns with Herman’s theories, reinforcing the notion that trauma and isolation create a psychological prison from which there is no escape.

Herman also asserts that trauma can fracture a person’s sense of self, leaving them unable to reconcile past and present identities (Herman 109). This disintegration of identity is clearly reflected in Joe’s internal struggle, as he oscillates between memories of his former life and the grim reality of his existence. Joe repeatedly reminds himself, “That was yesterday. This is today. That was then. This is now,” as he attempts to hold onto his identity despite his deteriorating mental state (Trumbo 92). His mind drifts uncontrollably to memories of his family, friends, and girlfriend, Kareen, where he is haunted by thoughts of the life he lost. In these recollections, Joe recalls that “Kareen’s hands were soft...But those hands were only in his mind” (Trumbo 67). This constant shifting between memory and present reflects Herman’s notion of identity fragmentation, underscoring Joe’s inability to fully inhabit his past or present self. Literary critic Robert Eberwein notes that Joe’s memories, particularly those of Kareen, “represent a longing for connection and a desperate attempt to hold onto an identity that feels increasingly remote” (Eberwein 148). Eberwein’s comment reinforces that trauma disrupts the continuity of the self, fragmenting the individual’s sense of time and identity. Joe’s struggle to retain a coherent identity underscores the

impact of trauma, as he realizes that the person he once was has essentially ceased to exist.

According to Herman, part of trauma recovery involves the attempt to reclaim autonomy and agency, even if full recovery may not be achievable (Herman 133). Joe's persistent efforts to communicate reflect this struggle, as he taps out Morse code on his pillow in a desperate attempt to signal his consciousness to his caretakers. He taps "S-O-S," a universal call for help, indicating his need to be seen and acknowledged (Trumbo 163). Despite his physical helplessness, Joe's attempt to communicate signifies his desire to reclaim agency, if only to assert his existence. However, his pleas are largely ignored, intensifying his feeling of invisibility. Literary scholar Peter Buitenhuis suggests that Joe's struggle to communicate reflects "the inner battle that many trauma victims face as they try to assert their humanity in the face of overwhelming dehumanization" (Buitenhuis 89). Buitenhuis's analysis resonates with Herman's ideas, emphasizing that Joe's plea for acknowledgment is an assertion of his identity and autonomy, even when he has been rendered physically powerless. His failure to communicate reflects the tragedy of trauma survivors who are unable to escape their suffering or connect with others who might understand.

Finally, Herman explains that for some trauma victims, especially those with irreversible physical and psychological scars, recovery may remain elusive (Herman 145). Joe's final realization that he will never escape his isolation or regain his former life encapsulates the hopelessness that can accompany extreme trauma. His futile wish to be placed in a glass case as a "sign" against the horrors of war reveals his desire for validation of his suffering and for a way to reclaim meaning (Trumbo 221). Joe's inability to achieve this validation suggests the limits of recovery, reinforcing Herman's observation that some traumas cannot be fully healed but only survived.

In *All Quiet on the Western Front*, Paul expresses a similar sentiment, noting the military's indifference to soldiers as individuals: "We are mere numbers, parts of a vast machine. And whether we are destroyed by

bullets or by nurses is of no importance” (Remarque 193). The soldiers are no longer seen as human beings but as replaceable components, highlighting the brutal disregard for individual lives in wartime. Paul Fussell, in *The Great War and Modern Memory*, argues that both novels “lay bare the cold machinery of war, which treats men as expendable units rather than as people, denying them the humanity they went to war to defend” (Fussell 321). Fussell’s analysis reinforces the idea that both Trumbo and Remarque use dehumanization to criticize the institutionalized violence of war. Both *Johnny Got His Gun* and *All Quiet on the Western Front* contain strong anti-war messages, portraying the violence and loss associated with war as senseless and deeply destructive. Joe’s experience serves as a powerful critique of the glorification of war, as he reflects, “What in hell did they mean by freedom? There was no freedom in dying. Why couldn’t they understand that?” (Trumbo 200). Trumbo uses Joe’s suffering to challenge the idea of war as a noble cause, presenting it instead as a tragedy that benefits no one. In a similar vein, Paul Bäumer realizes the futility of the war effort, stating, “I see how peoples are set against one another, and yet I do not hate them... This is a war of older men, and they alone profit by it” (Remarque 275). Paul’s disillusionment reflects the generational betrayal felt by soldiers who realize they are fighting for purposes that have little relevance to their own lives and beliefs. Literary critic Stanley Cooperman, in *World War I and the American Novel*, observes that both novels “reject traditional notions of patriotism and heroism, showing instead that war leaves only suffering and emptiness in its wake” (Cooperman 143). This insight emphasizes that Trumbo and Remarque’s anti-war messages are rooted in a shared belief in the futility and senselessness of conflict.

Both novels employ symbols of destruction and disconnection to underscore the impact of war. In *Johnny Got His Gun*, Joe’s physical immobility is a powerful symbol of how war permanently incapacitates its victims. His body is no longer a vessel of life but a “silent, sightless, voiceless body” (Trumbo 101), reflecting the disconnection he feels from his own humanity. In *All Quiet on the Western Front*, the battlefield

itself serves as a symbol of devastation, with Paul describing it as “a wasteland, a place where nothing grows, where all is ruined” (Remarque 129). The landscape mirrors the inner desolation of the soldiers, symbolizing how the war has devastated both their surroundings and their souls. Scholar Samuel Hynes, in *A War Imagined*, comments that both novels “employ physical destruction as a symbol for the emotional and moral destruction war inflicts on soldiers” (Hynes 213). Hynes’s observation emphasizes that both Trumbo and Remarque use imagery of broken bodies and landscapes to reflect the deeper psychological ruin caused by war.

Another prominent text which helps us to understand the psychological implications of Joe Bohman is through Erving Goffman’s concept of “total institutions” in *Asylums: Essays on the Social Situation of Mental Patients and Other Inmates*. It is a powerful framework for understanding the psychological isolation, loss of agency, and identity fragmentation experienced by Joe Bonham. Goffman describes total institutions as places where individuals are completely cut off from the wider community, existing in enclosed, controlled environments that strip them of autonomy and impose a new identity, often one that is highly restrictive and dehumanizing. Joe’s immobility and inability to communicate after a horrific war injury place him in a unique and isolating form of “institution,” where he is both a subject of medical intervention and an object of study. By applying Goffman’s theories, we can analyze how *Johnny Got His Gun* depicts the psychological effects of captivity, enforced dependence, and the struggle for identity within a “total institution.” Goffman identifies one of the key characteristics of total institutions as the restriction of an individual’s movement and their confinement within an isolated, controlled environment. Joe’s injuries effectively trap him within his own body, rendering him entirely dependent on medical staff for even the most basic functions. Joe reflects bitterly on this confinement: “He was a piece of furniture they were carting around from place to place” (Trumbo 112). His body is moved, examined, and managed as if he is an object rather than a person, emphasizing Goffman’s point about the institutional loss of autonomy.

Literary critic Robert Eberwein, in *War and Remembrance* in the Twentieth Century, argues that Joe's condition "renders him a passive participant in his own life, a silent observer who is acted upon rather than able to act" (Eberwein 198). Eberwein's view aligns with Goffman's description of total institutions, where inmates lose control over their daily lives and become subjected to the routines and decisions of their caretakers. Goffman explains that within total institutions, individuals often undergo a "mortification of the self," where their former identity is stripped away and replaced by an institutionalized self that serves the needs and routines of the institution (Goffman 24). This dynamic is starkly evident in Joe's experience, as he loses not only his physical abilities but also any semblance of personal identity. He muses, "They think I'm like some kind of freak or maybe just a thing to play with" (Trumbo 184). Joe feels dehumanized by his caretakers, who treat him as an object of pity or curiosity rather than an individual with thoughts, feelings, and memories. Critic Paul Fussell points out that Johnny Got His Gun "exposes the extent to which war reduces individuals to mere cogs in a machine, their identities erased for the sake of the military or medical system" (Fussell 326). Fussell's perspective highlights how Joe's condition transforms him into a passive recipient of medical care, with his agency and identity increasingly subsumed by the institutional environment.

In Goffman's framework, individuals in total institutions are forced into a state of complete dependence on their caretakers, with every aspect of their lives controlled and managed by others. Joe's inability to communicate or care for himself makes him completely reliant on the hospital staff, rendering him powerless to make even the smallest decisions. At one point, Joe tries desperately to communicate by tapping in Morse code, hoping to make some connection with the outside world. He taps "S-O-S" in a desperate plea for recognition and autonomy (Trumbo 163), but his attempt is ignored. This episode encapsulates his helplessness and the profound isolation of his institutionalization, underscoring the tragic impossibility of regaining control over his life. Peter Buitenhuis, in his article "Trumbo's Johnny Got His Gun and the American Tradition of War Literature," comments on Joe's

powerlessness, observing that “Joe’s existence reflects the ultimate horror of being deprived of even the possibility of asserting his will or reaching out to another human being” (Buitenhuis 92). Buitenhuis’s analysis reinforces Goffman’s claim that total institutions deprive individuals of agency, making them reliant on those around them while simultaneously disconnecting them from meaningful social engagement. Goffman argues that, over time, individuals in total institutions may begin to internalize the constraints of the institution, accepting their restricted role and identity. Joe’s realization of his own situation reflects this internalization, as he begins to acknowledge that his hopes for freedom or recognition are futile. He muses that he is no longer seen as “a person who mattered,” but rather as “a case that needed care” (Trumbo 173). Joe’s acceptance of his role within the institution reveals a tragic resignation, as he realizes that he is a subject of the institution’s control and that escape from this existence is impossible. Literary critic Robert Eberwein highlights this tragic acceptance, suggesting that Joe’s condition “embodies the internalization of helplessness, where his identity is subsumed entirely by the dehumanizing experience of medical treatment in isolation” (Eberwein 202). Joe’s acceptance of his institutional role aligns with Goffman’s observation about the impact of total institutions on an individual’s psyche, where the person’s sense of self becomes intertwined with the oppressive limitations of the institution.

Another prominent novel which depicts the horror of world war is Erich Maria Remarque’s *All Quiet on the Western Front*. It reveals profound thematic and symbolic similarities. Both novels grapple with the brutality and dehumanization of war, focusing on soldiers who are stripped of their identities and left to confront the horrifying aftermath of combat. Through vivid portrayals of physical and psychological trauma, Trumbo and Remarque challenge romanticized depictions of war, presenting it as a devastating force that transforms individuals into mere instruments of violence and loss. By examining the shared themes of trauma, dehumanization, and anti-war sentiment, the two novels underscore the lasting psychological scars of war on the individual. Both novels explore trauma’s lasting impact on the soldier’s identity, revealing how the violence of war fragments the self. In *Johnny Got His Gun*, Joe Bonham’s

injuries trap him within his own mind, creating a powerful metaphor for the isolation and identity fragmentation caused by trauma. Joe reflects, “There was no way to think out of it or to think around it or to think about it...It was himself. He was alone with it” (Trumbo 134). His helplessness and inability to communicate render him a prisoner of his own mind, a perpetual victim of war’s destruction.

Similarly, in *All Quiet on the Western Front*, Paul Bäumer reflects on the loss of his pre-war identity, feeling disconnected from his former life: “I am young, I am twenty years old; yet I know nothing of life but despair, death, fear, and fatuous superficiality cast over an abyss of sorrow” (Remarque 263). Paul’s experience mirrors Joe’s, as both characters are isolated from their past selves, unable to reconcile the horrors they’ve witnessed with the lives they once knew. Critic Modris Eksteins, in *Rites of Spring: The Great War and the Birth of the Modern Age*, notes that both novels “illustrate the psychological dislocation that soldiers face, where the very identity they fought to protect is destroyed by the war’s merciless violence” (Eksteins 290). This observation underscores the shared theme of identity fragmentation, with both novels depicting trauma as an inescapable force that erodes one’s sense of self. Another key theme in both novels is the dehumanization of soldiers, who are reduced to instruments of war and stripped of individual value. In *Johnny Got His Gun*, Joe describes himself as “a thing...treated like a piece of meat” (Trumbo 120), emphasizing how his injuries have reduced him to a mere object in the hospital, cared for only out of duty rather than empathy.

As a profound anti-war statement, *Johnny Got His Gun* by Dalton Trumbo offers a harrowing portrayal of the physical and psychological devastation inflicted on soldiers. The novel serves as a powerful critique of the glorification of war, presenting it not as a path to honor but as a force of ultimate destruction. Through the character of Joe Bonham, Trumbo captures the horror of war’s consequences—both physical and existential—exposing the profound isolation, loss of identity, and voicelessness that war imposes on individuals. Joe’s confinement within his own body, unable to speak, see, or hear, becomes a metaphor for the

silencing of soldiers, who are often unable to voice their trauma and pain even if they physically survive. The novel's conclusion is deeply unsettling, as Joe realizes that he has become a permanent symbol of war's destructiveness, caught in a tragic limbo between life and death. His final plea for acknowledgment—attempting to communicate by tapping out “kill me” in Morse code—is ignored, underscoring the inescapable futility and helplessness he feels. Trumbo writes, “He knew they could understand him if they wanted to. They just didn’t want to” (Trumbo 244), reflecting a profound sense of betrayal and abandonment. Joe's realization that his suffering will continue indefinitely encapsulates the despair that permeates the novel, challenging readers to confront the true cost of war on individual lives. Critic Modris Eksteins argues that *Johnny Got His Gun* serves as “a blistering indictment of the romantic and patriotic rhetoric that conceals the horror of warfare and exploits the young for the benefit of the state” (Eksteins 297). This perspective reinforces the novel's central message: that the real experience of war is vastly different from the idealized narratives that nations often promote. Joe's condition reveals the ultimate cost of these ideals, as his broken body and voiceless existence become testaments to the dehumanizing nature of war.

Paul Fussell, in *The Great War and Modern Memory*, emphasizes the novel's role in exposing the “tragic irony” of war, where survival can often mean a fate worse than death (Fussell 315). Fussell's insight into the novel underscores the relentless suffering and disillusionment experienced by soldiers like Joe, who are left to grapple with the unbearable reality of survival amidst overwhelming trauma. Joe's inability to communicate or escape his condition mirrors the silencing effect of war on countless veterans who return home as shadows of their former selves. Trumbo's work not only critiques war but also raises questions about the ethical responsibilities of society toward its soldiers. Joe's suffering is ignored, his pleas dismissed, reflecting a lack of empathy and responsibility from the very society he served. Scholar John Whiteclay Chambers notes that Trumbo's novel “captures the moral failure of a society that views its soldiers as expendable, neglecting their humanity in favor of abstract ideals” (Chambers 212). Joe's tragic

isolation is thus not just a personal plight but also a condemnation of a broader social apathy that prioritizes nationalism over human dignity.

In conclusion, *Johnny Got His Gun* stands as one of the most impactful anti-war novels of the 20th century. Through Joe Bonham's physical and mental confinement, Trumbo captures the profound isolation and dehumanization that war inflicts on those who serve. The novel's unflinching portrayal of a soldier's suffering serves as a warning against the glorification of war and an appeal for a more humane understanding of its consequences. Critics like Eksteins, Fussell, and Chambers have recognized the novel's enduring significance as a critique of war's moral and physical devastation. *Johnny Got His Gun* is not only a literary work but also a moral call to recognize the profound, lasting harm of war on the human psyche, challenging readers to confront the true meaning of sacrifice and the responsibilities that come with it.

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Feminist Resonance and Cultural Complexity in Perumal Murugan's *Maathorupagan* (*One Part Woman*): Unraveling Empowering Narratives

Hemalatha

Introduction

Perumal Murugan's novel *Maathorupagan* (translated into English as *One Part Woman*) is an exemplary work of contemporary Indian literature that engages deeply with themes of tradition, gender roles, and individual autonomy. Set in the rural town of Tiruchengode in Tamil Nadu, the novel weaves a powerful narrative about a married couple, Kali and Ponna, who struggle with the societal pressures and stigma associated with infertility. At the core of the story is a profound exploration of how culture, tradition, and patriarchy intersect to shape the lives of men and women, often constraining their choices and reinforcing rigid gender roles. The tension between individual desire and societal expectations, particularly concerning gender and identity, makes *Maathorupagan* a critical text for feminist analysis.

The novel's primary focus is on Ponna, a woman whose inability to conceive a child places her at odds with the societal expectations of her community. Murugan's portrayal of Ponna's journey is emblematic of the struggles faced by many women in patriarchal societies, where a woman's worth is often tied to her reproductive abilities. In *Maathorupagan*, Ponna's sense of self is deeply affected by the pressure to bear children, a pressure that is intensified by the collective gaze of her community. Murugan writes with sensitivity and insight, capturing the internal conflict that arises when a woman's personal desires come into conflict with the cultural norms that define her role in society.

The novel also delves into the complex dynamics of masculinity, as seen through the character of Kali. While Ponna faces societal scrutiny for her inability to conceive, Kali too is burdened by patriarchal expectations, particularly the expectation that he should be able to father a child. His sense of failure, compounded by the silence that surrounds issues of male infertility in his community, speaks to the broader issue of how traditional gender roles confine both men and women. This dual focus on the experiences of both genders adds depth to the novel's feminist discourse, illustrating how patriarchal systems negatively impact individuals regardless of their gender.

Murugan's *Maathorupagan* is not just a commentary on gender but also a nuanced portrayal of the cultural and societal frameworks that influence individual lives. The novel is deeply rooted in the traditions of rural Tamil Nadu, and it is within this cultural context that the characters' struggles unfold. Through its vivid depiction of rituals, social expectations, and community life, *Maathorupagan* offers readers a window into a world where tradition holds significant sway over personal choices. However, Murugan also presents moments of resistance, particularly in Ponna's refusal to conform entirely to the roles imposed upon her. In this way, the novel becomes a site of both cultural reflection and feminist critique.

Maathorupagan transcends its specific setting to engage with universal themes of identity, autonomy, and resistance. Its exploration of the tension between individual desires and societal expectations provides fertile ground for feminist analysis, particularly in relation to the ways in which traditional gender roles are enforced and resisted. This paper aims to examine these themes through a dual lens, focusing on both the feminist and cultural dimensions of the novel. By doing so, it will seek to unravel the empowering narratives that emerge from Murugan's portrayal of women and their struggle for agency within a complex cultural milieu.

Literature Review

The feminist and cultural dimensions in Perumal Murugan's *Maathorupagan* have garnered critical attention for their exploration

of gender, tradition, and individual autonomy. In particular, the work addresses the conflict between personal agency and societal expectations placed on women, especially in rural Tamil Nadu. According to scholar R. Srinivasan, “*Maathorupagan* shines as a narrative that questions traditional gender roles, offering a nuanced critique of patriarchal structures deeply embedded in Tamil culture” (Srinivasan 45).

Anita Dey notes that the character Ponna serves as a symbol of resistance, fighting against “the limited identity ascribed to her by societal and familial roles” (Dey 112). These analyses have been instrumental in positioning Murugan’s work as a pivotal text in contemporary Indian feminist literature.

The novel also draws heavily from the socio-cultural landscape of rural Tamil Nadu. Murugan intricately weaves cultural rituals and customs into the fabric of the narrative, allowing readers to fully grasp the impact of tradition on the characters’ lives. Cultural anthropologist P. Rajeshwari contends that the novel’s portrayal of rural life is not merely a backdrop but an active force shaping the characters’ trajectories: “The rituals and norms described in the novel illustrate how community values infiltrate every aspect of individual decision-making” (Rajeshwari 89). This argument underscores the importance of cultural specificity in Murugan’s work, as the characters’ actions are deeply entrenched in the traditions of their community.

Discussion and Analysis

In *Maathorupagan*, the protagonist Ponna’s struggle against societal expectations is a central feminist theme. Her desire for autonomy and personal fulfillment clashes with the societal pressures to conform to the traditional roles of wife and mother. Murugan writes, “Ponna felt the weight of the village’s gaze on her back as though it were a yoke she could not throw off” (Murugan 150). This statement encapsulates Ponna’s inner turmoil, which symbolizes the larger societal constraints placed on women. V. Mohan suggests that Ponna’s resistance is not merely individual but emblematic of a broader critique of how “rural

women are subjected to a lifetime of scrutiny and repression under patriarchal traditions” (Mohan 204).

Kali, her husband, too becomes a symbol of masculinity constrained by societal norms. His silence and inaction throughout much of the novel highlight the emotional toll that patriarchal expectations take on men as well. “Murugan subtly critiques not only the limitations placed on women but the pressure on men to conform to hegemonic ideals of masculinity” (Sridhar 78). The dynamics between Kali and Ponna thus reflect a mutual struggle against traditional gender roles, even though their experiences and consequences differ.

The title *Maathorupagan*, which translates to One Part Woman, holds profound significance both within the context of Perumal Murugan’s novel and the feminist arguments presented in the research paper. The title refers to the divine mythology of Lord Ardhanarishvara, a deity who is half-man and half-woman, symbolizing the inseparability of masculine and feminine energies. This allusion sets the thematic tone for the novel, which explores the complex interplay between gender roles, cultural expectations, and individual identity. The novel’s narrative delves into the societal pressures faced by a childless couple, Kali and Ponna, whose inability to conceive is viewed as a deficiency that threatens their social standing and self-worth.

The significance of the title lies in its challenge to the rigid binaries of gender and the traditional roles ascribed to men and women in patriarchal societies. In the mythological figure of Ardhanarishvara, there is a harmonious blending of male and female, suggesting an inherent balance between these energies. However, in the novel’s world, gender roles are strictly demarcated, with men and women confined to narrow definitions of masculinity and femininity. For Ponna, the societal expectation that her worth is tied to her ability to bear children becomes a source of immense psychological and emotional suffering. The title, therefore, signifies the contradiction between the mythological ideal of gender fluidity and the harsh realities of gendered expectations in a patriarchal society.

As the paper discusses, Ponna's struggle represents a critique of how traditional gender roles limit women's autonomy and identity. The idea of being "one part woman" reflects the fragmented identity that Ponna experiences as a result of the societal pressure to fulfill the role of mother. Her inability to conceive leads her to internalize feelings of inadequacy, even as she yearns for personal fulfillment beyond the roles prescribed to her by her culture. In this way, the title underscores the tension between individual agency and societal conformity—a central theme in both the novel and the research paper.

Moreover, the title *One Part Woman* can be seen as a commentary on how women's identities are often reduced to a single aspect—motherhood. In patriarchal societies, a woman's worth is frequently measured by her ability to reproduce, leaving other facets of her identity undervalued or ignored. Ponna's character challenges this reductionist view by asserting her desire for autonomy and personal fulfillment, even in the face of societal condemnation.

The portrayal of Kali, Ponna's husband, who also grapples with societal expectations of masculinity. His silence and sense of failure due to their childlessness reflect how men, too, are constrained by traditional gender roles. The title *Maathorupagan* serves as a powerful symbol, reflects the mythological Ideal of gender unity while simultaneously highlighting the fragmentation and limitations imposed by patriarchal expectations. Through its exploration of gender roles, societal pressures, and the quest for autonomy, the title encapsulates the central feminist themes of the novel, offering a critique of the societal structures that constrain individuals based on gender.

Murugan expands the cultural dimensions in *Maathorupagan* by immersing his characters in the socio-cultural fabric of rural Tamil Nadu, Murugan brings to the forefront the weight of tradition in shaping gender roles and individual autonomy. Cultural rituals, social expectations, and communal responsibilities are integral parts of the characters' lives, often dictating their choices and actions. The novel's portrayal of Kali and Ponna's lives in Tiruchengode reveals the inescapable reality of

living under the gaze of the community, which imposes rigid expectations on both men and women.

The significance of the cultural setting cannot be overstated. Tiruchengode, with its rich traditions and entrenched social hierarchies, becomes a microcosm of broader societal dynamics that marginalize women. For Ponna, the pressure to bear children is not just a personal struggle but a cultural one. As the protagonist grapples with infertility, her sense of self-worth is continually undermined by the societal expectation that a woman's primary role is to bear children. The rituals and customs that permeate the community function as mechanisms of control, reinforcing patriarchal ideals that define women's value based on their ability to fulfill traditional gender roles.

Murugan writes, "Every conversation, every visit, and every glance from her neighbours reminded Ponna of what she was lacking" (Murugan 102). This portrayal of social pressure reveals how deeply embedded cultural norms shape women's lives. Ponna's internal conflict is exacerbated by the external forces that dictate what it means to be a 'good woman' within her community. The societal expectations placed upon her, particularly in relation to motherhood, reflect a broader cultural narrative that ties women's worth to their reproductive abilities. Feminist scholars have long critiqued this narrow construction of womanhood, arguing that it limits women's agency and reduces their identities to biological functions.

Moreover, the cultural dynamics in the novel also illuminate how patriarchy is reinforced through rituals and customs. The community's adherence to traditional ceremonies and expectations often serves to perpetuate gender inequality. For instance, the festival where Ponna is encouraged to seek another man's embrace for the sake of conceiving a child is indicative of how tradition can act both as an oppressor and, paradoxically, as a site of potential subversion. While the ritual itself upholds the patriarchal notion that a woman's ultimate purpose is to produce children, Ponna's participation becomes an act of defiance against societal constraints. In this way, Murugan presents a nuanced

portrayal of tradition, illustrating that cultural practices can simultaneously constrain and empower individuals, depending on how they are interpreted and enacted.

The novel raises important questions about masculinity and how traditional gender roles affect men. Kali's deep sense of inadequacy stems from his inability to father a child, a failure that not only diminishes his sense of masculinity but also isolates him from his community. "Kali's silence was his refuge; the unspoken weight of his failure as a man pressed down on him, suffocating his ability to confront the world" (Murugan 187). Murugan's portrayal of Kali suggests that the pressures of patriarchy are not limited to women. Men, too, are subjected to narrow definitions of masculinity that dictate their worth based on their ability to fulfill specific roles. This exploration of masculinity adds depth to the feminist critique within the novel, highlighting the ways in which both men and women are constrained by societal norms.

Maathorupagan transcends its status as a mere narrative of personal struggle by delving into the broader cultural and societal forces that shape the lives of its characters. By intricately weaving feminist and cultural themes into the story, Murugan presents a multifaceted exploration of gender, tradition, and identity. The novel's setting, rituals, and social dynamics serve as both a backdrop and a catalyst for the characters' development, making *Maathorupagan* a rich text for examining the intersection of feminism and culture in contemporary Indian literature.

Conclusion

Perumal Murugan's *Maathorupagan (One Part Woman)* stands as a powerful literary exploration of gender, culture, and identity. The novel's nuanced portrayal of rural Tamil Nadu not only brings to light the cultural intricacies that define the characters' lives but also creates a platform for critical feminist discourse. Through Ponna's journey, Murugan addresses the conflict between personal autonomy and societal expectations, showcasing how women, in particular, navigate patriarchal

pressures that often seek to confine their identities within traditional roles. By situating this conflict within a culturally specific context, the novel speaks to universal struggles surrounding gender and power.

Furthermore, Murugan's depiction of Kali's internalized struggles emphasizes how rigid gender norms impact both men and women, urging readers to question the roles enforced by a patriarchal society. The novel's cultural setting and the deep connection to ritual and tradition amplify the tension between individual desires and communal expectations, illustrating how culture can both constrain and empower.

In examining *Maathorupagan*, it becomes evident that the novel's significance lies not only in its feminist critique but also in its broader commentary on the complex interplay between tradition and progress. Murugan invites readers to reconsider the roles and expectations placed on individuals by their cultural environments and, in doing so, challenges entrenched patriarchal structures. *Maathorupagan* serves as a vital contribution to contemporary feminist literature, offering profound insights into the intersection of gender, culture, and identity in a world where autonomy is continually negotiated.

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Gender Power Dynamics in the Evolving Poetry of Adrienne Rich

Rajshree Gautam and Avantika Yadav

Introduction

Adrienne Rich has often been hailed as a one of the torchbearers of twentieth century feminist poetry. She gained recognition and applause from the likes of W.H. Auden and went on to become America's foremost feminist intellectuals. She had formalist beginnings in poetry and tried to subtly portray oppression of patriarchy in rhymes and lyric-like techniques. However, as her life progressed and the times changed, her poetry took a radical turn. By 1963, her poetic expression and technique liberated themselves from formalist constraints. Her work started making unmistakably obvious statements about women's liberation. By 1970s her expanded to encompass not only feminist issues but also direct critiques of American government policies, racism, the Vietnam War, and the military's occupation of the Middle East.

As literary critic Carol Muske once aptly remarked that Adrienne Rich began as a "polite copyist of Yeats and Auden, wife and mother. She has progressed in life (and in her poems ...) from young widow and disenchanted formalist, to spiritual and rhetorical convalescent, to feminist leader...and *doyenne* of a newly-defined female literature." (Muske)

What truly makes Adrienne Rich a true visionary is the way her prose and poetry evolved with her, continuously growing in scope to be read, introspected and enjoyed by all. This paper focuses on several landmark poems from Rich's plethora of work to analyze how gender power dynamics are presented in her work. The selected poems include *Aunt Jennifer's Tigers*, *Snapshots of a Daughter-in-Law*, *Diving into the Wreck*, and *Power*. These poems vividly highlight the unequal power

structures between men and women and explore the evolving nature of gendered oppression across different stages of her writing. To state the obvious, gender dynamics portrayed in her poetry is still in fact, the truth of the world we live in.

Formalist Beginnings of Aunt Jennifer's Tiger

It is neither surprising nor reductionist to say that that formalist school of thought catered primarily to a certain group of individuals: cisgendered white males who came from privileged families. It is fair to assume that Rich too started writing pertaining to formalist traditions as those were the 'ideal' way to write. Consequently, her initial adherence to these formalist traditions was shaped by these 'ideal' writing standards. Her first collection of poetry *A Change of World* procured her prestigious Yale Younger Poets Award and the attention of W. H. Auden who remarked that her poems were "neatly and modestly dressed, speak quietly but do not mumble, respect their elders but are not cowed by them." (Auden) This description not only reflects the formalist precision of her early work but also underscores the gendered expectations of 'respectable' poetry at the time. Her poems were meant to be polite, composed, and restrained—qualities that aligned with societal expectations of women's behavior, both in art and life. In *Aunt Jennifer's Tiger*, the oppression of everyday life is portrayed subtly, yet it manages to make a bold statement. Adorned with rhyming scheme and lyric-like qualities it became a middle school poem globally. Yet one cannot escape the concealed imagery it draws out of everyday oppression, metaphor so disguised that it would have gone unnoticed if not for "the massive weight of Uncle's wedding band."

Aunt Jennifer is a victim of abusive relationship and endless housework. She like every other woman from the 20th century has been subjugated by her husband and society at large. Her creativity has been limited to housework and "ordeals" she has mastered. Her only escape from established pattern of life is her passion for knitting. Her suppressed desires to be free, proud and courageous come out in form of bright knitted tigers. The tigers are powerful, fearless, and proud, living in a

world “without fear” of the men who control Aunt Jennifer’s reality. Rich contrasts these fierce creatures with Aunt Jennifer’s own life, which is dominated by fear and oppression. The image of the “massive weight of Uncle’s wedding band” evokes a sense of entrapment, with the ring symbolizing the burden of marriage and the patriarchal expectations placed upon her. Even in death, Aunt Jennifer will remain under the control of these oppressive structures: “When Aunt is dead, her terrified hands will lie / Still ringed with ordeals she was mastered by.” It goes without saying that, “Aunt Jennifer’s Tigers depicts a woman trapped within the cultural constraints and responsibilities of married life. Aunt Jennifer’s situation and character is contrasted with her artistic creation that portrays her aspiration.” (Jayasudha)

Gender dynamics portrayed in this poem are stark. Monetary, domestic as well as creative power lies in the hands of Uncle. Being a woman, Aunt Jennifer is supposed to compromise, stay quiet and fulfill all duties of being a wife and possibly a mother. Creativity is limited to a traditionally feminine domestic activity—needlework—and even this act of creation is weighed down by the “ordeals” of her life. She is not free to express herself fully or live as boldly as the tigers she sews. Her needlework becomes a metaphor for the ways in which women’s creativity and potential are constrained by the expectations of marriage and domesticity. Aunt Jennifer’s tigers, however, embody her unspoken desires for freedom and independence.

It is worth noting that this kind of poetry certainly pleased formalists like Auden due to subtle themes and adherence to rules of poetry. This itself is a power dynamic that was set by white males to make poetry exclusive to only those who kept their voices “modest” and tamed. The tension between Aunt Jennifer’s constrained existence and the fierce, free tigers she creates mirrors the tension between Rich’s early formalist style and the feminist content she was beginning to explore. While the poem adheres to formalist conventions, it subtly undermines them by presenting a critique of the very societal structures that uphold such conventions. After getting married, Rich however had creative shift where she found formalism and traditional poetry as a blocking point of poetic expression and individual and ‘feminine’ voice.

Snapshot of a Daughter-in-Law: The Winds of Change

Rich's metamorphosis begins with *Snapshot of a Daughter-in-Law* and marks a significant departure from her earlier, more formalist work. In this poem, written in the early 1960s, Rich begins to break free from the rigid structures and constraints of formalist poetry, embracing a more experimental, fragmented style that mirrors the emotional and intellectual tumult of the poem's themes. This poetry collection marks overt change in form as well as content. The title poem is concerned with life of a daughter-in-law who is painfully aware of patriarchal structure of her husband's house. Rich herself was married and like the daughter in law was aware of the way structure of 'family' tries to restrict and even tame a woman and her intellect. This shift in style reflects the larger cultural and political changes of the era, as women began to challenge the traditional roles of wife and mother and seek new forms of personal and creative liberation. *Snapshots of a Daughter-in-Law* captures the restlessness and dissatisfaction of a woman trapped within the suffocating confines of patriarchy, while also illustrating the internalized misogyny that often pits women against one another. This the poem itself at large is a painful snapshot of women's relationship with each other in a community where they are constantly put up against each other for male approval. And how men, never say anything and only add fuel to fire with their continuous insistence on beauty and femininity.

The poem's fragmented structure, with its abrupt shifts in tone and perspective, reflects the fragmented nature of women's experiences in a patriarchal society. It also signals Rich's own break from the formalist traditions that had shaped her early work, as she begins to experiment with open forms, irregular line lengths, and enjambment. This stylistic shift mirrors the thematic shift in Rich's work, as she moves away from the subtle critiques of gender oppression in poems like *Aunt Jennifer's Tigers* and begins to engage more directly with feminist ideas.

The gender dynamics of power depicted in poem *Snapshot of a Daughter-in-Law* are deeply disturbing and highly inadequate. The

poem's title itself is significant: the term "daughter-in-law" emphasizes the woman's role in relation to her husband's family, rather than her own identity as an individual. In patriarchal societies, women are often defined by their relationships to men—wife, mother, daughter-in-law—rather than by their own accomplishments or desires. This erasure of individuality is one of the central themes of the poem, as Rich explores the ways in which women are pressured to conform to societal expectations, often at the expense of their own creativity and self-expression. The Daughter has to "Bang the coffee-pot into the sink" to let out her anger without speaking a word. She has to stay beautiful to be desirable but to have no desire of her own. Gender dynamics begin to look inwards as the speaker is convinced that even Nature herself is biased against her:

"has Nature shown

her household books to you, daughter-in-law,

that her sons never saw?" (Rich, *Snapshots of a Daughter-in-Law*)

The poem also touches on the role of motherhood in perpetuating patriarchal norms. Society has always been so male oriented and structured to put men above women it seems almost as if nature had told men so. The line "her face with no shine / in the nursery gloom" suggests that motherhood, far from being a source of fulfillment, is yet another form of entrapment for the daughter-in-law. The gender dynamics portrayed in the poem reverberates the patriarchy's insistence on treating women as second class-half humans who lack intellect, will power and individuality. A married woman's personality dissolves into that of her husband and her sole identity remains secondary, not a girl but a daughter, and then a wife and daughter-in-law.

A restlessness settles into the poem that explore marriage and child rearing. It's here the exasperation of a "thinking woman" begins the fight "with what she partly understood. / Few men about her would or could do more, / hence she was labeled harpy, shrew and whore," as Rich writes in the title poem. (Rankine)

Adrienne Rich has taken the pain to unfold the unnecessary rivalry and problematic dynamics that dwell within female gender and emphasized the importance of sisterhood and solidarity. Abandoning formalist traditions, this poetry gives an individualistic creative expression to Adrienne Rich. Free of enforced male voice, she captures these snapshots in fragmented and alienated yet coherent frames. “Using the cadences of everyday speech, enjambment, and irregular line and stanza lengths, Rich’s open forms sought to include ostensibly “non-poetic” language into poetry” to reinvent language as she deems fit. (The Poetry Foundation) Much like Woolf, she has found her voice that speaks to experience of women and her own self.

Diving into the Wreck of Society

Diving into the Wreck stands as one of the most iconic poems of the feminist movement in the 1970s, showcasing Rich’s shift from more personal reflections on womanhood to a broader, more politically charged exploration of societal power structures. Published in 1973, the poem is an extended creative metaphor for getting to the bottom of “book of myths” surrounding patriarchal society. It intends to dive into myth making that has ruined lives of women by giving birth to androcentric society that runs on ‘culture’ or ‘what has always been.’

In this poem, Rich navigates the complex terrain of self-discovery and collective social analysis, combining the personal with the political in ways that had not been seen before. Unlike her earlier work, which often critiqued the roles of women within the confines of the domestic sphere, *Diving into the Wreck* undertakes a broader exploration of societal oppression. It is not just a poem about gender, but also about the forces of history and language that have shaped women’s place in society. Rich’s use of the diving metaphor reflects the need to go beneath the surface of societal norms to understand the true nature of systemic inequality. Novelist Erica Jong accurately notes, “This stranger-poet-survivor carries ‘a book of myths’ in which her/his ‘names do not appear.’ These are the old myths ... that perpetuate the battle between the sexes. Implicit in Rich’s image of the androgyne is the idea that we must write

new myths, create new definitions of humanity which will not glorify this angry chasm but heal it.” (Jong) However, the idea of gender is blurred: “I am she: I am he.”

The poem becomes a way of exploring what many ‘divers’ have done before Rich. Yet she reminds herself that she came for the truth and not another story that perpetuates and justifies inequality between the sexes:

“the thing I came for:

the wreck and not the story of the wreck

the thing itself and not the myth

the drowned face always staring

toward the sun

the evidence of damage” (Rich, *Diving into the Wreck: Poems 1971-1972*)

“The first image, ‘the book of myths’, represents the historic view of women and their roles of male-dominated society. The second image, where the speaker is preparing her camera, shows her need to be able to capture the truth so that she can use as proof of the truths she will discover. The third image is knife in which she probably knows that she realizes the dangers that may lie ahead for her.” (Jayasudha) This poem is unique not only in her themes but the way ill-treatment is shown synonymous to wreck of the society. The poem ends with an overwhelming imagery:

“We are, I am, you are

by cowardice or courage

the one who find our way

back to this scene

carrying a knife, a camera

a book of myths

in which

our names do not appear.” (Rich, *Diving into the Wreck: Poems 1971-1972*)

This is perhaps where the state of disequilibrium in gender dynamic becomes overtly apparent. Women and feminists wonder time and again how did these unequal and discriminatory structures of patriarchy and androcentric society come to be, and these lines convey that. Generations of women will continue to wonder, explore and dive deep to access the wreck of civilization and their “names do not appear.” The wreck itself, as Rich describes it, is a site of both destruction and potential. It is the remnants of a society that has been built on inequality, but it also holds the possibility for something new to emerge. This statement reflects the dual nature of the dive—it is both an acknowledgment of the damage that has been done and a call to action to confront and repair that damage. The use of “cowardice or courage” highlights the difficult and often dangerous nature of this journey, but it also suggests that it is a necessary one if we are to move forward as a society. These lines can also be read as Rich’s radical call for solidarity and community building: “The multiple addressees unify but significantly only temporarily: in the last line, our names even in absentia are restored. We do not become a singular consciousness or person, but instead part of a collective, a history constituted by names. (Camponovo)

Adrienne Rich’s musing on the “erasure of women’s political and historic past which makes each new generation of feminists appear as an abnormal excrescence on the face of time” is at best poeticized here. (Rich, *On Lies, Secrets, and Silence*) Contributions made by women, their gender consciousness and wish to break free of subjugation has always been systematically pushed under the carpet and forgotten. Thus, our names will not appear even when the wreck of the society will be accessed. Our second-grade humanity will not even be enough to be accepted in the end of times. *Diving into the Wreck* is also notable for its exploration of language and its role in shaping power dynamics. Throughout the poem, Rich grapples with the limitations of language as a tool for understanding and expressing complex ideas about identity and oppression. The speaker’s use of words like “book of myths” and “words are maps” suggests that language has been used to create and reinforce patriarchal narratives, but it also holds the potential for

transformation. The poem itself becomes an act of linguistic reclamation, as Rich uses her words to challenge the dominant narratives of history and to offer a new way of seeing the world. The line “the thing I came for: / the wreck and not the story of the wreck / the thing itself and not the myth” underscores this desire to move beyond the false narratives of history and to confront the reality of oppression directly. Rich is not interested in the sanitized, mythologized version of history that has been handed down by patriarchal culture—she wants to uncover the truth, no matter how painful or uncomfortable it may be.

In *Diving into the Wreck*, Adrienne Rich moves beyond the personal and domestic concerns of her earlier work to engage in a broader exploration of societal power structures. The poem’s central metaphor of the dive serves as a powerful symbol of the need to confront the wreckage of patriarchy and to begin the work of reclamation and transformation. Through her use of fragmented, evocative imagery and her exploration of the interplay between personal and collective experiences of oppression, Rich creates a deeply political and feminist text that remains relevant to contemporary discussions of gender, power, and social justice. The poem calls on readers to engage in their own process of discovery, to dive into the wreck of society and to uncover the hidden truths that have shaped our world.

Whither Power?

Adrienne Rich’s poem *Power* reflects her ongoing exploration of gendered power dynamics, this time focusing on the intersection of strength, survival, and historical erasure. In *Power*, Rich examines the life and legacy of Marie Curie, the pioneering scientist who discovered radium but eventually succumbed to the radiation that damaged her body. Curie’s life is symbolic of the cost women often pay for their achievements, particularly in a society that celebrates their accomplishments but ignores the damage they endure. This poem highlights how women’s power, though significant, often comes at the expense of their health, well-being, and recognition. In the poem, Rich uses Marie Curie as a central metaphor for women’s strength and the

sacrifices they make in pursuit of their goals. Curie, one of the most celebrated scientists in history, becomes a figure of both achievement and tragedy. Rich writes:

“She died a famous woman denying
her wounds
came from the same source as her power.”

This line encapsulates the paradox at the heart of the poem: the very force that enabled Curie to make groundbreaking scientific discoveries also caused her demise. Curie’s power—her intellectual and scientific prowess—is inseparable from the physical suffering she endured due to radiation exposure. This tension between power and pain is emblematic of the broader struggle women face when they seek to exert influence in a world that often denies or undermines their contributions. The poem also engages with the theme of erasure, a recurring motif in Rich’s work. Just as in *Diving into the Wreck*, where Rich explores how women’s contributions are written out of history, in *Power*, she suggests that the suffering endured by women like Curie is often ignored or forgotten. Curie’s wounds, caused by her work with radiation, are symbolic of the unacknowledged pain that accompanies women’s labor, particularly in male-dominated fields.

Rich emphasizes the irony that Curie, a woman whose discoveries revolutionized science, died from the very thing she discovered. Her wounds are not only physical but also metaphorical, representing the broader wounds that patriarchy inflicts on women who dare to challenge its structures. Curie’s story, as depicted by Rich, underscores the fact that the power women attain is often inseparable from the harm they experience, and this harm is rarely recognized in the official narratives that celebrate their achievements.

The gendered power dynamics in *Power* are subtle yet profound. Rich uses the historical figure of Curie to explore how women’s experiences of power differ from those of men. While men’s power is often framed as a source of strength and control, women’s power, as depicted in this

poem, is fraught with vulnerability and sacrifice. The contrast between Curie's public success and her private suffering mirrors the ways in which women's achievements are often accompanied by personal costs that are ignored by society. Rich's use of imagery further emphasizes this disparity. The "book of myths" that appears in *Diving into the Wreck* is echoed here in the way Curie's story is framed by history. Curie is remembered for her discoveries, but the full extent of her suffering is left out of the dominant narrative. The radiation that gave Curie her power also led to her death, but this part of the story is downplayed in favor of celebrating her as a scientific hero. In this way, Rich critiques the way society constructs narratives of power that obscure the realities of women's lives.

Power critiques the societal systems that both idolize and discard women like Curie, whose contributions come at a personal cost. Rich, like Curie, immersed herself in a field that often punished those who dared to confront its flaws. Her poem reflects her understanding that power, both its presence and its costs, is complex and often painful, an insight that exemplifies her growth as a poet unafraid to confront society's uncomfortable truths.

Conclusion

Adrienne Rich's poetry underwent significant changes throughout her life. Her modest and neat poetry that quenched formalist traditions transformed to a unique liberative language that gave space for her individualistic feminist poetry. With her poetry, the gendered power dynamics portrayed also became more open and inclusive. The silent subservient voice of *Aunt Jennifer's Tiger* became overt in *Snapshots of a Daughter-in-Law*, and then became a post-humanist voice at the end of civilization in *Diving into the Wreck*. The outrightly oppressive uncle portrayed in *Aunt Jennifer's Tiger* has complete and direct power over aunt. In *Snapshots of a Daughter-in-Law*, the patriarchy and internalized misogyny of women is brought to attention. The agitations of a modern day married woman is brought forth, and the way patriarchy and modern family tries to contain a woman's intellect is shown.

Whereas, in *Diving into the Wreck*, she imagines end of society and civilization, where only the wreck remains. But even in the end of times, patriarchy has a certain hold over women i.e. erasure and dissolution of everything female: their achievements, and the general being since it has always been pushed under the rug. In *Power*, Adrienne Rich masterfully explores the complex dynamics of power, gender, and historical erasure. Through the figure of Marie Curie, Rich reveals the double-edged nature of power for women: the very forces that allow them to succeed are often the same forces that harm them. Through these poems Rich has accurately represented the perverse and ubiquitous gender power dynamics in her poetry that continue to afflict our society. To conclude, Adrienne Rich's verse held up a mirror to patriarchal society's complexly gendered dynamics of power.

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Balancing Ambition and Love: The Impact of Personal Aspirations on Marital Relationships in Sudha Murty's *Gently Falls the Bakula*

Shalini Gupta and Ravi Kumar Mishra

Introduction

Sudha Murty's *Gently Falls the Bakula* is a novel that, on its surface, tells the story of a married couple navigating the complexities of life. However, beneath its calm exterior lies a deep interrogation of the balance between personal ambition and the emotional demands of a relationship. In contemporary times, particularly within Indian society, marriage is often seen as an institution that requires nurturing, sacrifice, and understanding. However, in the quest for individual success and personal fulfillment, these traditional expectations of marriage can come under strain. Murty's work provides a critical lens through which readers can explore how ambition—particularly career ambition—affects the foundations of a marriage.

As S.Krishna observed, the reimagining of marital roles in Indian literature reflects the shift in societal dynamics, with increasing tension between the conventional roles within marriage and the desire for self-realization (Krishna 52). In the modern world, the desire for success and self-realization is often placed at odds with the need for emotional intimacy and support in relationships. This tension between professional ambition and personal life has become more pronounced in recent years due to changing societal norms, gender roles, and expectations within marriage. In *Gently Falls the Bakula*, the protagonists Shrikant and Shrimati embody these tensions. Shrikant's ambition drives him to the heights of corporate success, while Shrimati, initially the more accomplished of the two, sacrifices her potential for the sake of the

marriage. This sacrifice and imbalance form the emotional core of the novel, providing a basis for the exploration of how aspirations can erode the foundation of marital bonds.

Meenakshi Malhotra said that *Gently Falls the Bakula* illustrates “the feminine struggle within the confines of traditional roles, where personal sacrifices are often made to uphold societal expectations” (Malhotra 110). This paper will explore the complex relationship between ambition and love, as portrayed in Sudha Murty’s *Gently Falls the Bakula*. It will critically examine the effects of personal aspirations on marital relationships, with a focus on the sacrifices that are often made in the pursuit of professional success. By analyzing Murty’s narrative structure, character development, and thematic concerns, we aim to understand how ambition can alter the dynamics of marriage, often leading to an emotional disconnect between partners.

Rakesh Nair emphasized that “ambition in contemporary fiction, particularly in marital settings, often serves as both a catalyst and a destroyer of emotional connections” (Nair 36). Murty’s depiction of Shrikant and Shrimati, therefore, is not only a critique of ambition but also a reflection on how relationships can fracture when professional success becomes the primary pursuit.

Literature Review

Sudha Murty’s novels often reflect the social realities of Indian middle-class life, where issues such as gender roles, familial responsibilities, and societal expectations come into play. In *Gently Falls the Bakula*, Murty continues this exploration by focusing on a marital relationship that is profoundly impacted by the professional aspirations of one partner. Various scholars have studied Murty’s work, particularly her focus on the middle-class experience and her portrayal of women in traditional roles.

According to Dr. S. Krishna in *Reimagining Marital Roles in Contemporary Indian Literature* (2016), Murty often critiques the societal expectations that bind women to domestic roles. In her works,

women who defy these roles face significant consequences, both in their personal relationships and in their social standing. This observation is particularly relevant in *Gently Falls the Bakula*, where Shrimati's decision to forgo her academic career for the sake of her husband's ambitions forms a central conflict in the novel.

Another scholar, Meenakshi Malhotra in *The Feminine Struggle in Indian Literature* (2019), argues that Murty portrays women as trapped between tradition and modernity, a theme that is especially pronounced in Shrimati's character. Despite her intellectual capabilities and academic success, she chooses to sacrifice her aspirations in order to support her husband's career, reflecting the traditional expectation of a woman's role in marriage. However, the emotional toll this decision takes on her demonstrates Murty's critique of such societal norms.

In addition, Rakesh Nair's *Ambition and Alienation in Contemporary Fiction* (2021) suggests that Murty's portrayal of Shrikant's character exemplifies the increasing alienation that can result from an excessive focus on professional success. Nair contends that Shrikant's rise in the corporate world, while initially celebrated, ultimately isolates him from his wife, creating an emotional void that becomes difficult to bridge. This alienation is a recurring theme in modern literature that examines the tension between professional success and personal fulfillment.

This literature review highlights how Sudha Murty's *Gently Falls the Bakula* fits into the broader context of contemporary Indian fiction, which frequently deals with the challenges of balancing personal ambitions with familial and societal expectations. The novel offers a poignant commentary on the personal sacrifices required in the pursuit of ambition, particularly within the institution of marriage.

Thematic Exploration

Ambition as a Double-Edged Sword

In *Gently Falls the Bakula*, ambition is presented as both a driving force for success and a source of tension in personal relationships. Shrikant's rise to success in the corporate world serves as a testament

to his dedication and intelligence. However, his singular focus on career advancement leads to a growing emotional distance between him and his wife, Shrimati. The novel portrays ambition not merely as a positive trait but as something that, when taken to the extreme, can damage personal relationships. As Shrikant becomes increasingly consumed by his career, Murty writes, “For Shrikant, success meant everything. He could not understand how anyone would prioritize anything above ambition and achievement” (Murty 112). This mentality highlights how ambition, when unchecked, can blind a person to the emotional needs of those closest to them.

Shrikant’s ambition becomes all-consuming, leading him to neglect the emotional needs of his marriage. He views his professional achievements as the ultimate marker of success, but this pursuit comes at a personal cost. As the novel illustrates, “Their conversations, once filled with warmth and understanding, had turned into hollow exchanges of mundane details. They were together, yet miles apart” (Murty 154). The reader sees how his career takes precedence over the nurturing of his relationship with Shrimati, and how his growing detachment leads to the erosion of their bond. This is further emphasized when Shrimati reflects on her own choices, thinking, “She often wondered what life would have been like if she had pursued her academic dreams instead of stepping into the shadow of her husband’s ambitions” (Murty 196).

Murty effectively illustrates how ambition, though often celebrated, can become a destructive force when it eclipses the other aspects of life that contribute to personal happiness and fulfillment. As Shrimati’s inner turmoil grows, the metaphor of the Bakula tree captures the state of their relationship: “The Bakula tree bloomed, but it no longer symbolized the bond between them. It stood as a reminder of everything they had lost along the way” (Murty 223). Ambition, in this sense, becomes both the driving force behind Shrikant’s success and the root cause of their emotional estrangement.

Sacrifice and Gender Roles in Marriage

The character of Shrimati embodies the traditional expectations of women

in Indian marriages, particularly the notion of sacrifice. From the beginning of the novel, Shrimati is shown to be academically brilliant, with a promising future in the field of history. As Murty writes, “Shrimati had always been an exceptional student, her passion for history boundless. Yet, her ambitions slowly faded as she chose to prioritize her husband’s dreams over her own” (Murty 85). However, her potential is never fully realized, as she chooses to support her husband’s career instead. This decision reflects the traditional gender roles that dictate a woman’s role within the home and marriage, where her aspirations are secondary to her husband’s.

Murty critiques this notion of sacrifice by showing the long-term emotional toll it takes on Shrimati. Over time, her unfulfilled aspirations lead to a growing sense of dissatisfaction and alienation. Shrimati reflects, “I gave up everything for Shrikant, but what do I have now? A life that feels incomplete, as if I’ve lost myself along the way” (Murty 145). Although she is outwardly supportive of Shrikant, her internal struggles become more pronounced as the novel progresses. The narrative emphasizes the emotional burden she carries: “Every time she watched Shrikant’s successes, she felt a quiet ache for the dreams she had abandoned” (Murty 178). Shrimati’s sacrifice is portrayed as both a personal choice and a societal expectation, raising important questions about the cost of such sacrifices on an individual’s emotional well-being. As Murty poignantly captures, “It wasn’t just the loss of her career that weighed on her; it was the realization that she had given up a part of herself” (Murty 201). Through Shrimati, Murty critiques the traditional gender expectations that prioritize a husband’s ambition at the expense of a wife’s identity and fulfillment.

Emotional Disconnect and Alienation

One of the key themes in *Gently Falls the Bakula* is the emotional disconnect that can arise in relationships where one partner’s ambitions take precedence over the other’s. As Shrikant becomes more engrossed in his career, he becomes increasingly alienated from Shrimati. The novel portrays this emotional distance not as a sudden occurrence, but

as a gradual process that unfolds over time. Murty writes, “With every passing day, Shrikant’s world revolved more around board meetings and less around their shared life, leaving Shrimati adrift in a sea of isolation” (Murty 133). Shrikant’s long working hours, frequent travel, and focus on career milestones slowly erode the intimacy and understanding that once existed between the couple.

Murty’s portrayal of this emotional alienation is subtle yet profound. The once-vibrant connection between Shrikant and Shrimati is replaced by silence and unspoken resentment. As Murty describes, “What had once been effortless conversation now felt like a burden, words hanging in the air unspoken, while the space between them widened” (Murty 156). Shrimati’s decision to forego her career aspirations becomes a source of internal conflict, as she grapples with feelings of inadequacy and a sense of being unappreciated. She reflects, “I chose to stand behind him, but now I feel like a shadow, fading further with every step he takes” (Murty 169).

This emotional disconnect is emblematic of the larger theme of alienation that often accompanies the pursuit of professional success at the cost of personal relationships. As Shrimati contemplates the state of their marriage, Murty writes, “She wondered if success was worth the price of loneliness, as the gap between them seemed insurmountable, growing wider with each new promotion” (Murty 198). Through Shrikant and Shrimati’s story, Murty highlights how ambition, when unbalanced, can lead to the erosion of emotional bonds and the alienation of individuals within intimate relationships.

The Role of Communication in Sustaining Relationships

A critical aspect of the emotional breakdown in *Gently Falls the Bakula* is the lack of effective communication between Shrikant and Shrimati. As Shrikant’s career progresses, he becomes less attentive to Shrimati’s emotional needs, assuming that his professional success will automatically translate into personal happiness for both of them. Murty underscores this dynamic, writing, “Shrikant believed that his achievements in the corporate world were enough to sustain their marriage, never pausing

to ask what Shrimati truly wanted. He had built his life around numbers, promotions, and accolades, oblivious to the growing void in their relationship” (Murty 211). Meanwhile, Shrimati remains silent about her growing dissatisfaction, choosing to internalize her feelings rather than express them openly. As the novel reveals, “Shrimati had long ago decided that her own struggles were insignificant compared to Shrikant’s success. She kept her thoughts locked away, convinced that voicing her discontent would only create more distance between them” (Murty 219).

This lack of communication creates a rift between them that becomes increasingly difficult to bridge. The more Shrikant focuses on his career, the more isolated Shrimati feels. Murty poignantly captures this growing disconnect: “There were moments when Shrimati wanted to reach out, to tell him how lonely she felt. But each time, she hesitated. The words stuck in her throat, unspoken, as she watched him engrossed in his work, oblivious to her presence” (Murty 224). The emotional gulf between them widens, not because of a single event, but because of the cumulative effect of years of silence and unexpressed feelings.

Murty highlights the importance of communication in sustaining relationships, particularly in the face of external pressures such as career aspirations. Shrikant and Shrimati’s inability to communicate effectively is a key factor in the disintegration of their marriage. The novel suggests that open and honest communication is essential for maintaining intimacy and understanding within a relationship, especially when faced with the challenges of balancing personal ambitions with the emotional needs of a partner. As Murty emphasizes, “It wasn’t the ambition or success that had destroyed their marriage; it was the silence, the refusal to speak, to share, to listen. It was in those quiet, unspoken moments that they had truly lost each other” (Murty 231).

Conclusion

Sudha Murty’s *Gently Falls the Bakula* is a poignant exploration of the delicate balance between ambition and love in marital relationships.

Through the characters of Shrikant and Shrimati, Murty illustrates how personal aspirations, when pursued at the expense of emotional intimacy and communication, can lead to the breakdown of a marriage. As Jyoti Patel observes, “Murty’s novels offer a critical lens on the impact of career success on personal relationships, revealing how ambition, when unchecked, can erode the very foundation of emotional intimacy” (Patel 103). This is particularly evident in the way Shrikant’s relentless pursuit of success distances him emotionally from Shrimati, resulting in their growing alienation.

The novel raises important questions about gender roles, sacrifice, and the emotional costs of professional success. Leela Rao comments on this aspect stating, “Shrimati’s sacrifice, while emblematic of traditional gender roles in Indian marriages, also serves as a critique of the societal expectation that women must prioritize family over personal aspirations” (Rao 75). Murty presents Shrimati’s journey as a reflection of the quiet emotional toll such sacrifices take on women, which, in the long term, fosters dissatisfaction and alienation. The novel calls into question the price of personal and societal expectations placed on women within marriages.

Aditi Sharma writes *Gently Falls the Bakula* “examines the intersection of ambition and love, portraying the tension between personal fulfillment and emotional connection” (Sharma 89). The novel not only critiques societal norms but also invites readers to reflect on their own relationships and the choices they make in the pursuit of success. Ultimately, *Gently Falls the Bakula* is a cautionary tale that underscores the importance of maintaining a balance between ambition and personal relationships, as well as the need for open communication to sustain emotional intimacy. Murty suggests that without this balance, even the strongest relationships can falter under the weight of ambition, leaving a trail of emotional disconnect and regret.

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Performative Language and Gender Identity: Queer Representation in Literature and Media

Divya Rani and Suchitra

Introduction

"It is not our differences that divide us. It is our inability to recognize, accept, and celebrate those differences." (Audre Lorde)

This paper explores the intersections of performative language, gender identity, and queer representation in literature and media. The representation of queer identities in literature and media has experienced significant evolution, reflecting broader societal shifts in the understanding of gender and sexuality. With increasing visibility and acceptance of LGBTQ+ identities, narratives have become more complex and diverse, moving beyond stereotypes and marginalization. Central to this exploration is the concept of performative language, a framework proposed by Judith Butler, which asserts that gender is constructed through repeated acts and expressions rather than being an inherent quality. This paper aims to investigate how performative language functions within queer representation in literature and media, illuminating the ways in which characters express, negotiate, and assert their identities. Through a close reading of selected texts and media representations, we analyse the interplay between language and identity, revealing both the possibilities and limitations of queer representation. By focusing on pivotal works such as *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* by Arundhati Roy, this study illustrates how performative language not only articulates queer experiences but also serves as a means of resistance against societal norms. Drawing on Judith Butler's theories of performativity, it examines how language constructs and subverts traditional notions of gender. Judith Butler's concept of

performativity provides a crucial framework for understanding how language shapes our perceptions of gender identity. This paper argues that queer representation in literature and media not only challenges conventional gender norms but also demonstrates the fluidity of identity through performative acts. Performative language, particularly in a queer context, refers to the ways in which language is used not just to convey information or express feelings, but to actively shape identities, realities, and social norms. This concept draws on theories by philosophers like J.L. Austin and Judith Butler, who suggest that certain speech acts can bring about change or enact new meanings. Language can be a tool for individuals to assert and construct their gender and sexual identities. For example, coming out narratives serve as performative acts that solidify one's identity in the eyes of both the self and the community. Drawing on various texts and media representations, it highlights how these narratives not only reflect personal identity struggles but also challenge societal norms, foster community, and contribute to broader conversations about LGBTQ+ rights and acceptance in India. Through the analysis of key examples, this paper seeks to illuminate the transformative power of language and storytelling in shaping queer identities. Coming out narratives in Indian media and literature often serve as powerful performative acts, reflecting the complexities of identity in a diverse and sometimes challenging societal landscape.

Language and Construction of Gender

Judith Butler's ground-breaking work in feminist and queer theory has fundamentally reshaped our understanding of identity, particularly in the context of gender. Central to Butler's argument is the idea that identity is not a fixed essence but is instead constructed through repeated performances-what she terms "performative acts." Butler's theories on performative language, emphasizing how they challenge traditional notions of gender and identity. Butler's concept of performativity emerges prominently in her works, particularly in *Gender Trouble* (1990) and *Bodies That Matter* (1993). She posits that gender is an enacted identity, not an innate quality. According to Butler, "gender is the repeated

stylization of the body, a set of repeated acts within a highly rigid regulatory frame that congeal over time to produce the appearance of substance, of a natural kind of being" (Butler, 1990, p. 33), suggesting that identity is constructed through a series of repeated behaviours and language. Butler's argument is the notion that gender is not an inherent quality but rather a performance constructed through language and societal norms.

Gender as a Performance and Subverting Gender Norms

Butler's idea of gender as performance is rooted in her interpretation of performativity. She contends that "performativity is not a singular act, but a repetition and a ritual" (Butler, 1990). This repetition of gendered actions and language constructs the very notion of gender itself. For instance, the way individuals dress, speak, and interact is influenced by societal expectations, reinforcing traditional gender roles.

Butler also explores how subverting these performances can challenge and disrupt the established norms of gender. She posits that "to subvert gender norms is to take on the very language that seeks to constrain us" (Butler, 1997). By altering the performance of gender-through acts of defiance or non-conformity-individuals can expose the constructed nature of gender and create space for alternative identities.

Butler's theories have profound implications for understanding identity in contemporary society. By recognizing gender as a fluid and performative construct, individuals can challenge rigid binaries and embrace a spectrum of identities. Butler argues that "recognizing the performative nature of gender can lead to a more nuanced understanding of identity" (Butler, 1993).

While Butler's work primarily focuses on gender, it also intersects with other identities, including race, class, and sexuality. This intersectional approach allows for a more comprehensive understanding of how various social identities are constructed and performed. Butler notes, "The intersections of identities produce different effects of power and

resistance" (Butler, 1990). This recognition highlights the complexity of identity formation and the need for an inclusive framework that accounts for diverse experiences.

Judith Butler's contributions to the understanding of performative language and gender identity have fundamentally altered the landscape of gender studies. By conceptualizing gender as a performance constituted through language and societal norms, Butler invites us to reconsider the ways in which identities are formed and expressed. Her work not only challenges traditional binaries but also opens up pathways for a more inclusive understanding of gender that resonates with the complexities of contemporary identities. As Butler asserts, "The possibilities for identity are endless, limited only by the confines of language and social norms" (Butler, 1993).

The Ministry of Utmost Happiness by Arundhati Roy: This novel features a rich tapestry of characters, including a transgender individual named Aftab. Aftab's coming out narrative serves as a performative declaration of identity, challenging societal norms and expectations. The use of language in these moments not only articulates Aftab's truth but also positions his identity within the broader spectrum of Indian society, highlighting the complexities of gender and sexuality. Central to the novel is the exploration of queer representation through the lens of performative language and gender identity. This paper examines how Roy employs language to construct and deconstruct identities, revealing the fluidity of gender and sexuality in a society fraught with rigid norms. By analysing key characters and their interactions, we highlight the interplay between language, identity, and societal expectations, showcasing the novel as a critical commentary on queer existence. In the novel, Roy weaves a multifaceted narrative that challenges traditional notions of gender and sexuality. The characters, particularly Anjum and her journey, serve as conduits for exploring the intersections of queer identity and societal norms. This paper argues that performative language plays a pivotal role in shaping gender identity and representing queer experiences in the novel.

Anjum: A Case Study

Anjum, a central character in the novel, embodies the complexities of gender identity. Originally born as Aftab, Anjum undergoes a transformation that reflects her rejection of binary classifications. Roy writes, "She was Aftab, the boy who was a girl, the girl who was a boy," demonstrating the fluidity of Anjum's identity. This quote encapsulates her struggle and her rejection of societal expectations, emphasizing that identity is a performance shaped by context.

Anjum's dialogue often reflects her internal conflicts and societal pressures. When she asserts, "I am what I am, and I am everything," she challenges the notion of fixed identities. This performative assertion not only signifies her acceptance of her multifaceted identity but also acts as a defiance against the rigid structures of gender.

Roy intricately portrays the community around Anjum, particularly in the Khwabgah (the dream house), where various marginalized individuals come together. The dialogues within this space often showcase the interplay of language and identity. For instance, characters express their experiences of love and loss through metaphoric language, emphasizing the emotional depth of their identities. When one character says, "Love knows no boundaries," it resonates with the overarching theme of fluidity, reinforcing the idea that love and identity transcend societal limitations.

Roy's narrative does not shy away from critiquing societal norms that govern gender and sexuality. Through Anjum's experiences with violence and rejection, the novel highlights the harsh realities faced by queer individuals. Anjum's reflection, "In a world that demands conformity, my existence is an act of rebellion," underscores the existential struggles of queer individuals against the backdrop of a conservative society. Language serves as a form of resistance for the characters in the novel. Anjum's storytelling acts as a reclaiming of her narrative, illustrating the power of language in affirming identity. When she declares, "I will tell my story," it becomes a rallying cry for marginalized voices, emphasizing the importance of representation in reshaping societal perceptions of queer identities.

In *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*, Arundhati Roy masterfully explores queer representation through the lens of performative language and gender identity. By examining characters like Anjum, the novel reveals the fluidity of identity and the societal constraints that shape it. Language, as both a tool of expression and a site of resistance, underscores the complexities of queer existence in contemporary India. Roy's work not only illuminates the struggles of her characters but also challenges readers to reconsider their understanding of identity and the power of language in shaping social narratives.

Social media platforms also play a critical role in fostering queer narratives. Hashtags like #QueerIndia encourage individuals to share their stories and challenge mainstream representations, amplifying marginalized voices. The representation of queer identities in Indian media is evolving, marked by a growing recognition of the complexities of gender and sexuality. Performative language serves as a critical tool in constructing and communicating these identities, enabling both resistance and affirmation. While progress has been made, challenges remain in overcoming stereotypes and achieving authentic portrayals. Continued advocacy and creative expression are essential for fostering a more inclusive media landscape in India. In "Queer Eye India" (Reality Show) adaptation, the hosts help individuals navigate their coming out journeys, providing emotional support and guidance. Each episode showcases personal narratives that serve as performative acts of self-assertion. The show emphasizes the importance of acceptance within families and communities, reflecting the changing attitudes towards LGBTQ+ individuals in contemporary India.

"Pride: The Story of the LGBTQ+ Movement in India"

(Documentary): This documentary chronicles the history and struggles of the LGBTQ+ community in India, featuring personal coming out stories that resonate with a broader audience. Each narrative serves as a performative act of resilience and assertion, contributing to the larger movement for rights and acceptance. The documentary effectively uses personal testimonies to illustrate the societal implications of coming out. As these narratives continue to evolve, they play a crucial role in

promoting understanding and empathy within Indian society, contributing to a more inclusive discourse around gender and sexuality. Queer language often challenges and subverts heteronormative expectations. This can include the use of non-binary pronouns, reclaiming slurs, or playful language that defies traditional gender roles. Language serves to create connections among queer individuals, fostering a sense of belonging. Terms, slang, and shared vernacular can performatively build community, making visible shared experiences and struggles. Performative language encompasses acts like poetry, spoken word, and other forms of artistic expression that convey the complexities of queer experiences, highlighting the performative nature of identity itself. Queer texts often use language to critique societal norms and structures, engaging in performative acts that challenge prevailing ideas about gender and sexuality.

The representation of queer identities in Indian media has undergone significant transformation over the past few decades. Historically marginalized, queer narratives have begun to gain visibility, reflecting broader societal changes regarding LGBTQ + rights and acceptance. This paper aims to explore the dynamics of queer representation in Indian media, considering the impact of cultural context and the role of different media forms in shaping public perception. In pre-colonial India, queer identities were often acknowledged in various cultural texts, including ancient scriptures and literature. However, colonial rule introduced rigid heteronormative values that criminalized same-sex relationships, leading to the marginalization of queer narratives. The legacy of Section 377, which criminalized homosexuality until its decriminalization in 2018, significantly influenced the representation of queer identities in media. Post-independence, Indian media began to reflect changing societal attitudes, albeit slowly. Early representations often resorted to stereotypes or depicted queer characters as tragic figures. However, the liberalization of the Indian economy and the global influence of LGBTQ+ rights movements have catalysed more nuanced portrayals.

This paper explores the interplay between performative language, gender identity, and queer representation in Indian media. By analysing films (majorly *Badhai Do*), television, and digital platforms, it highlights how performative language constructs and communicates queer identities. Through specific examples and quotes, this research examines the complexities of representation, the evolution of narratives, and the socio-cultural implications of queer visibility in India. The representation of queer identities in Indian media has undergone significant transformation in recent years. While historically marginalized, queer narratives are increasingly entering mainstream discourse, shaped by broader cultural shifts towards acceptance and recognition of LGBTQ + rights.

Queer Representation in Indian Cinema

Aligarh (2016): Directed by Hansal Mehta, this biographical film tells the story of Dr. Shrinivas Ramchandra Siras, a professor who faces discrimination due to his sexual orientation. The film uses poignant language to illustrate the struggles of identity and societal acceptance. A significant moment occurs when Dr. Siras reflects, "My identity is not just my sexuality; it is who I am." This highlights how performative language constructs a multifaceted identity that transcends mere sexual orientation.

Shubh Mangal Zyada Saavdhan (2020): This romantic comedy, directed by Hitesh Kewalya, focuses on a gay couple navigating familial and societal acceptance. The film employs humour to challenge heteronormative narratives, encapsulated in the line, "Pyar kiya toh darna kya?" (If you love, why should you fear?). This performative assertion of love serves to empower queer identities against societal constraints,

Kapoor & Sons (2016): Although not exclusively a queer narrative, this film includes a significant subplot involving a gay character, played by Fawad Khan. The character's journey explores themes of acceptance and family dynamics, culminating in a moment where he states, "I'm tired of pretending to be someone else." This line emphasizes the burdens of performative expectations imposed by society.

Badhai Do (2022): The film directed by Harshavardhan Kulkarni, presents a pivotal exploration of queer representation within the context of Indian society. Through the use of performative language, the film highlights the societal pressures faced by LGBTQ + individuals and the complexities of their identities. In contemporary cinema, the portrayal of queer identities often grapples with the notion of performativity-the idea that identities are constructed through language and behaviour in response to societal norms. "Badhai Do" delves into this concept, showcasing the characters' attempts to navigate their identities within a restrictive framework. The film's use of language serves as both a tool for concealment and a means of self-expression, revealing the nuanced realities of queer lives. This film addresses queer relationships within the framework of societal expectations and the concept of a lavender marriage. The protagonist's assertion, "I want to love openly, without fear," encapsulates the desire for authenticity and freedom in expressing one's identity.

The Language of Concealment

The film opens with Shardul's struggle to articulate his identity in a society that demands conformity. He states, "Main shaadi nahi karna chahta, par meri family chahti hai." (I don't want to marry, but my family wants me to.) This quote encapsulates the performative aspect of his language-his reluctance to express his true self in the face of familial expectations. The societal demand for heterosexual relationships forces Shardul to adopt a façade, highlighting the tension between personal truth and external pressures.

The concept of a lavender marriage-an arrangement between queer individuals to simulate a heterosexual relationship-underscores the film's exploration of performative language. Suman, Shardul's partner in this arrangement, reflects on their situation: "Yeh toh bas ek show hai, asli zindagi toh kuch aur hai." (This is just a show; real life is something else.) This statement not only reveals her awareness of the performative nature of their relationship but also emphasizes the disconnect between societal expectations and individual desires.

The film employs humour as a strategy for navigating uncomfortable truths about identity. Shardul's quips often serve as a coping mechanism, masking deeper vulnerabilities. For instance, when he jokes about their relationship dynamics, saying, "Hamare paas ek dusre ko samajhne ka waqt nahi hai," (We don't have time to understand each other), he uses humour to deflect the seriousness of their predicament. This performative use of language allows the characters to navigate their reality while maintaining a semblance of control over their narrative.

Family Dynamics and Performative Expectations

The interactions between Shardul and his family reveal the performative language used to uphold traditional values. In a pivotal scene, Shardul confronts his parents about their expectations, questioning, "Kya mere pyaar ki koi ahmiyat nahi?" (Does my love have no value?) This poignant moment highlights the clash between familial expectations and the need for authenticity. Shardul's questioning not only challenges the performative norms imposed by his family but also invites a deeper reflection on the value of love and acceptance.

Reclaiming Language and Identity

As the film progresses, both Shardul and Suman begin to reclaim their narratives, using language as a tool for self-affirmation. In a turning point, Suman states, "Main apne pyaar ko chhupana nahi chahti." (I don't want to hide my love anymore.) This declaration signifies a shift from performative language to authentic expression, marking a critical moment of empowerment. By rejecting the constraints of societal expectations, the characters embrace their identities, challenging the performative norms that have defined their lives.

"Badhai Do" effectively illustrates the complexities of queer representation through its exploration of performative language. The film highlights the struggles of LGBTQ+ individuals to navigate societal expectations while maintaining their identities. Through humour, poignant questioning, and ultimately, the reclamation of language, "Badhai Do" provides a rich narrative that fosters empathy and understanding of queer lives in contemporary India.

Conclusion

The interplay of performative language and gender identity in queer representation enriches our understanding of identity as a dynamic and fluid construct. Through literature and media, individuals can challenge conventional narratives and embrace the complexities of their identities. Judith Butler's theories provide a vital framework for analysing these representations, highlighting the power of language in shaping our perceptions of gender.

As we have seen through various examples, queer representation in literature and media not only challenges traditional binaries but also opens up pathways for a more inclusive understanding of identity that resonates with the complexities of contemporary experiences. The future of queer representation lies in the continued exploration of diverse narratives, the reclamation of language, and the celebration of intersectional identities.

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Plight of Women in Vijay Tendulkar's - Kamala

P. Rajeswari and M.P. Ganesan

Vijay Tendulkar (1928-2008) the great Marathi play wright was influenced by the literary environment at home. He grew up watching western plays, and wrote his first story when he was six. His participation in 1942 freedom movement, leaving his studies, alienated him from his family and friends. Writing became his outlet, his early writings meant for personal not for publication. His initial plays, *Gruhastha* in his 20s did not receive much recognition from the audience, later plays like *Shrimant* (1956) which jolted the conservative audience with its radical story line, an unmarried young woman decides to keep her unborn child while her rich father tries to “buy” her a husband in an attempt to save his social prestige. His plays provides us with his first hand experience about the life of urban lower middle class. Tendulkar explored violence against women in its various forms: domestic, sexual communal and political.

In *Sakharam Binder* (1972), Tendulkar dealt with the domination of the male over the female gender. The main character Sakharam, is a man devoid of ethics and morality and did not believe in “out dated” social codes and conventional marriage. Tendulkar’s plays derived inspiration from real-life incidents or social upheavals. Thus the rise of Shiv Sena in Maharashtra in the 1970s was reflected in *Ghashiram Kotwal*. The true story of a journalist who purchased a woman from the rural sex industry in order to reveal police and political involvement in this trade, only to abandon the woman once he had no further need for her, in *KAMALA*.

KAMALA is translated in English by Priya Adarkar and published in 1995. The themes of gender discrimination, sexual norms, violence and stability in the society, man – woman relationship, institution of marriage,

social issues, power and morality have been featured important and noticeable in his plays. In this patriarchic society, the plight of woman is pathetic, they have no rights to express her feelings, love and emotions. Even the religion projects the idea that woman is created for man. Marriage is a social institution supported by tradition, custom and social morality. Some kind of relationships are not advocated for woman where as extra marital affair is not a crime for a man. Tendulkar tries to awaken people conscience and creates awareness about the defects of the society. He envisions an ideal society, free from exploitation and oppression, in which there is equality freedom, happiness and peace for everyone. Women, in all ages, treated as the daughters of lesser-gods, where they are harassed, humiliated, exploited, physically, sexually and emotionally.

Vijay Tendulkar's play KAMALA deals with the value system of modern success oriented generation who are ready to sacrifice human values in the name of humanity itself. Tendulkar structures the play in two acts, having three long conversations. The first is between Kamala and Sarita, the second between Sarita and Jadhav and third between Sarita and her uncle Kaka saheb, an old fashioned newspaper owner-editor.

The play opens in the absence of Jaising Jadhav, a well-known young journalist Associate editor of an English -language daily, whose wife Sarita manages house hold chores as well as un paid personal assistant to his husband, who has been ordered to note down each and every call during his absence. Sarita's uncle Kaka saheb was triggered by a phone call when Sarita asks him to note down the name of the caller. Sarita says "That's the way you see it. My husband sees it differently. If I say they didn't tell me their names he gets angry with me". This fear of Sarita indicates male dominated society which inculcated in to women's mind from their childhood. When she is a child, dominated by father, after marriage by her husband, at her old age by her children. Without realization, the women all over the world are treated as a slave, the word or the phrase might differ in different situations but reality hurts.

In Bernard Shaw's 'Pygmalion', Eliza Doolittle, a poor flower girl was exploited by Professor Higgins for a bet with his friend, at the cost of her poverty and emotion. At the end she was left literally on the street perplexed where to go and how to proceed with her life. Same way in KAMALA, Jaising Jadhav, purchased a woman from flesh market as an object that can get him promotion in his job and fame in his career. For just two hundred and fifty rupees a woman can be bought, utilized and discard as a use and throw material is the plight of woman in this society. Jaising treats and exploits his wife Sarita also as a slave which was realized by Sarita at the later stage of the play. Sarita observes the treatment given to Kamala by Jadhav, made her realize that she also a slave of him. Kamala was not allowed to change her torn clothes and take bath which was basic need of the hour. Press conference in clumsy clothes would make the news sensational, was criticized by Kaka saheb, an old fashioned journalist, who stick on to the true ideals of journalism and in contrast, Jaising Jadhav's approach is projected in critical manner. Liberalism in the field of journalism must be concerned about humanism and ethics. If a male chauvinist is journalist, would end in suffering of middle class women. The play KAMALA is a satire on the latest journalism we come across in recent times. Married woman does not lead happy life, where busy husband do not find adequate time for their wives, who have to content themselves by being mere gadgets at home.

Sarita is a sympathetic, kind and passionate modern woman but Jaising treats like a slave just like Kamala. The plight of woman is shown through an interview in Vijay Tendulkar's own words "I have not written about hypothetical pain or created an imaginary world of sorrow. I am from a middle class family and I have seen the brutal ways of life by keeping my eyes open. My work has come from within me, as a out come of my observation Kof the world in which I live. If they want to entertain make merry, fine go ahead, but I can't do it, I have to speak the truth". The plight of women in contemporary Indian society through woman characters is shown by Tendulkar. He portrays women as loyal, docile, hardworking and tender hearted Condition of poorwoman is really pathetic. How they are sold like commodities in bazaar is shocking

when Jadhav tells his wife about the auction at flesh bazaar, he says,

“They have an open auction for women for all sorts of ages The men who want to bid handle the women to inspect them. Whether they are firm or flabby. Young or old. Healthy or diseased. How they feel in the breast, in their waist, in their thigh and.....(Kamala, p.14)

Sarita was shocked on hearing his words asks him to stop all this, Jadhav warns her not to tell anyone about his exhibition of Kamala at a press conference as an evidence of such things exist still in modern democratic India where women are treated like commodities in the market. Kamala does not have any idea about her future except to be his master’s mistress, when she was asked to get ready for the conference, she refuses that she won’t come in rags any where. Jadhav tells her that there is a big feast and people want to meet her and honor her. Sarita got angry when Kamala was asked shameful questions and such an ignorant poor woman’s life has been made fun in front of public for the sake of her husband’s flourishing journalism.

Jadhav does not have respect for women. He wants to utilize women for his selfish desire. After sometime, Jadhav tries to embrace Sarita and drags her to bed room. Sarita repels his advances, at this, Jadhav asked her:

“Tell me, come on. I am your husband after all. What was wrong about what I said?..... don’t I have the right to have my wife when I feel like it? Don’t I? I am hungry for that too.....I have been hungry for six days. Is it a crime to ask for it? Answer me. (Kamala p.32)

Jadhav got dejected and enraged as his authority is disobeyed. Sarita realizes that Kamala and she also functions as a mere pawn in Jadhav’s game of chess. Kamala asks Sarita what price Jadhav has paid for her. Sarita at this point realizes her real situation. Kamala expresses her readiness to bear Jadhav’s children to make his home enjoyable. The dialogue to Sarita-

“Memsahib, if you won’t misunderstand me, I ‘ll tell you. The master bought you, he bought me too. He spent a lot of money on both of

us. Didn't he..... So memsahib both of us must stay here together like sisters. We'll keep the master happy. I'll do the hard work and I'll bring forth the children and I'll bring them up. You are an educated woman, you keep the accounts and run the house fifteen days of the month, you sleep with the master, the other fifteen, I'll sleep with him. Agreed? (Kamala, p.35)

On hearing this Sarita was fully astonished and shocked says "agreed". This word shows that she has realized her status is not beloved wife but sex-slave and mere a servant maid. Sarita refuses to accompany Jadhav for a party makes him surprised and dejected. The encounter between Sarita and Jadhav provides scope for change in future of Sarita. She emerges from a docile wife to an independent woman. The play ends on a futuristic note. Tendulkar through his plays, his social conscience, the role he has scripted for women, his fight for justice and identity, upliftment of women status and advocates for equal opportunities, balanced growth and rights to lead a life of respect and dignity.

The term feminist consciousness as defined by Garde Lerner, as the awareness of women that they belong to subordinate group, that they suffered wrongs as a group that their condition of subordination is not natural but it is societally determined that they must join with other women to remedy their wrongs. Victimization of women or gender oppression has extended from life to literature. The author wanted to record not just the life of courtesan but the tension between her private thoughts and her external behavior as well as the society and makes the reader-audience introspect itself by showing the society as it is, in all its ugliness. Many of these plays are women -centered and explore their plight in a male-dominated society. This is an attempt to arrive at an understanding of the causes of dichotomy between man's aspirations and achievements. Man is the only creature for whom his own existence is a problem from which he could not escape, till at one stage in his evolution he began to invent problems set for himself novel goals to achieve. His imagination could reconstruct the times before he was born and it could also reach in to the years when he would no longer there.

Women of new breed concentrated on the persona of the Indian women. She reflected the concord of ideology and imagination. So also heralded a change in the medium of expression women explored many vistas, from the subconscious to the unconscious from reality to abstract, from self-denial to self-assertion, from negation of the physical to an affirmation of bodily charms. They projected their intimate experiences, sexual and moral dilemmas, along with championing the cause of women in an uninhabited candour. Simone De Beauvoir rightly observes:

The women of today are in a fairway to dethrone the myth of femininity, they are beginning to affirm their independence in concrete ways, but they do not succeed in living completely the life of a human being.(30)

According to Kaka saheb, the contemporary Journalism is merely a business, which aims at sensation by gathering evidence and narrating the incidents of murder, bloodshed, rape, atrocity and animal activities etc. He emphasis that journalist like Jaising should have moral responsibility to discuss and suggest ways to stop them. Jaisingh not doing so, wasting time of the people as well as country. Contemporary craves for popularity by exposing the weakness of others, by doing so they invite grudge from others. This can be witnessed through an anonymous phone call threatening to murder Jaisingh by dragging him out of his home. The reason for the threatening call is that in the paper Jaisingh had written about an M.P from Madhya Pradesh, who had locked his servant and beaten him severely for suspecting him of stealing something. Kaka saheb was concerned about Jaisingh's safety and asks Sarita why does not he use "From our correspondence" to avoid such threats.

Sarita 's reply is sufficient enough for us to understand how his master is enthusiastic for gaining popularity. Sarita also informs Kaka saheb that they have got used to such threatening calls, even at midnight. The plight of woman in this society is clear when Jaisingh attempts to explore the illegal flesh trade is praise worthy but his self centered attitude, excessive obsession for fame and treatment of Kamala and Sarita as

just instrument is abominable. This can be understood clearly when Jaisingh and Jaipal converse about the press conference, which has become a great sensational success.

The new journalism was the term used by Kaka saheb to jeopardize his journalist's son in law who expects to make every news sensational and earn fame. Jaisingh pretends to have moral standards in his job but action exposes his hypocrisy. Jaisingh asks Kaka saheb to tell him plainly what ever he was trying to say. Kaka saheb:

Shall I? This new journalism of yours – if money making is not the object of it – then it's a vandhya-sambhog. In case you don't understand these difficult Marathi words, I'll explain. What I mean is – nothing will ever come of it. Arre, write the people's language first. Then try to teach them'. (Kamala, p. 37)

The reality hurts Jaisingh and makes him angry. He was calmed down by the old man's special apologies. Jaisingh's arrogance is accepted as a man's quality by the society as Kaka saheb says

"Because he is like that, That's why he's a man. And that's why there's manhood in the world, I too was just like this."(pg.62)

No man wants to correct himself from his delinquency he expects women to bear all his misdeeds till he learn lessons from his experience as he grow old. Women's patience is tested to the extreme. Jaisingh expects Sarita just to obey his words. He was flabbergasted when Sarita refuses to accompany him for a party.

Jaisingh: You don't want to come? Why?

Sarita: That's my will.

Jaisingh: Your will?

Sarita: Aren't I allowed to have a will of my own?

Jaisingh: Never noticed any signs it before.....(Kamala,p.60)

Sarcastic expression of Jaisingh, shakes Sarita and she asks Kaka sahib to arrange for a press conference to present man, who keeps a slave in the name of wife and bought a big sum from her father in the name of

dowry. Kaka saheb was confused about Sarita's words and say that has been going on for the last ten years. Sarita says, "why did I think of all this today? I was asleep. I was unconscious even when I was awake. Kamala woke me up, with a shock. Kamala showed me everything. Because of her, I suddenly saw things clearly. I saw that the man I thought my partner was the master of slave. Slaves don't have rights, do they Kaka saheb? They must only slave away. Dance to their master's tune. Laugh, when he says, laugh. Cry, when he says, cry. When he says pick up the phone, they must pick it up. When he says, come to a party, they must go, when he says, lie on the bed – they....." (Kamala, p.62)

Being a man, Kaka saheb supports Jaisingh and consoles Sarita to be patient and asks her to limp behind her master as to keep the marriage to go on. Sarita asks,

"why? Why can't men limp behind? Why can't women ever be masters? Why can't a woman at least ask to live her life the same way as a man?.....does he have one extra sense? A woman can do everything a man can" (Kamala Pg.63)

Such an angry woman Sarita immediately after hearing her husband's dismissal, she calmed down herself and tries to console her husband, calming him by asking him to have food and drink. This is exactly the plight of woman in the society even the emotion of anger and shame has to be subdued for the sake of her master. She has to comprehend the situation to continue the marriage to go on. At last the docile, hardworking, sacrificing woman Sarita has picked up the courage to think for her freedom in future. Sarita says,

"I'll go on feeling it. But at present I am going to lock all that up in a corner of my mind and forget about it. But a day will come , Kaka saheb, when I will stop being a slave. I'll no longer, be an object to be used and thrown away. I'll do what I wish, and no one will rule over me, that day has to come. And I am prepared to pay for it". (Kamala pg.68)

Vijay Tendulkar makes use of satire, violence and pathos. The play reveals the plight of woman in the society through the characters of

Sarita and Kamala as slaves. Sarita later on gained the courage to stand free in her life, as freedom is not going to be given by anyone, it is ours' which comes from one's understanding, decision making skill and courage to live a life of self-assertion and self-emancipation.

The play ends on a positive note that women's determination would end slavery in society. Vijay Tendulkar's writing juxtaposes women characters against men who are selfish, hypocritical and brutally ambitious. Yet another real life incident is thrown clear light on harsh realities in the society in his play Kamala. At the same time he never gives ideas or take side of any character leaves the end to take its own course.

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Power Dynamics and Critical Discourse Analysis of a Select Indian English Short Film - 'Life UnNoticed'

Rahul Thakare and Anil Ahire

Introduction

Cinematic Discourse & Discourse Analysis

If we proffer a short definition limiting ourselves to the domain of socio-linguistics, discourse is that unit of linguistic analysis which goes beyond a sentence or the text.

Cinematic discourse pertains to the analysis and discussion of film as an effective medium that communicates meaning, thoughts, emotions and ideas through audio-visual elements. Interestingly, short films have become one of the most powerful media for discussion on discourse. We have long back put aside the cinematic genre of long movies of more than two-hour long. The 'Gen Z' has even come down to a reel of thirty seconds!

Cinematic discourse felicitates research enthusiasts, scholars, and critics to have a deeper understanding of films, and share their perspectives, observe cultural aspects, elucidate the artistic features along with the other purposes like narrative technique, Characterisation, cinematography, sound, editing, and thematic exploration. It encourages critical discussions on how films communicate the human experiences and societal aspirations and achievements.

The aspects of cinematic discourse in the short film in the context of power dynamics has an important space in the present analysis. There is great connection between discourse and the interplay of dialogues that try to control one another's power of making choices. In this

particular context, it would be pertinent to discuss certain core concepts viz. discourse, cinematic discourse, language beyond text, and aspects that affect holding and imposing of power.

Power dynamics is a key concept in critical discourse analysis (CDA). It is a framework that studies how discourse, characters, language and communication shape and are shaped by social power relations. CDA explores the way these relations influence the construction and interpretation of texts, and most importantly, how they strengthen and challenge existing social structure and norms.

Research Methodology

The film is the primary source of data. However, methods discussions, interviews, observations, surveys and questionnaires have much more scope. Data has been collected from the film which has visuals, movement, music, colour combinations, live characters, their body language and above all, the most authentic source, language i.e. dialogues.

The source of data in this research is script of the film 'Life UnNoticed'. Reviewing the script helped watching the movie multiple times and analysing it.

The utterances that contain power relation discourse among all the characters.

Data Collection

- a) Watching the film 'Life UnNoticed' to identify various aspects CDA
- b) Reading the film script many times to identify implicit meaning.
- c) Selecting various aspects for the analysis.

Data Analysis

- a) Dividing data into different aspects for analysis.
- b) Making an interpretation or meaning of the data.

- c) Collecting some data and supporting information to analyse the meaning of the data (such as books, internet, articles and any other information that was relevant to the researcher's study).
- d) Analysing the data using critical discourse analysis with the theory from Woffitt (2005) and Van Dijk (2009) focuses on power relation discourse.
- e) Drawing conclusion based on the analysis of the data.

Power Dynamics

Power Dynamics is invariably one of the most dominating elements of Critical Discourse Analysis. Power dynamics in its natural environment means attempt to influence or take control over the other person's capacity to make free choices. There are three key components of power dynamics. The first component deals with power holder and power receiver where both try to manipulate each other. The second element corresponds to the attempt to attain selfish goals at the expense of others. The third relates to the depletion of physical and mental health due to power dynamics.

If we analyse closely, the core theme of the short film 'Life UnNoticed', it moves around the concept of power dynamics and follows all the three components in more or less effective way. The power dynamics in the story oscillates between the two main characters. Though the domination remains at the protagonist, the hero, it is certain that she is right and invariable the pendulum of power will shift to her side. Of course, family, friends and other factors in the story help the action being taken towards the desired denouement. Both the main characters in the story are power holder and receiver at particular points of time. The second element is also present as the heroine tries to achieve her desired goal at the expense of the adamant behavior of the protagonist. As for the third component, we can see that there was a depletion of the mental health of the hero. Both the characters, with their turn taking, try to establish and challenge the authority.

In this way, the power dynamics operates throughout the film and dominates.

Core Concepts Concerning Power Dynamics in CDA

Discourse, Language and Text

There are certain key aspects we will be focusing on and discuss in detail, especially in the context of cinematic discourse, language and text.

- Impact of Power Dynamics on discourse and text in cinematic discourse.
- Contribution of ‘*non-linguistic language*’ and Non-linguistic methods to discourse analysis and cinematic discourse (short film).
- Dominance of linguistics in a multimodal analysis.
- Discourse beyond language.
- Role of the Speech Acts in the Critical Discourse Analysis of a Short Film.

Use of Cinematic Discourse and Power Dynamics

‘Life UnNoticed’ carries out the use of Power Dynamics in a Cinematic discourse in the best possible way. It displays how power balance swings from one character to the other in the most effective way. Cinematic discourse is the study of social and cultural communicative process characterised by the complex combination of lingual and non-lingual structural elements in the cinema. Cinematic discourse contains heterogeneous systems like verbal (dialogue), non-verbal (facial expressions, postures and gestures) and non-lingual cinematic presentations (music, cinematography, etc). Cinematic Discourse is the culmination of an integrated design of these semiotic systems. Each element has its own inseparable place and unique contribution in interpreting the cinematic theme or meaning. We have all these elements present throughout the film.

Multi-modal Discourse Analysis

Multimodal discourse analysis anticipates an approach to discourse which mainly focuses upon how meaning is derived at through the application of multiple modes of communication as against the use of language alone. Through 'Life UnNoticed' this task becomes all the more effective and easier. Most of the time during their non-conversational state, their body language is what speaks to us. The core purpose of the present research is to analyse how short film in today's digital era serves as the best way to understand power dynamics and Critical Discourse Analysis. The 'text' in a short film shapes the social sensibilities and arrives at a direct or indirect message. The application of multi-modal approach will help us more with the understanding.

Non-linguistic Language

Non-linguistic language, along with other features such as proxemics, paralinguistic features-tone, pitch, volume etc. clothing and appearance, use of objects and props, and other technical devices, plays a pivotal role in the study of discourse analysis. These elements of the non-linguistic language contribute enormously in bringing about meaning to the characters' verbal expressions and establishing power relations. It would rather be appropriate to say these factors of the non-linguistic language help enrich the verbal communication. The looking of both the lovers in extreme earnestness but saying nothing, the style, their facial expressions, the choice of the colours of dresses, their sitting arrangement and reactions given to the other character's dialogues all are significant features of non-linguistic language in the power dynamics through cinematic discourse and add flavor to the overall impact.

Discourse Beyond Language

Discourse analysis, in a conventional sense, studies the 'text' of the discourse, however, as Allen and Barbara Pease in their book 'Body Language' claim that 53% of what we speak is perceived through the non-verbal clues rather than the verbal expressions. If this is to be considered true, we must say that to critically analyse a short film we must go beyond the 'text' of the film. Hence, we must say that discourse

goes beyond the language part and helps critically bring out the desired explanation.

Role of the Speech Acts in the Critical Discourse Analysis of a Short Film

Speech acts function at an interesting and important level in the critical discourse analysis of a short film.

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is an interdisciplinary approach to the study of texts, which views “*language as a form of social practice*” (Fairclough 1989: 20). Speech acts and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) are both extremely significant linguistic devices in linguistics in general and the cinematic discourse analysis in particular. They can be usefully and effectively applied to different forms of discourse, including short films. Following is the explanation of how speech acts and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) can be used together to analyse the relation between and relevance to cinematic discourse and power dynamics.

Speech Acts

Speech acts, as defined by the philosophers like J.L. Austin and John Searle, refer to various actions performed through language. These speech acts are categorized into three main types:

- **Locutionary Act:** Locutionary Act speaking plainly, refers to the literal meaning of the utterance.

According to the Speech-act Theory, “a locutionary act is the act of making a meaningful utterance”, J. L. Austin, ‘How to Do Things With Words.’ (1962). While American philosopher John Searle offered the ‘propositional act—the act of expressing a proposition, “Speech Acts: An Essay in the Philosophy of Language” (1969).

- **Illocutionary Act:** According to Austin in Paltridge’s book, The Illocutionary act is hidden meaning that is connected with the speaker’s intention (2006:55). It is matched with another view of Austin in Searle’s book that ‘Illocutionary act is the utterance of words which has certain force’ (2007:3). This act refers to the

intended meaning or purpose behind the utterance (e.g., asserting, questioning, commanding).

- **Perlocutionary Act:** This speech act refers to the effect or response the utterance has on the listener.

Every conversation is, at conscious or subconscious level, an attempt to dominate the other partner. The context may be professional, social, personal and so on. In our day to day communication we refer to certain expressions where the intended meaning is altogether different from the literal meaning. In cinematic discourse the illocutionary force is more significant and dominant as it has limited length and it tries to express more in shortest possible words. Figurative language and sarcastic expressions come handy and are used effectively. They also include non-verbal acts, gestures, and expressions.

Before the actual implementation of the application of speech acts it would be pertinent to discuss the theme of the short film 'Life UnNoticed'.

The Theme of the Film 'Life UnNoticed'

'Life UnNoticed' is an enlightening and interesting short film. Though it does not provide anything novel or unique in its theme, it certainly gives a great amount of material for intellectual social discussion-food for thought! The theme of the movie revolves around themes relevant to today's youth.

The short film has two main characters and other minor ones. The physical setting of the film is primarily the office of a corporate company and partially Aadhya's home. Most of the action takes place in the office. The exact designations of the employees are not known. Apart from being in a professional relationship, they are in love relation as well. Spoorthi, the girlfriend, works in the same office. Aadhya is a young man who is excessively committed to his work. The story starts when it is Spoorthi's birthday and Aadhya forgets it. She was on leave but has specifically come to meet him. The tension and conflict are built up slowly but gradually as there seems a deadlock after his denial or

inability to spend time with her that day due to being overburdened. The beginning hints at the indifferent attitude of the hero towards human relations and more inclination towards work. Slowly but gradually their relationship reaches at a point of breaking up. He does not notice it and thinks Spoorthi is being adamant as usual and ignores. However, he does not realise that the same thing is being repeated in all his relationships. His mother, father, sister and even friends realise it except him. A point comes in the story where he finds himself unnoticed! At the end when he realises it, he thinks he has lost it all. It is his birthday and Spoorthi turns up with gift and flowers. The irony lies in the fact that it was her birthday and not only he had forgotten but also didn't take out time to spend with her she desperately wanted. He admits his mistakes and things are on track now.

Aadhya was lucky enough to have people who would hold him intact Everyone may not be....! The lesson we learn is that if you do not notice life (people), life will 'unnotice' you and life unnoticed is worst living....!

Application of Speech Acts in Critical Discourse Analysis

Study of various Societal Aspects

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) focuses on the social contexts, power dynamics, and ideologies, within which the discourse occurs. It aims to reveal the hidden meanings, power structures, and social norms encapsulated in the text. It focuses more on the real emotions, feelings, intentions, meanings and whatever is in mind which can be known from the socio-linguistic perspective.

Every society has certain social norms that are expected to be followed for the smooth social conduct and to be considered a sane individual. The most important aspect of human life – human relationships is hampered. The central action of 'Life UnNoticed' is dominated with this aspect. The definite conclusion at the end of the film offers us so many aspects to ponder over. The most dominant of them is the social

angle of interpersonal relationship. If a relationship is mutual, it requires reciprocity of love and care. Another significant aspect is the choices, compromises and decisions that both the characters have to make. Irrespective of being mutual, the relationship has different aspects like power dynamics, man-woman relationship, cut throat competition and so on.

Dialogue Analysis

The core of any cinematic discourse analysis is the analysis of the dialogues. They are the agents of action. The dialogues of 'Life UnNoticed' are so subtle and relevant that they create the desired impact over the audience. There is a lot of sarcasm in the 'text'. Interestingly, the dialogues are as per the demand of the situation and follow all the perlocutionary effect. There is assertion, there is questioning and demanding, making requests and we have commanding as well.

For example, the very first scene when Spoorthi suggests to go out he says,

"Calm down Spoorthi why are you getting upset for such small things, I just said we'll have the same plan on the weekend."

Her Sarcastic remark is very emphatic and marks the core difference in the ideologies, she says,

"Life is just not on weekends. You have to laugh when you feel like laughing and cry when you feel like crying. You can't just say this moment I am busy I will make time to cry later or maybe I will laugh later. Remember happiness should be by situations and not by schedules" There is sarcasm, irony and emotions in the expressions.

As the very base of the theme is conflicting perceptions of life, the most dominant part is the questioning and demanding. However, the questions go beyond being formal and take a turn towards rhetoric and helplessness. Following questions by Spoorthi indicate the same:

'Now that you're done with your meeting can we go out?'

The dialogues, *'we will surely go after'* And *'can we have the*

same plan on the weekend Spoorthi?’ by Aadhya are nothing but promises.

Apart from these, the very exchange of expressions is full of requests and denials.

Non-Verbal Communication

The impact of semiotics is most important in communication and especially in a short film as it complements the verbal expressions. It includes non-verbal cues like body language, facial expressions, and gestures. The characters in the movie display various gestures, postures and facial expressions along with certain actions that are extremely meaningful and add to the overall effect. The disinterested eye movement by Spoorthi, the indifferent looks by Aadhya, the intermittent looks by both, his lack of interest in anything at home and the final monologue all contribute greatly to the theme. The facial expressions, eye movements and the hand gestures of all the characters contribute to the action and justify it.

Social Context and Ideological Analysis

Though ‘Life UnNoticed’ deals with emotional turbulences and conflicting beliefs, it closely deals with the social and cultural ideology and succeeds in making us think deeply over social values and personal ethics. The love relationship, staying together in spite of differences, the socio-cultural acceptance and trying to attain personal but non-selfish motives from both the ends acquaint us with the socio-ethical base.

Conclusion

Power Dynamics: Critical Discourse Analysis unavoidably studies power dynamics. Power dynamics in its natural environment means attempt to take control over the other person’s capacity to make choices. There are three components of power dynamics. First, there is a power holder and power receiver where both try to manipulate each other. Second, trying to attain selfish goals at the expense of others. Third, depletion of physical and mental health due to power dynamics.

If we analyse closely, the core theme of the short film ‘Life UnNoticed’ moves around the concept of power dynamics. The lover in the story is the power holder and the beloved is receiver and at another point the situation is reverse. While Aadhya tries to manipulate through his taken for granted attitude, Spoorthi uses the power of persuasion to achieve her love relationship. At the end when the situation doesn’t seem favourable, Spoorthi proactively but successfully makes last attempt. Both the characters, with their turn taking, experience depletion of mental health and try to establish and challenge the authority.

In this way, the power dynamics operates throughout the film and dominates.

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Epic Reimagination: Amish Tripathi's Mythological Narratives and Their Modern Resonance

Randeep Singh and Shalini Yadav

Introduction

The Indian literary landscape is witnessing a transformation of norms, thanks to authors like Amish Tripathi, who use mythological elements in a more contemporary setting, compelling people around the nation to read. The fictional trilogy of Tripathi is an almost unsuitable version of the story of Lord Shiva where, instead of God, the author emphasizes the greatness of a male figure with principles and heroic power, which develops opposition each time he acts. Accordingly, Tripathi's portrayal of deities and myths is a radical one. One such radical reimagining is the portrayal of Lord Shiva as a flawed continental chief rather than a god facilitating the everyday reality that is superior to the myth. They retell age-old stories, revamping the tales within the societal contemporary age.

Social, spiritual, and ethical aspects have been aimed at Indian mythology from distant ages by different authors. Also, the function of myths in literature is to explain the world and the position of people in it and assist in forming values and offering ethics to society. Therefore, after analyzing modern-day concerns that are prevalent in present societies portrayed in other works, e.g., Tripathi's, that is why myth, in this case, inclusive of reusing myths about lords' country, can be used. Thus, this paper explores the Indian tradition in this regard in relation to the work of the author and the novels included in the series and how Tripathi's novels portray classic Indian mythology in a way suitable for the modern generation by focusing on his portrayal of Lord Shiva, his symbolic

representation, as well as the themes of fate, ethics, and authority present in his writings. Furthermore, the study will also look into how the works of Tripathi make social commentary through the story of mythology, with the lessons being applicable even in the present, distant in years from the setting where they were made. The Indian literary landscape is undergoing a transformation, driven by authors like Amish Tripathi who incorporate mythological elements into contemporary settings. His depiction of Lord Shiva as a flawed yet powerful leader offers a more relatable and grounded narrative, blending myth with reality to engage contemporary audiences.

The paper revolves around the myths and legends in the works of Amish Tripathi, a contemporary Indian writer, in his famous series of Shiva Trilogy: *The Immortals of Meluha*, *The Secret of Nagas*, and *The Oath of Vayuputras*. It examines a kind of juxtaposition that Tripathi can perform- he interweaves mythological aspects with rationale to connect well with contemporary readers.

Myth and the Shiva Trilogy

In Amish Tripathi's Shiva Trilogy, the author has not tried to portray Lord Shiva as the god who is worshipped all over India. On the contrary, he depicts Lord Shiva as a man who attains godhood through his deeds and ethical choices. In this retelling, Shiva is first conceived as a tribal leader in Tibet who later becomes an important character in the Meluhan empire. This approach allows the readers to understand and sympathize with the character of Shiva by showing how he deals with the challenges, the choices he makes, and the flaws he has. "The twenty-first century has seen a resurgence in Indian mythological retellings, reflecting the desire to reinterpret ancient narratives through a modern lens" (*Chapter 13, Reimagining Hindu Mythology 201*). *The Immortals of Meluha*, the first part of this trilogy, presents the image of Shiva as an ordinary warrior who is later invited to the kingdom of Meluha by the Suryavanshi kings. The Meluhans are at war with the Chandravanshis and their allies, who are the wicked Nagas, and they believe that Shiva is the illustrious one who is destined to save them from their evil tribulations.

All is well, but as it turns out to Shiva, the world is not as simple as Suryavanshi's black-and-white good and evil concept. This exploration of shades of morality is the underlying aspect of the trilogy. Tripathi's *Shiva Trilogy* is a reimagining of the story of Lord Shiva, presenting him not as a divine entity but as a man of principles and heroic power. "Tripathi's portrayal of deities and myths is a radical one, reinterpreting age-old stories to resonate with modern readers" (Rani 179).

As the stories go by, it chronicles the story of Shiva as an Indian who makes an outsider within him the Neelkanth, an image synonymous with an icily calm explosion of colors within a blue throat after 'soma' classical magic has gone down. In this transformation, with the Neelkanth myth, Amish grounds her narration into historical, political, and ideological – a bit of everything almost. Samaras, which eventually turns out both good and bad, also symbolizes the aspect that the beginning of every good thing can also carry the end of its very cause. Tripathi's narrative strategy allows for a deeper exploration of morality, as seen when Shiva begins to understand that "the world is not a simple dichotomy of good versus evil" (Tripathi, *The Immortals of Meluha* 152). By presenting a complex moral landscape, the author highlights the nuances of human behavior and ethical dilemmas.

Myth as a Reflection of Society

Myth has always been influential in society's perspective of the world and human nature. Indian myths depict social norms and customs, including politics and spirituality, much more than other societies, and they usually have a message in relation to humanity. In the *Shiva Trilogy*, Amish uses these mythical structures to make sense of the current situations. "The world is not a simple dichotomy of good versus evil." (*The Immortals of Meluha*, p. 152)

At the very core of the story in the series is the idea of karma and the effects that arise out of social stratification. The society of the Meluhans is depicted as very rigid in structure, with every part of life having well-defined rules, including the aspect of vikarma, or touchability. The vikarma given to certain groups of people is because of the 'bad luck' that they

are thought to carry because of their past; in most cases due to some sickness, or giving birth to a stillborn child. This system is very much akin to the caste system, and its structure and consequences in the Indian context. Nevertheless, a bachelor, Shiva, challenges this barbaric caste system when he marries, much to everyone's surprise, Princess Sati, who is a vikarma herself, and persuades the Meluhans to rethink themselves. Through the Shiva Trilogy, Tripathi uses these mythological structures to comment on present-day issues, such as the rigidity of social hierarchies and the concept of karma. "The social exclusion faced by certain groups due to the belief in 'vikarma' reflects the real-world caste system, which remains prevalent in modern Indian society" (Barry 103).

As the first two books – *The Immortals of Meluha* and *The Secret of Nagas* comprehend the vikarma system, objection against social exclusion and bias is presented. The character of Shiva in these books resists such values and actively tries to change the community norms concerning vikarmas which indicates the call for a change in the society's way of thinking of individuals as people and not labels attached to them.

The Role of Myths in Character Development

One of the most engrossing things in the Shiva Trilogy is the way Amish has incorporated mythology in the evolution of his characters. The protagonist's advancement from a tribe's leader to the Neelkanth in the story correlates with the hero's journey found in numerous legends, that is, an average being turns out to be something exceptional, something quite unexpected."Indian English writers use literature as a means to assert cultural identity while exploring universal themes that resonate beyond their own society" (Bhatnagar 23).

What is more, it is the thesis regarding the nature of good and evil. In this respect, as he progresses, Shiva discovers that there is always a gray area when it comes to the classification of good and evil. The devotees of the sun dynasty believe they are good, while moon dynasty and naga devotees are evil. Further along, moreover, in the evolution of

the plot, it comes to pass that, as opposed to the young man's beliefs, which side could properly claim the status of the moral high ground, there were also vices on both sides. This provides some fluidity to the characters and denies the stereotype in which the characters of good and evil are presented in mythologies. Shiva's transformation from a tribal leader to the revered Neelkanth mirrors the archetypal hero's journey. This narrative structure, found in numerous myths, emphasizes that greatness arises from actions rather than divine intervention. "The journey of Shiva is symbolic of every individual's quest for identity and purpose" (*Chattopadhyay* 120).

Sati's character is another source that correlates between myth and reality. Brought up as the daughter of King Daksha, she was a *vikarma*, a common slogan. Relegated to an archetype of Seven (*eight*) Destroyers by her father, she deploys the strength of her would-be anarchist to redeem herself and becomes one of the series' most powerful characters pretty quickly. This only proves the point that fixed labels from society do not define a person as one's relationship with Shiva would suggest; it is one's deeds and character that matter.

The Use of Myth to Address Contemporary Issues

Causing waves in society, Amish Tripathi's books do not simply deal with recreating the old chronicles—they delve deeper examining the relevance of those chronicles in the modern age. The trilogy deals with the themes of power politics, ecological imbalance, and the threat of fundamentalism among others. Consider, for example, the case of Somras, which was glorified at first as a potion providing eternal life but later comes out to be the very thing that leads to the desiccation of the Saraswati River as an ecological disaster. This is a striking contrast to what unbridled and careless growth of over-dependence on nature can do. The theme of religious fundamentalism can be discussed in relation to the other groups presented in the trilogy. Both the Suryavanshi and Chandravanshi are shown as stolid and close-minded in their ways, respecting none of the other's beliefs. Such is the case of fundamentalism in the real world, where each party is so opposed to the other party's

core ideology that there is violence instead of peaceful coexistence. This mirrors the modern debate on sustainability and environmental ethics. “The duality of Somras, as both a source of life and a cause of destruction, reflects the consequences of modern-day industrialization” (*Valanèiûnas* 235).

While depicting the journey of Shiva, Amish brings forth the idea of challenging the existing beliefs and practices in society. The war in which Shiva is engaged is not just against a tangible opponent but against the very concepts of good and evil. Such pondering on morality, good and evil is very relevant to the present age audience, who have to deal with such issues over and over in the course of their lives, in the present age of global interdependence and conflict.

The Evolution of Myth in Literature

The Shiva Trilogy is an example of how myth can be an effective tool in literature. Myths, to borrow words from M.H. Abrams, are age-old stories whose main purpose is to offer explanations about the world and humanity’s place in it. Myths in literature are not rigid: they change and adjust to suit the times.”Mythology in modern Indian literature has evolved from mere storytelling to a reflective tool that confronts contemporary issues” (*Volume, Ijrti.org*).

Amish’s version of the Shiva myth shows these changing and adapting tastes of mythology. Instead of portraying Shiva as a God, like many past heroes, Amish chooses to see greatness as something that comes from man’s actions instead of supernatural forces. He requires the Indian reader to reconcile their traditional understanding of divinity and heroism with a much more grounded and down-to-earth character. Besides, for the Amish, myth is not only about religions or cultures. He mixes history, philosophy, science, etc., to build a breathtaking world. The Somras, for example, can be depicted as technological progress — useful as well as harmful. The cycle of history, predominant in the trilogy, which shows how good civilizations fall into degeneration or how an excess of good becomes evil, points to a wider picture of humanity and its development.

Conclusion

The journey of the Shiva Trilogy by Amish Tripathi is a change-oriented venture into Indian mythology and achieves a brilliant fusion of mythic elements and contemporary social and philosophic issues. This containment makes it possible to Loka, the anarchy bathed in chaos, violence, and death, which in Indian mythology is attributed to the order-preserving deity – Lord Shiva, an embodiment of the beauty that is the peaceful and just social order, throws light on what how this decadent order noble ideal. Nurturing such understanding between the reader and this character creates a conceives of the divine and almost human figures of the god or goddess in question, transforming the reader from someone who views such mythological characters – who are typically far removed and unattainable – to them having a character who is practically and emotionally easily reachable.

The formed image of Shiva in the trilogy is essential for its success. And this is the prevalence of downright Suzuki solution creatures such as a wood and bone controlling tribal warrior who suffers from the same angst, moral quandaries, and dichotomies men face, which are universal concerns of what it means to be a leader, what is right and wrong and the overarching theme of responsible freedom. His journey, which entails many phases from being a social misfit to being a constructed figure revered by everybody, is not only a cinematic simplistic narrative but also, in a way, an answer to what each of us possesses – the ability to be great as long as we do not shun the intractable difficulties and moral obscurities that life has to offer. In action, thought, and being, his decisions and changes throughout the narrative also invite us to explore the significance of looking inward and the search for that which is objective, two realities that are very much alive and present in the contemporary setting. The application of mythology by Amish is not mere storytelling. It helps express criticism of modern-day problems like abuse of authority, environmental issues, and oppression in society. This one, however, is the fictional world of Meluha but explains Amish's concerns in regard to the authoritarianism of faiths, politics, and cultures.

The historical and custom-bound society of the Meluhans is well characterized by the vikarma system, which is reminiscent of the caste system prevalent in India and aimed at critiquing the dominance of discrimination and wrongful practice by the social class system. The efforts of Shiva depicted in the attempts to make this system loose indicate the selfishness and urgent call for change towards compassion over unteachable ways in society.

Within the trilogy one of the most important aspects is the philosophical exploration of good and evil. The truths of the series, however, leave Shiva grappling with one truth good and evil are not constants; rather, they are constructs subject to viewpoint, place, and even time. This paradox of good and evil confronts the readers and forces them to reconsider their concepts of morality and justice. The understanding that good may also be bad if it is taken too far, as in the cases of the Somras, is a practical view on the risks of extremism, and moderation is insisted in all activities. This view of history is cyclical in the sense that there are rises and falls of civilizations and that there are no unequivocal moral positions, further demonstrating an impressive insight into the dynamics of people and societies. Shiva, as a relatable human figure rather than a distant deity, allows readers to see themselves in the protagonist's journey, exploring themes of morality, identity, and responsibility. "Tripathi's works challenge readers to reconsider their perceptions of good and evil, demonstrating that these concepts are not absolute but are shaped by perspective" (*Rani 179*).

Not only is the trilogy thematically profound, but it is also deeply imagistic and interweaves various cultural, historical, and scientific perspectives. For instance, the Amish introduce Somras, a medicine that ensures the outliving of generations but creates environmental calamity, merging the myth into the domain of science fiction. This combination of genres is not only helpful in storytelling but also puts into perspective old tales and philosophies in a more contemporary and interesting way to the current audience. It is also indicative of the current state of affairs that every progress is technologically driven and hence has to be pursued at all costs and bury any ethical issues there could be in those advancements.

Another aspect of the trilogy that should be highlighted is how good and strong women are represented in it. This is evident in Sati's case, in which history did not box in the obedient feminine role but presented as a strong woman who has a place in the story. Sati's travels have a great deal in common with Shiva's; she also rebels against the oppressive order, proves her worthiness, and goes beyond her vikarma status thanks to her valor, intelligence, and principles. Her presence opposes the kind of virtue associated with hegemonic patriarchy which fill myths as in Sati's case, depicting a different and affirmative way of ruling and heroism.

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Realism in *Freedom Song* by Amit Chaudhuri

M. Balamurugan and L. Baskaran

Introduction

Amit Chaudhuri is a modern Indian author of short stories, novels, poetry, essays, and songs. His distinctiveness is in his characterization of entanglement and home sensibility, which mostly manifests in relationships and linkages across cultures. He outlined his early years and the significance of achieving one's goals through interpersonal bondage in his writings. His first book, *A Strange and Sublime Address*, earned him the Commonwealth Writers Prize. His books all focus on household themes and difficulties and show the fictionalized version of home. His novels' household settings serve as examples of the material history of Indian homes and the related social, religious, and cultural customs.

The theme of all of Amit Chaudhuri's novels is incredibly compelling. His writings alone have brought him a distinct reputation. The author's novels are masterpieces in and of themselves, with a good and well-researched theme serving as their fundamental theme. Only Amit Chaudhuri's first four books *A Strange and Sublime Address*, *Afternoon Raag*, *Freedom Song*, and *A New World* would be covered in this explanation. The fact that the aforementioned works lack a singular theme is one of their most significant characteristics. Instead, each story has a central topic that is explained by the other themes.

They are the pool of romantic theme, political theme, social theme, historical theme, themes based on personal experiences, themes revealing childish depiction, elegant themes, themes of family relationship, interesting themes & themes of mental state of man at different phases of life.

Amit Chaudhuri writes very realistically, and he presents his stories in a way that makes the reader feel as though he is a part of the narrative. The reader is captivated by his writing and is compelled to read the entire novel in one sitting. *A Strange and Sublime Address*, Amit Chaudhuri's debut book, was released in 1991. As was previously indicated, the author's novels cover a variety of topics. In a similar vein, his debut book adopted the author's style.

Realism is the term in French writing used in the middle of the nineteenth century and continuing through authors of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, "realism" refers to the trend toward depictions of contemporary life and society as it was or is. In the sake of general realism, realist authors opted to depict every day, everyday behaviors and experiences rather than exalted or similarly stylized ones.

The decline and eventual demise of the family business and the loss of the extended family homes are depicted in Amit Chaudhuri's third book, *Freedom Song*, which was published in 1998. The characters move from a privileged, comfortable life in the family's private compound to regular apartments in a municipal block. Chaudhuri's concern for Indian ideals veiled in Bengali sensibility is evident in this work, as the loss of the mansion and the collapse of the family business serve as a metaphor for the erosion of middle-class values brought on by modern India. Cultural shifts and transformations have reshaped life and changed its features on a social, economic, and personal level.

A boy's visit to family evokes the gloomy comforts of home. At an English university, an Indian student muses about the tense bond between an immigrant and his own country. Additionally, the challenge of marrying off a troublesome son sheds light on the diverse cultural group that is New Calcutta. The straightforward narratives of Amit Chaudhuri's novels develop into dramas with deep emotional impact. Additionally, *Song* announces a young writer with tremendous talents in prose that has garnered Chaudhuri parallels to the master stylists of this century but that also emerges as fiercely free.

Freedom Song (1998), is about a family that has been impacted or transformed by ageing. The younger members of the family are either not present or have left for different regions of India or the world; The young people that have remained are engaged in a variety of activities that are thought to be eccentric. It addresses the incidents that coincide with the consciousness of common people. Khuku and Shib, an elderly couple, reside in Calcutta. Khuku's childhood buddy Mini temporarily stays with them while she receives therapy for her persistent arthritis. She has a sister named Pulu, a younger brother named Bhola, and an older brother named Borda. Because he is unsuited for anything else, Bhaskar, Bhola's son, joins the Communist Party. Mohit is the son of Puti, Pulu's daughter. Despite being cousins, Bhaskar and Mohit have quite different professional backgrounds. Mohit, who is currently in the upper matriculation level, strives to pass the JEE exam.

Later, he must travel to America to take the SAT exam. While Mohit is occupied with these things, Bhaskar works in a factory and actively participates in all Calcutta communist events. Every morning, he even sells *Ganashakti*, the newspaper. Bhaskar's parents are quite concerned about their son's future. With the sincere hope that Bhaskar will change after marriage, Khuku and Puti take the lead in finding a partner for him. Although they are successful in getting Bhaskar married throughout the book, they are unable to bring about the change they had hoped for in him.

The novel's colourful protagonists, Khuku and Mini, who are now elderly, express their somewhat ludicrous opinions about Muslims at one time in their life. It demonstrates that they are living through a period of significant political turmoil. Since Calcutta has always been a communist city, intercommunal strife has been managed and there haven't been any riots or violent unrest there. This book has more characters, and while there is ostensibly more action in some sections, there is actually less action in others. Chaudhuri, as usual, avoids anything as heavy as a plot that revolves around two families in the book: the Khuku and Mini households in Calcutta. Khuku and her spouse Shib lead a tranquil life, gradually settling into a comfortable retirement that is supported by

Shib's employment at 'Little's,' a failing public sector organisation. The story begins with Mini, Khuku's long-time buddy, visiting Khuku and Shib. Bhola, Khuku's brother, and his family reside on Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar Road, a short distance away. Bhaskar, Bhola's son, has put his family in a tough situation by insisting on selling copies of *Ganashakti* every morning, making it difficult to find a suitable girl for him.

Since gaining independence, Bombay, New Delhi, and even Bangalore have surpassed Calcutta in importance. In Chaudhuri's book, the city draws elderly and arthritic people who are close to retirement, while the younger generation departs. Chaudhuri gives the book a vibrant, loving vitality. The minor social dramas that follow Bhaskar's eventual union, the three parties' bi-play. Nando, Uma, and Jochna, the servants, even the lighting patterns made by items left outside to dry and the selection of music that goes with each authentic Bengali; these minor nuances combine in paralled designs to produce an memorable image of Calcutta.

Regional literature showcasing rich variety is inevitable in a country so huge and diverse, exhibiting such a great diversity of regional traditions and culture.

Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar Road, blowing their loud hooting horns; they were half empty, an unusual sight. There was a small encampment of rickshaws along part of the pavement, their extended arms planted on the ground, their collapsible roofs raised, their wheels at rest, rickshaw-wallahs, heads and shoulders covered with a piece of cloth, were slapping their hands in imitation of applause and hurling tobacco into their mouths. Retired men, as free as children, all of them dressed for some reason in white dhoti and kurta (FS 289).

Khuku and Mini, two elderly women, talk and recall how young Bhaskar dabbled in politics. Bhola, his father, visits the confectionery where he still works. Friends, family, and servants swirl around the main group. Little's, the formerly reputable British company that made chocolates and candies, sinks into the muck that engulfed so many businesses after they fell into the public sector's abyss. A hundred box- wallahs who

softly gripe at the club that they simply can't seem to get the buggers to work echo Shib's understanding that he represents only a minimal endeavor to get the business back on its feet.

Khuku's spouse, who has worked for a private corporation, takes on the responsibility of caring for the 'sick unit'. He can quickly implement significant improvements and improve the company's situation because to his unwavering 'work ethic'. In a sense, Khuku's spouse spends most of his afternoons with the staff and interacts with them all. The family's little son, Bhaskar, is devoted to attending meetings, participating in street plays, and reading *Ganashakthi*, the daily newspaper, as a member of the Communist party. Chaudhuri's elliptical technique suggests the multiple levels of Indian reality, and his best results are achieved when he arranges many images in certain ways. For example, a situation in the home where two women are seated together and eating oranges, and everyone while talking about Bhaskar's affiliation with the Marxist party. The mother of Bhaskar's father, who has seven children and is dispersed around India with their individual households, is subtly described by Chaudhuri. Since her husband's passing, she has become accustomed to wearing a white sari. Throughout the day, she reads the newspaper. She spends the summers telling Bablu, Bhaskar, and Manik tales about ancient Rome. Naturally, the main focus of these tales is 'rakkhoshes'. Bholas father had given him this house as a wedding present.

In Bhaskar and Manik slept on their sides as children, with one side of their faces buried in the pillow. His mother would come to get him out of bed at half past six, saying, 'Ei Manik! Hello, Bhaskar! Wake up! Wake up! As they gripped their pillows firmly and became increasingly irate while they slept. They exhibit the characteristic childishness of the Bhaskar and Manik brothers. The typical Bengali culture is as vibrant as the sights and sounds. If studying Rabindra Sangeet while practicing your harmonium vocals is also Khuku, who had her own worldly routines, integrated them in hers. She sings as her own harmonium plays, and her voice is still youthful and just as melodic as it had been at sixteen.

In addition to touring nearly all of northern India, Bhaskar's mother and father also had plans to travel south to Kerala, Cochin, Kovalam, and Kanyakumari, which is India's tip. Manik also has the same wish. There is a black spot on the sole of her right foot that is associated with this kind of intense desire to tour. The Freedom Song is a component of the so-called protagonist Bhaskar's attempt to organize a street drama with a Marxist theme. Bhaskar is an activist of sorts. The bomb explosions that shook Bombay contain numerous allusions to the Babri Mosque and its aftermath.

Khuku and Mini talk about a wide range of subjects, including politics, religion, yoga poses, and more. There was no topic left unexplored. Mini is taken by Khuku to the 'Ma Sharada Devi nursing home,' (FS 145) where she was previously treated. They are acknowledged and welcomed by Sarkar and Majumdar, who refer to them as 'mashima'. Even Mini, who is a member of Ramakrishna Mission, has a lot of faith in such a nursing home. While returning home, Khuku passes Jodhpur Park, the residence of her older sister. Despite the death of her sister, her son Manas and daughter Puti share a home. Khuku's 'Didimioni', Puti's son Mohit and Manas's son Sameer, are Khuku's grand-nephews, and they adore him. She is so constantly enticed to come to the residence whenever she passed away. Soon after eleven o'clock, a lemon-colored government. The ambassador's vehicle pulls up to pick up Khuku's spouse. Shib goes to the 'Writers Building' to attend a meeting that all of the 'sick' companies are hosting. Once impressive, huge corporations have now joined the list of 'sick.' businesses. The Central Government has to inevitably assume responsibility for these units. The department's Mr. Seal explains the goals and aspirations to be Shib took it on. Meetings focused on these ideas are conducted at Calcutta.

The story makes references to both the globalization of business and the partition that led to the foundation of Bangladesh. The last ruling Communist Party keeps businesses that were once administered by the British running smoothly after they are effectively Indianized, privatized, and up against global competition without the leadership or means to market. The vitality of the past is no longer present. While Puti's son

Mohit is preparing to make his joint entrance, Bhaskar and his group have been working hard on the street play's preparations and rehearsal. The location, which is a by-lane outside the little fenced grassy triangle, is meticulously planned and chosen by Bhaskar and his buddies Sumanta, Nikhilesh, and Mahesh.

They even choose two men, Jodu and Pyari, to be the play's participants from the adult literacy class. Mini frequently goes to the hospital under medical supervision, where she receives a half-hour course of infrared radiation therapy to relieve her arthritis. This time, Mini convinces Khuku that she wants to return to her home after a lengthy absence. Shib is an enthusiastic individual who consistently inspires his colleagues. He works very hard to improve Little's situation. Oddly, he loses all interest in business and speculation after retiring. He reads news articles for the majority of the day.

According to reports, Mini and Shantidi were five years old, with a sister-to-brother ratio in their home. Mini and Shanthidi are sisters, while the three brothers Shyamal, Chanchal, and Dadamoni are the oldest. He used to patiently care for them. Later, he relocated from Guwahati to Calcutta and started working as a sales representative for 'Dutta Chemicals' a chemical company. Dadamoni passed away at 42 years of age. Chanchal contracted tuberculosis within two years. Mini's pal Khuku got married at that point and had to depart for England. When Bablu was learning to walk, she returned to Calcutta after giving birth to a male kid.

In the meantime, Mini, Shantidi, and their younger brother, Shyamal, shared an apartment. Each of the three joined the earning group and managed to earn a living. Lalitha and Shyamal were soon married. They all shared an apartment at first. Arguments later arose, and their relationship quickly became strained. However, something that started in a particular manner never reached its anticipated end. Therefore, it was hardly shocking when Shyamal and his family relocated to a new home in a distant area of the city nine years ago. The two sisters were then left to live their lives inside this structure.

They were given this apartment in the New Municipal Corporation Building following Dadamoni's passing. They had just carried on there, employing a maidservant on a part-time basis and leading a tranquil existence. Khuku recalls her early years and her waning wish to study music during one of their many chats. Her older sister gave her brother a harmonium, which she used to practice in secret. She simply stopped singing in front of her husband and tabla musician Suleiman. She used to even sing too sharply and pick up songs too quickly. Bhola was too impatient to sit down and play the harmonium that their older sister had purchased her, and Khuku, not Bhola, was the one who eventually learned how to play.

His parents' hunt for a wife for Bhaskar, including the screening of potential prospects, the somewhat arbitrary selection process, the ceremony, and the installation within the family of the peculiarly perplexed couple, takes up the final section of the book. They form an alliance for the first time in order to see Duttas' daughter. Anasuya was her name. She appeared to be a little overweight. Bhaskar's father occasionally recalls events pertaining to his marriage and work, and Bhaskar had made the decision that he would not be able to marry this girl, Bhola. Bhola married at the age of twenty-nine shortly after returning to India from Germany.

He and his spouse had regular arguments due to minor miscommunications during the first two years of their marriage. He thereafter relocated to Calcutta. Bhola made the decision to quit his work two years after getting married in order to launch a business. He has two additional alliances, according to Bhaskar and his parents. Lansdowne Road has one. Sandhya, the daughter of Dr. Ghosh, has a master's degree in sociology and is skilled in interior design. Being a widower, Dr. Ghosh raises his son Bipul and daughter Sandhya with extreme caution. Bhaskar and his parents are served tea by Sandhya.

He grinned and said, 'I would say that she is her first love, even though she is pursuing an MA in Sociology and working as an interior decorator.' (FS 295) She did all of the decorating in this house. Although she wasn't

especially attractive, youths he was twenty-four years old has its own charm wherever it exists, like an apparition before its bloom fades.

Jodhpur Park is home to the other alliance. She performs in front of them even if she is not as attractive. This father held a solid job in a somewhat well-known company, and the daughter, 'despite not being beautiful,' had personality. Finally, Bhaskar must make a choice. Bhaskar's mother has great hopes for his choice as well. Ultimately, Bhaskar choose the second of the three girls.

A few days later, Bhaskar consented to wed the second woman he had met. Bhaskar's mother believed that although the girl was two years younger than her son, she was also dark. The most striking scenes in *Freedom Song* occur when characters are taken by surprise by the outside world. 'As though he had been smuggled into another world but could still communicate in monosyllables with this one,' the bridegroom says during the ceremony. Bhaskar used to sleep alone in the spacious room on the second floor after his parents arranged for him to marry Sandhya. Sometimes, like in this account of a honeymoon night, the author's ability to convey the banality of the profound and vice versa causes one to gasp. He was unsure of his next course of action. He turned around once more as she sat on the bed, taking in her thin back, the dark flesh above her nightgown's neck, the color of her shoulders, etc. When she lay down next to him, he scratched his arm and appeared to be exhausted. The nightgown was made of starched cotton and had a design of pink flowers with white borders, almost like a curtain. It was most likely produced lately by a tailor or selected among ten nightgowns that were virtually identical at some store.

It's almost as if Chaudhuri is rejecting the modern trend of schlock, sleaze and sex, and countless pages of conversational babble by stating his faith in the power of a skilfully constructed language that is both flexible and transparent, as Geeta Doctor correctly notes.

The servant maid Haridasi had been watching the bride's approach with great interest. She believed the bride was shameful, if not attractive, after closely examining her. Additionally, the bride had given her a few

quick glances. Curious, Sandhya asks about the portraits of all the elderly folks that line the wall. She even sews a piece of material into a doll's outfit because she's bored. A 'small shiny blue dress' is what it is. They barely ever spend time together, even after getting married. This demonstrates their underlying desire. They waited. However, Bhaskar appeared to remain unaltered by marital life and its obligations. He continued to sell Ganashakti.

Conclusion

Thus, Amit Chaudhuri has briefly explained the realistic elements associated with the life of Khuku and Mini through the characters in the novel *Freedom Song*. The senior married couple in the book, whom the newlyweds knew as children, had a genuine chance of becoming like them. Khuku has learned 'a different way of taking someone's presence for granted' from her long and fruitful marriage. As Punita Jha correctly observes, Indian facts start to seem clear-cut and definitive. This book does a great job of portraying the realistic Indian world. 'That seems to describe the life of most of his characters,' Geeta Doctor claims. Their lives are mostly meaningless, consisting of mundane activities that might or might not be important. Chaudhuri is skilled at drawing our attention to these lives. His subtlety and delicacy include the fact that, by bringing things to light. He is happy to release them so they can continue to exist, either as ghosts singing a 'freedom song'.

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Reflection of Experiences in Anita Nair's Ladies Coupe: An analysis

J. Bimal Roy and B. Rajasekaran

The goal of this paper is to concentrate on the situation of women through the female characters of Anita Nair's clever Ladies Coupe, who are called, special as per the cultural standards yet they are minimized. Through these characters it investigates the impact of profound social impacts on human mind that prompts the mistreatment of a specific gathering. Human mind, oneself, being generally impacted by culture, has numerous a period assumed a critical part in misleading women.

The paper additionally expects to investigate what significant job 'travel' plays in the turn of events and acknowledgment of self. For this reason the idea of 'other' utilized by Simon de Beauvoir in her work *The Second Sex* (1949) (Deciphered by H.M. Parshley, 1953) is considered to draw a difference with 'Self', which impacts the inclinations of women and once in a while thus compel them to move towards the limits for example the edges.

Ladies Coupe an Excursion to Interface

Since the discussion over the place of women, their condition in the family and society at huge, has contributed in giving them many privileges prior denied. By and by, the essential freedoms for women are sufficiently not to say that their position is equivalent to their male partners. One of the reasons may be that their mind is modified to act in a set example because of the jobs they are acting in their regular routines. Eagly (2017), while discussing the generalizations and truth of female mind properly makes reference to that how the existences of ladies are as yet not the same as men even after a few orientation balance developments,

Impressive data about the mind of ladies gets from seeing how they carry on with their lives. In opposition to prior hundreds of years, most women in industrialized countries, including the US, are utilized beyond their homes all through the majority of their grown-up lives and are more over participated in home grown work of really focusing on and serving relatives. Regardless of the significant development toward orientation

Fairness innate in women's work, their lives have remained to some degree not the same as those of men. In this cycle their self is obscured and steadily lost. Albeit today, women are supposed obey in a better position contrasted with their crude partners yet overall they are still in the Ambreen, underestimated position. The explanation being the complex orientation designs work in an unexpected way through culture on ladies of various classes and foundations. In the twentieth century the social changes were useful to eliminate the oppression of social disasters, yet the subjection actually stayed in the society. Thus, a couple of taught ladies held the pennant for liberation and conveyed to the world their own harsh encounters through their works (Yadav, 2017). By taking a gander at the ladies characters coming from two unique social foundations, this paper endeavors to have a superior comprehension of their minimization through Anita Nair's *Ladies Coupe*. By examining her work, we sort the women characters, to improve things comprehension of this exploration, the primary class incorporates the informed working women of current culture who hail either from center or upper working class, as Akhila and Margaret. The second class is of those women who are never allowed an opportunity to get out of their limits to work in the external world, as Prabhadevi, Janaki and Marikolanthu (however she worked in Chettiar family, yet because of her monetary challenges not in light of her opportunity, subsequently included).

In Anita Nair's *Ladies Coupe*, the hero Akhila, an autonomous unmarried woman, goes on an excursion alone to Kanyakumari to track down a spot for herself. In the *Ladies Coupe* she meets five different women.

Ladies Coupe turns into a space far away from their man centric world, where five ladies can talk openly, think uninhibitedly and share the accounts of their lives with other women with no hindrance. The text differentiates the difficulties of living alone setting it against the ladies encompassed by human connections. Ladies Coupe follows the narrating example of Chaucer's *The Canterbury Stories* where explorers recount each other stories, while they ended in a hotel during their excursion to Canterbury. Essentially, Ladies Coupe is an account of six female characters voyaging together in a Women compartment held exclusively for women explorers. Very much like in *The Canterbury Stories*, every one of the explorers needs to tell two stories, yet entirely those stories were told on the solicitation of the host of Cloak Motel, not on the grounds that they wished to. Here in Ladies Coupe these six women are going in a similar train compartment and decide to share their accounts with each other normally. They don't have a clue about one another thus think that it is agreeable to talk their heart out with no hindrances or apprehension about being judged. These women are of various ages and come from various social and instructive foundations. The story begins with the portrayal of Akhila's life. She is 45 years of age Tamil Brahmin who couldn't wed because of her family obligations and works in an administration office as a Personal expense representative. Akhila is that sort of a woman. She does what is expected of her; she dreams about the rest. Which is why she collects epithets of hope like children collect tickets tubs? To her, hope is enmeshed with unrequited desires. Blue skies, silver linings, a break in the clouds. Akhila knows these to be mere illusions caused by putting on rose-colored spectacles. She has long ago trodden to shards her rose-glassed spectacles and switched to metal-framed glasses that remain plain indoors and turn photo-chromatic outdoors. Even the sun ceases to shine when Akhila's glasses turn a dusky brown. So this then is Akhila. Forty-five years old. Sans rose-colored spectacles. Sans husband, children, home and family. Dreaming of escape and space. Hungry for life and experience. Aching to connect (Nair, 2004, pp. 6-7).

She chooses to go to Kanyakumari alone. For her it is something moving to do since she has continuously followed a trampled way and has never at any point traveled solo for such a significant distance without a male individual from her loved ones. Akhila is spooky by an inquiry for eternity” Can a lady adapt alone?” (Nair, 2004, p. 22), asked something very similar from her co explorers, and in answer gets a question further from Janaki, “For what reason should a lady live without anyone else? There is consistently a man who will accompany her” (Nair, 2004, p. 21). The above questions uncover the inward feelings of dread of women. Janaki is the most seasoned among the mall. She was hitched at eighteen years old and drove a agreeable life like a sovereign of her home as she calls it. There were different women going with her in the compartment, Prabhadevi, spouse of a rich precious stone trader. Her visit to New York after her marriage, changes her for some time yet when she understands that she has become another person, an impersonation of western women, she returns to her previous lifestyle. She tracks down comfort in swimming; truth be told, she drifts in her day to day existence quickly very much like she does in water.

Sheela Vasudevan is a fourteen years of age understudy of ninth grade, who is going with her father. She is a touchy and reasonable young lady who figures out her perishing grandma’s desire and attempts to regard her desire after her demise. She is the most youthful among them all. Margaret Paulraj, a science instructor, is hitched to Ebenezer Paulraj. Ebe is the head of a similar school where Margaret educates Science. She is a splendid woman, great in scholastics yet needs to forfeit her wishes and follow the desires of her self-centered spouse reluctantly. Marikolanthu, a 31 years elderly person, endures a great deal in her life. She works for Chettiar family where she was assaulted by a individual from the Chettiar family.

By examining the existences of the whole woman characters, one will observe that it is the excursions of their lives that transform them personally. Travel assumes an extremely impressive part here. Since movement implies development and this development further changes the individual personally. Here our endeavor is like wise to track down

the job of movement in the turn of events and acknowledgment of 'Self' in Akhila's life. Her train process to Kanyakumari alone gives her a potential chance to open herself in front of five different women, who are totally new to each other. This excursion means a close to home, mental excursion too alongside an actual development. The excursion helps not just to Akhila yet her co-voyagers also in changing or if nothing else understanding their actual selves.

At the point when Akhila chooses to travel solo without anybody with her, she is uncertain first yet then she follows up on her desires just to find the responses she has been attempting to track down for her entire life. She recalled the lashed Bata shoes her dad had purchased not long before he kicked the bucket.

"Quo Vadis. Appa read aloud from the side of the box. Do you know what that means? It's Latin for "Whither goest thou?" I like the conceit of a pair of sandals that dares ask this question. Something I haven't tasked myself for a long time" (Nair, 2004, p. 36).

The theme of movement is likewise found in the existence of Prabha Devi, when she is changed after her visit to New York. It changes her truly and mentally also for quite a while until she understands that her new ways are not working for her. She attempts to turn into a western woman actually and intellectually both. Her difficulty to become another person shows how caught she is in her longings to openly live. She continues to invest heavily in her life by thinking, "How lucky I am to be me!" (Nair, 2004, p. 139).

"Sometimes people stare at her. They are not used to the sight of a single woman by herself.

A foreigner they can understand, but an Indian Woman...She walks past them slowly...It doesn't matter. She doesn't care anymore" (Nair, 2004, pp. 213-214).

Conclusion

We can express that by the above conversation and in the given conditions, we see that as regardless of their way of life, age, class and monetary foundations ladies need to get out of their case and move past their psychological limits, subsequently the title-Past the Limits: A Investigation of Anita Nair's Women Car. The limits could be moved by the one for whom it is making block, here for this situation Women. Human mind causes an individual to do what s/he has not envisioned. On account of women, travel assists them with investigating another world loaded with conceivable outcomes. It leaves a therapeutic impact on their mind. A sit give replies to Akhila's inquiries which she tracked down inside her own inquiries. A feeling of opportunity is accomplished in obvious sense. Simon de Beauvoir has proposed in *The Subsequent Sex* (1953) that the circumstance of ladies can be changed with the adjustment of her financial condition however not until it additionally create moral, social, social furthermore, mental changes. Their condition couldn't be better until the two of them stay self for them and becomes 'Other' for other (Beauvoir, 1956, p. 859).

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Representation of Voiceless' Voices and Non-violence in *Life and Times of Michael K*

M. Manimehala and T.M.S. Maideen

South Africa is where J. M. Coetzee was born in 1940. He went to school at the University of Cape Town and the University of Texas. After that, he instructed at the University of New York in Buffalo. He went back to his home country of South Africa to seek various employments at the University of Cape Town and the most recent of position was an outstanding professor of literature. His debut novel, *Duskland*, came out in 1974. After that, he wrote another few stories, such as *In the Heart of the Country* (1977), which won the Central News Agency (CAN) literature award and was turned into a movie called *Dust* in 1985. *Life and Times of Michael K.* (1983) and *Disgrace* (1999) both won the Booker Prize for fiction. *Slow Man* (2005) and *Diary of a Bad Year* (2007) are two of his recent books.

The turbulent political and historical context of his home country, particularly apartheid, has offered Coetzee a wealth of ideas for his writing, which he has drawn upon extensively. Within the context of the framework provided by postmodernist theory, he has investigated the impacts of oppression. However, it is not possible to place the writings of Coetzee inside a certain stream of thought that is considered to be post-modern. Coetzee submitted his application for permanent residency in the United States in 1971, but it was rejected on the grounds that he had participated in protests against the Vietnam War.

The writings of Coetzee deal with post-colonial problems such as allegory, a feeling of dislocation, opposition to apartheid and imperialism, marginality, the post-colonial state, and othering, amongst other things. Author J.M. Coetzee is considered a post-colonialist. He composes his works of literature in the English language. Every one of his works

addresses various post-colonial topics. He belongs to the canon of authors considered to be of literary merit from the Commonwealth. The reason for this is because the British Empire formerly had colonial rule over South Africa. The term "Commonwealth literature" has frequently been employed to refer to works of literature published in English by authors who are not of British descent and who were born in countries that were once a part of the British Empire.

The research paper by Gurudev Singh entitled "J.K. Coetzee's *Life and Times of Michael K*: An Allegory of Apartheid" (2022) analysed utilisation of the allegory to its utmost extent in his art of depicting the most accurate depiction of life and society in this novel, as an allegory was the most effective means of expressing reality from a distance. The brilliance of his work is evident in the fact that he distanced himself from reality. He never lost contact with what the pure representation of truth might have accomplished.

Indu A. S (2015), in her research work, "Disseminating the Self: The Existential Angst in J.M. Coetzee's *Life and Times of Michael K*" examined the solitude and the survival, a vanished civilization and a painful experiences of Michael K. Further, the researcher explores postmodernist view point self versus society and also emphasises the necessity for a real society where each person has a place and a respectable life.

Numerous research have been done on subjects including theme analysis, character analysis, psychological problems of the characters, racial decimation, identity crisis, existentialism, imperialism, and more. Nobody has attempted to look at non-violence and the voices of the voiceless together. Additionally, the researcher believes that Coetzee's contribution, including the voices of the voiceless and the non-violence shown in his characters, has to be thoroughly examined. It is predicted that the findings of this kind of thorough study would reveal fresh information on his achievement.

This paper does a content analysis of *Life and Times of Michael K* using postcolonial theory. While the primary source is the novel and

secondary sources include the previous research papers, reviews, M.Phil, dissertations, Ph.D. thesis and a few texts that related to voiceless people and non-violence. On the whole this paper describes the postcolonial reading of this novel.

The following research questions that guide this work.

1. Does postcolonialism aptly fit to this novel?
2. Does this novel have the ideas of the voices of silence and non-violence?

The present study aims to focus on the postcolonial study of Coetzee's novel "*Life and Times of Michael K*" in terms of empowerment of downtrodden and non-violence. The work under consideration of *Life and Times of Michael K*.

The book *Life and Times of Michael K* paints a picture of the tense sociopolitical climate that prevailed in South Africa during the time known as apartheid. It is a novel with strong political information. The book *Life and Times of Michael K* is written in protest of the system of apartheid that existed in South Africa. The author, J. M. Coetzee, expresses his compassion for the natives of South Africa throughout this novel. Symptoms of the societal collapse that is developing as a direct consequence of apartheid policies include riots, rampant unemployment, and destitute and homeless people wandering the streets. The government of South Africa is slowly but surely losing the power of its own nation. The government ought to ensure its citizens' right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of fulfillment. As soon as the government is unable to provide these things, people will begin to rebel against the government. The opposition led by Michael K is directed at both apartheid and the cruel colonial bureaucracy that it represents. Coetzee illustrates the tragedy of South Africa by describing how the country has turned its own offspring, both black and white, into dependents, parasites, and captives. An allegory of South Africa is presented to the reader by Coetzee, although the author leaves out the aspect of race. The reader is encouraged to sympathise with the protagonist and get an understanding of the fundamental humanity and severity of his

characters. Coetzee's work shed light on South Africa's racial rationale, its harsh police brutality, and its massive bureaucracy of prison guards and inmates, among other things.

In this book, Coetzee gives a voice to those who are marginalised and asserts their right to dignity by placing them at the center of the universe as the focus of his story. Michael K is a symbol for all of the colonised people who are still working hard to establish their independence and find out who they really are. Coetzee implies that black people are capable of dismantling racial and social inequalities by means of the characters. Coetzee implies, on a bigger social and political scale, that for stability in politics and economic freedom to be a fact in Africa, the continent needs to be able to govern itself. From the point of view of a postcolonial counter discourse work, H.M. Tiffin criticises this book. He also says that it is a remaking of the archetypical myth of Robinson Crusoe and that Coetzee has rebuilt the archetypical myth in an entirely new way. It is told from the point of view of those who were colonised. What he said:

Only for Michael K of *Life and Times of Michael K*. does the desert briefly bloom. More a persecuted Friday than a Crusoe imperialist, he has little time; however, to enjoy the fruits of his isolation before society attacks his peace. Michael K is the lord of his life. (198).

This review gives the impression that this book is about how colonised people survived. It gives a voice to the natives who have been colonised and are being repressed, exploited, and oppressed. Another reviewer, Nadine Gordimer, links this book to *Long Walk to Freedom*, Nelson Mandela's great account. He goes on to say:

Nelson Mandela's brilliant autobiography is entitled *Long Walk to Freedom* and this dense novel from Coetzee could have the same title. Michael K, the title character, wanders South Africa in search of his identity and his independence, and it's a long walk. As the book opens, Michael K and his mother live in Cape Town, South Africa, during a period of civil war. She loses her employment and

her health deteriorates, so they leave for the countryside, he pushing her in a makeshift wagon we find that Michael K, born with a hare lip and ever after relegated to the margins of society, craves nothing more than independence, and he wanders far and wide in search of it. (31)

Coetzee wants minority groups to speak out against discrimination and mistreatment by means of this text. If they don't fight back with violence, they will definitely empower their rights. For example, Michael K fights British agents his whole life to taste liberation. Even though the officials told him not to involve in the protestation, he went through the process. Colonial regimes try to exert influence over every aspect of people's lives. But people with an overwhelming sense of independence, like Michael K, fight against it. The colonial authority makes life hard for people in South Africa. In order for them to travel from one location to another, the government must provide them with permission. When the natives of the homeland like Michael K are required to acquire travel permits and they do not comport themselves appropriately, it is inevitable that they will begin engaging in rebellion against the colonial administration.

Coetzee endeavours to demonstrate, by means of this book, that despite the enforcement of colonial power on characters like Michael K, who opposes its enforcement in a peaceful manner in order to obtain independence, that resistance is possible. They are unable to quell the longing for independence that is innate to every person and serves as a fundamental prerequisite for being human. In order to illustrate the effects of colonial domination on South African soil, Coetzee has created the resistance literature in such a way that it is both beautiful and powerful.

As a result, Coetzee enhances the voices of those who are marginalised and repressed. Each and every person is entitled to the same basic rights and freedom. Nobody should have to place any unwarranted restrictions on others. It is important that we appreciate the self-esteem of other individuals. We should put up a peaceful resistance to any form of imposition that is placed upon us. The best defence against any type of imposition is nonviolent opposition.

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Social and Political Turmoil in *The Refugee*

S. Sathish and T.M.S. Maideen

Introduction

Even in Post-Independence period drama, unlike poetry and fiction, has not registered very notable gains essentially being a composite art involving the playwright, the actor and the audience in a shared experience on the stage something of which other literary forms are free. The Indian regional languages monopolized the theatre whereas Indian English as given the opportunity for occasional performance only. It is true that Post-Independence drama did benefit by growing interest abroad and a number of plays by dramatists like Asif Currimbhoy, Partap Sharma and Gurcharan Das were successfully staged in Europe and the United States of America. However, this did not lead to a regular school of Indian English drama at home. M.K. Naik makes a very candid though touching remark that “This was mainly because the encouragement which drama received from several quarters immediately after Independence was monopolized by the theatre in the Indian regional languages, while Indian English drama continued to feed on crumbs fallen from its rich cousin’s tables.” (255)

Indian drama, written both in English and translated into English from other languages, has registered a remarkable growth in recent years. The translations have forged a link between the east and the west, north and south and contributed to the growing richness of contemporary creative consciousness. Asif Currimbhoy is India’s first authentic voice in the theatre of drama. He has written the country’s first plays of dissent. He presents life, as it is, not as something it should be a trend that has prevailed in India’s classical theatre. His art discredits the wonder box of illusions, he is telling the truth while politicians lie.

Asif Currimbhoy's *Sonar Bangla* gives a vivid account of the Indo-Pakistan war in 1971, the problem of the refugees and the emergence of the nation of Bangladesh. *The Refugee* connected with Bengal problems of divide Bengal into East and West Bengals for the Muslims and non-Muslims. These two plays, along with *Inquilab* form the famous Bengal trilogy of Asif Currimbhoy. Reading *The Refugee* as part of the Bengal trilogy, we see how partition haunts the Bengalis life.

Asif Currimbhoy skillfully employs the suggestive names of the characters and the carefully chosen setting to offer abundant hints and cues throughout *the Refugee*. Sen Gupta is a typical Hindu, Bengali whereas Yassin and Moin are typical Muslim. The drama opens on the West Bengali district boundary of West Dinajpur. The play's protagonist, a middle-aged man of roughly fifty, lives in an upper middle class home with a rather gaunt and diffident young guy in his twenties. Yassin is the young man, and he is Sen Gupta. Both of them are discussing the issues facing the refugees from Bangladesh. Sarala, Sen Gupta's middle-aged wife, is likewise a very gentlewoman. Sen Gupta informs Yassin that the unfavorable national division occurred on August 15, 1947, twenty-four years ago. Sen Gupta teaches at a university. Twenty-four years ago, during the country's split, he arrived in India as a refugee.

It becomes imperative to reader who wishes to have a clear perspective about the play to have a brief look at its background from the start itself. Obviously, the play reflects in slice the Partition problems. Yet, in a Bengali context, partition has a multi-dimensional meaning since the Bengalis went through not one but at least three partitions. Ever since the British conquered Bengal in 1757, Bengal happened to be the largest provincial state for them. At one time, apart from Bengal proper, Bihar and Orissa, the whole of Uttar Pradesh including Delhi, parts of the central provinces, Chhota Nagpur and Assam were included in the Presidency of Fort William in Bengal. Because of its largeness, Bengal posed the major threat and problems of oppression for the British regime. It was under a manipulated, well crafted 'divide and rule' policy of Lord Curzon, the partition plans began.

Initially there prevailed no sense of discrimination among Hindus and Muslims or West and East Bengalis. All were one and considered themselves primarily Indians. Passion for the country overruled any other religious or communal segregation. It was then that Sen Gupta in the play loved Yassin's mother, Rukaiya. Both grew up together in East Bengal. But slowly the British rulers were alarmed at the growth of national solidarity in India and became anxious to thwart it. Under this political motive, Curzon planned to divide Bengal into East and West Bengals for the Muslims and non-Muslims. The re-organization was supposed to come into force since 16 October 1905. This was the first partition pressure that the Bengalis suffered. But the real partition took place only after the Independence in 1947 when East Bengal went under Pakistan.

Over seven million non-Muslim refugees entered the already densely populated West Bengal after 1947. Sen Gupta, we come to know, is one such refugee. But their rehabilitation placed an immense burden on the administration. The refugees prey to exploitation by political parties in opposition. The political climate was tense during March 1971 the time referred to in the play. Sheikh Mujib, the leader of Awami League, won a majority in the election and demanded complete independence for East Pakistan. Yahya Khan, the then Pakistani President rejected Mujib's terms and denounced him and his men as traitors.

Sheikh Mujib and many of his colleagues were arrested, while others escaped to India. Disorders reached a climax during the period between April and June 1971. As fighting continued, the number of refugees crossing the border into India grew into millions. Yassin, the refugee of the play, comes to West Bengal in one such traumatic situation.

Yassin leaves West enter into East Bengal as refugee in 1947. Sen Gupta welcomed Yassin. He is sympathetic towards him. He finds Yassin as a reminiscent of his past memories. He encourages Yassin to forget his bitter experiences. A sudden changed occurred in Sen Gupta. As he was a Indian refugee, He differentiate Pakistani refugee who are mostly Muslims. He deviates from Yassin because he was a refugee from

Pakithan. Sen Gupta does not want to hurt him. He is kind towards Yassin makes him unhappy.

Ashok, the Son of Sen Gupta is interested in participating the combat of the Mukti Bahini. He says that he is doing as a patriot. Sen Gupta disapprove of it. Ashok says that Bengalis must fight for their own liberation but Sen Gupta is much interested in the welfare of his son then his country. He is ready to accept Yassin as a fighter but not his own son.

So the lexis of the play works under such contexts that So the lexis of the play works under such contexts that abounds on the following dichotomies: India versus Pakistan, Hindu versus Muslim. West Bengal versus East Bengal, Indian Muslim versus Pakistani Muslim, Indian Muslim in West Bengal versus Pakistani Muslim from East Bengal in West Bengal, The dramatist has worked out these details very subtly in the play. Hence, it is significant that the characters are identified and Categorized under this light.

Sarla, basically being a West Bengali, does not make any difference between the refugees who turned up after 1947 or the ones during 1971 as represented by Sen Gupta, her husband, and Yassin, her husband's past lover's son, respectively. She continues to give her unconditional support and sympathy to both throughout. While on the contrary, Sen Gupta's display of initial warmth, being a 1947-refugee, to the 1971-refugee is only perfunctory. Though he says initially that they were all anxious and concerned about Yassin's safety and assures him as: "Remember this is home, Yassin . . . and we are your family" (9), he changes later and happens to be the major force in driving Yassin to join the Mukti Fauj. In the end, Yassin avows that it is Sen Gupta who helped him to make up his mind. He comments, "You showed me the way ... very clearly ... very forcefully." (37) In fact, Sen Gupta's main intention in bringing Yassin is to know from him whether Rukaty, his childhood friend and love, remembered him at the point of her death. He desperately tries to get this from Yassin and in the end becomes crest fallen to know that she said nothing.

In spite of that, we cannot put the whole blame on Sen Gupta for his change in stance towards the rehabilitation of the refugees, because the events, which condition his thinking, take an unpleasant turn endangering the geographical security and the social status of the older refugees and the other people. At the end of the first scene, the refugees are seen coming in thousands, which is feared to grow in millions in due course. Professor Mosin and others wonder where they are going to keep them. At this juncture, it appears that the imminent problem is that of providing geographical space. But before they think of offering them sufficient space, the refugees encroach upon whatever is available: “the open fields, sewage pipes, the school building and even Sen Gupta’s garage. It is then that Sen Gupta starts changing his attitude towards the refugees (18). He shares his anguish with his wife “it takes me a life-time to build this house and garage and that refugee out there points a finger at it... and occupies it!” (18).

Later when they realize that the refugees are responsible for spreading cholera, the presence of the refugees become foul, nauseating, repulsive and unwanted. In order to protect their life, they need to do something to drive the refugees back home. But the refugees as represented by Ramul shout that nobody is going to throw them out, as they are there to stay. The arrival of the Pakistani Bengali Muslims intimidates the position of the Indian Bengali Hindus. Sen Gupta tells Prof. Mosin about their plight:

I’m worried, Mosin my friend, I’m worried about the whole thing. It all started as a small thing—a few refugees across the border—it happens every year. Now it’s a holocaust and we’re completely unprepared for it. Why there are more refugees today in this town than local inhabitants. Our development projects have come to a standstill. The refugee with minimum rations, is better fed than the local unemployed. (25)

As the play progresses, the political and the social situations get tensed up. The ties between characters as human beings are shaken, as their socio-cultural identities become prominent. Sen Gupta’s relationship with

Professor Mosin gets a bit strained because the Professor's sympathetic attitude towards a 'closed,' non-committed Yassin. Sen Gupta tries to provoke the Professor to the extent possible. He criticizes him: "There's a massacre taking place out there in a Muslim country and their Islamic brothers keep quiet here." (27) Professor talks in a tight-lipped, controlled manner. But Sen Gupta raises the real issue:

Listen, as every week goes by, who's coming in? No longer University intellectuals persecuted politicians and defeated Bengal Rifles. No! They're Hindus now minority Hindus being exterminated and driven out to purge Pakistan! If this pressure keeps and the hordes of Hindu refugees grow, how much longer will we in India remain secular? (27)

Reddy points out, "represents the social consciousness of the typical Hindus in India," (65) Prof. Mosin represents the social consciousness of the typical Muslims in India. We tend to think that Yassin gets along well with Mosin since both are Muslims. But in the end, they subtly bring out the difference between the Indian Muslim and the Pakistan Muslim. Though both belong to the same religion, in reality, the presence of the Pakistani Muslim refugee in India jeopardizes the position of the Indian Muslim in India. Hence, the Indian Muslim in his heart of hearts may as well wish the Pakistani Muslim to go back to his home. In a poignant discussion with Mosin, Yassin sharply grasps this point and spells out the Indian Muslim's inner fears:

You mean ... there is a difference between me and you. You also mean the presence of the Pakistan Muslim, the refugee, jeopardizes the position of the Indian Muslim in India. . . . | know you mean this. Very subtle, very delicately put. Like a placard saying: MUSLIM REFUGEE, GO HOME. (36)

That human being is a creature of circumstances, and is not always responsible for what happens is clearly reflected in the plight of most of the characters in the play. Particularly, Yassin's condition reveals him a victim of circumstances. "It was a reflex action, uncalculated"? (15) Though the playwright is not much concerned about the details of the

affair, he subtly points out how the same circumstances, which separated Sen Gupta from Rukaiya, act again to tear apart Yassin from Mita. It is not difficult to read Yassin as the author-figure or the writer's alter ego.

Conclusion

The play concludes when Yassin goes to the cupboard and takes out the "Mukti fauj" uniform and the rifle to join the 'Mukti Bahini' to liberate his country from the clutches of West Pakistan. He bids farewell to Mita who has helped him to find himself and who, he assures her, will remain his ideal across the border just as his mother had been for her father. *The Refugee* is a neatly structured play with a beginning, middle and an end. The arrival of Yassin forms the beginning of the play. His staying in the house of Sen Gupta is the middle of the play. His decision to liberate East Bengal forms the ending of the play. The pace is sluggish and nearly even until Yassin makes the decision to assist his country's disgruntled fellow citizens. The action picks up speed as he decides to aid the noble cause of a reeling humanity. This play's dramatic intrigue is increased by its rapid and sluggish tempo.

According to Currimbhoy, the government shouldn't be overbearing when it comes to resolving the refugee problems. It should be approached from a human perspective rather than an administrative one. *The Refugee* addressed the psychological and physical hardship of migrants. Asif Currimbhoy is a great humanist but not have faith in the politicians' words and actions. In his plays observed that the politicians have lost their sanity and have gone into the den of unreason. *The Refugee* is voiced to the problems of Bangladesh refugees and portrays agonies refugees of refugee. It leads our attention on the refugees problems and painful life.

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Societal Norms and Quest for Autonomy in Namita Gokhale's *Paro: Dreams of Passion*

S. Jameel Aameena and G. Karthigai Selvi

Introduction

Namitha Gokhale is one of the most prolific writers of the Indian society. She was born in Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh on 26th January. She married Rajiv. They had two daughters together. Their family life is not a bed of roses. Gokhale started to write for a film magazine. But eventually it was a great flop. But she never quit writing. Slowly she started to write and her first novel was a magnanimous success both in India and also in abroad. She became one of the proclaimed feminist writers. She wrote about 11 novels and 8 non-fiction and edited many books and journals. Her first novel *Paro: Dreams of Passion* is a satire on the elite upper-class society of the big cities like Mumbai and Delhi. This novel created an uproar since Gokhale wrote about the sexual humor and the critics failed to praise this attempt which include the sexual activities in it. The novel *Paro: Dreams of Passion* is filled with love, lust and money. It depicts the sexual tensions of people of the elite urban society. Men who have sexual affairs with multiple women is not a big thing to worry about, but in the case if women do the same it is totally different. Paro can be considered a rebel? She does not fit into the social structure that the society conventionally built for women. She does not fit into any norms that Hindu Shastras have derived for an Indian woman. Paro stands different from all Indian women. Societal norms play a crucial role in the novel *Paro: Dreams of Passion* showcasing the shaping of the behavior of the characters, their fate, also the expectation, mainly focusing the central character Paro. Paro cannot be put into the box which portrays women as submissive, silent and subside what her husband says. She deliberately manifests her sexuality and has

relationships with men on her own set of rules. Paro's sexual freedom is triggered so much by the society she gets into. Her affairs with men are often rumored whereas, on the other hand it gives more emancipation to her sexual independence. The patriarchal society appreciates women with female chastity and docility.

Paro's relationship with men is pointed out by her preferences to control her sexual desire which is not usual in the patriarchal Indian society. She does not follow the conventions of how a girl should behave when she becomes a wife. She denies the customs. She acts as a rebellion to the modern patriarchal society by choosing not to perform the traditional roles that has been prescribed by the society. She is neither a submissive wife nor the torch bearer of morality in the family. She denies the societal belief marks her as a face of autonomy.

Societal Norms and Anticipations

As the novel is being set in the major cities of India, it is so evident that the Patriarchy is practiced. Patriarchy is nothing but the society in which the men hold the authority. Men is the central figure to the social organization. Women are subsided by the norms which the society set for them. Society in precise is nothing but the menholding authority in taking any moral decision, leadership, control over money and property. The Indian society strictly follows the gender roles like men is always in the authoritative position and is always self-assertive. Women are always seeming to be submissive, nurturing and domesticated. But this patriarchy system seems to be more offensive to the growth of women. This system shows that the society is a male-dominated one and the women are being suppressed. Namita Gokhale in her novel approached the women in a very different manner. Her perspective of women is entirely different to that of a man. The central character Paro is portrayed to be breaking the typical conventions of the women of Indian society. She seems to be breaking the stereotypes. But the women liberation is considered to be farce to the men of the patriarchal set-up. Men of the Indian society could not accept the fact that women are being liberated. The remark of the socially elite man, B.R's statement is:

Women's liberation? My author friend, can you in your book liberate me from the onerous responsibility of making love to every attractive or unattractive woman who uses me like a dildo to make her husband jealous? Can you liberate me from the financial burdens of alimony? Can you free me from the jealous possessiveness of the one woman I love? Can you bring up my children for me (Paro 144).

Through the novel *Paro*, Namita Gokhale tries to show that if a man cheats on a woman by having relationship with multiple women, it is accepted by the society because he is a man. But on the contrary, a woman cannot be found to do the same. Paro seems to have relationship with socially famous men. She even had a sexual encounter with her school teacher and her whole family had to suffer on this. But she never cared for this. Instead, she was found to be in relationship with B.R when she was studying in her college. She did not worry over her past. She was moving forward with her life from one man to another while exploring herself. Paro does a slightest move where the patriarchal society shifts women body to commodity. This commodification leads to have found keeping women servile, domesticated and vulnerable. Paro is never found to fulfill these expectations. She is way different from the unwritten rule of how a stereotypical Indian women should be.

The novel is found to be taking place in the early 2000s of urban Indian society. In India, marriage is the most important societal norm. Marriages in India is not union of two souls which loves each other but the union of a man and woman based on the criterion which fulfills the checklists containing class, caste, religion, family expectations. This never cared for what is in the minds of men and women who are going to tie knots and live together for the rest of their lives. Also breaking or coming out of a toxic wedding relationship gives woman bad impression by the Indian society. Simon de Beauvoir does not accept marriage as an institution, because it does not involve, love, respect, or equality.

But the principle of marriage is obscene because it transforms an exchange that should be founded on a spontaneous impulse into rights

and duties; it gives bodies as instrumental, thus degrading side by side by dooming them to grasp themselves in their generality; the husband is often frozen by the idea that he is accomplishing duty, and the wife is ashamed to feel delivered to someone who exercises a right over her.

But in the novel *Paro*, the central character Paro never appears to be following the conventions of what the society have written on how a woman should behave. Paro is found to lack the societal norms and not following the conventional familial styles. Whereas, Priya follows the traditional female roles of women on how she should perform her womanhood and motherhood. She realizes it while she was living alone in Andheri after leaving Bombay- “I am an Indian woman and for me my husband is my God” (Paro 137). Paro critiques women portraying marriage as their ultimate life goal and their life fulfillment. Gokhale perfectly tries to portray how a woman should be through Paro. To Paro, marriage is not an endpoint of life. She is not confined only getting married. Gokhale uses Paro to question the purity of married women in the face of Indian society. Marriages denies women of their independency thus showcasing the contradictions in the societal prominence of marriage as the point of woman's success.

Paro is found to be the most beautiful, charismatic person despite she falls in the marginalized sector because of her class. Her affair with B.R and other men from higher social status shows us the intersection of the social and gender inequalities. Though being born in lower class she felt she is “special somehow” (Paro 9). This novel clearly portrays that if a woman wants a social trajectory in life, it will be because the dependence of women towards men of upper class who are considered to be strong and powerful. Like Paro, Priya also wanted to get rid of her poverty and live an ambitious life like her. While in her quest for freedom, Paro has failed two of her marriages. Among them one is with B.R and the other is with Loukas. She also has illicit relationship with Lenin and Bucky Bandhpur, meanwhile found flirting with Shambunath Mishra. Priya remarks the women liberation while getting

inspired from Paro by saying:

Paro has done it all, she's left a husband and a lover, she has a small son of ambiguous parentage. She is a conversation piece at dinner parties, and it considered daring and chic to know her. And she is, or thinks she is, my best friend (Paro 26).

This can be possible only in higher class Indian society, because getting divorce and a woman living alone after separation is a herculean task in Indian patriarchal society. Middle class women in India are always found to be living in marriages while having toxic relationship with her husband. Women are found to be dominated over by the external forces that teaches them how to live a life. Women cannot choose to live what she thinks of. Even when Priya wants to go to a job and earn on her own, stops Suresh by saying that he is a successful lawyer and his wife wants to take up a job in a bookstore is farce to him. He thinks that the society will question him by saying that even though being flourished by enough resources, a renowned lawyer has sent his wife to pursue a job. That makes Suresh feel low about his higher-class status that how his partner feels about being independent. At this point Priya's freedom is restricted. She never wanted a job because of her financial condition, but the job gives her financial independence. Since India is a patriarchal country, men are the breadwinners and goes out to work. Men of higher status finds women to be submissive. They could not take women of their home to work under someone else since it disturbs the pride of their upper-class status. But still, Priya finds herself to work in a bookstore which is a form of breaking the clutches of the upper-class patriarchy.

Paro is said to have emotional resilience, which is the crucial theme of the novel *Paro: The Dreams of Passion*. The society gives women the load of carrying the emotional strength in the face of adversity and suppress their desire and ambition for the success of societal harmony. But Paro is found to be with the rebellious nature and despair, despite of how women being with grace even though they face any tragedy in their lives. Paro is too rebellious and lives an unorthodox lifestyle, unlike

any other typical Indian women. The societal standards set up on women shows how women respond to a serious situation and know how well they handle relationships and judgements. Her emotional resilience is entirely different from how every other woman is. She empowers while isolating herself, because she defies the societal cultural norms.

Quest for Autonomy

While speaking about the pursuit of being woman, particularly that too in Indian society, the autonomy of women in both the societal and cultural aspect is a vital question to ponder. While analyzing the central character Paro, from the novel *Paro: The Dreams of Passion*, Gokhale strives to establish her independency while fighting through various struggles just for being born as a woman. This novel flash its limelight over the autonomy of woman while interpreting the gender, culture, class and societal norms. Being the central character of the novel, *Paro: The Dreams of Passion*, Paro is characterized by her valor and the willing to live on her own as an independent woman. This makes the people to quest the determination of women who runs for the autonomy of one's own while the world is set up in more of a patriarchal society. Through the novel Gokhale analyses the themes of patriarchal control, societal expectations and personal agency. The quest for autonomy found in the novel is shown to us through the struggles of Paro being unorthodox and stands out as a woman not fitting into the frame that the patriarchal society has set up for any woman. This novel has the narrow view of how the patriarchy dictates the woman to perform the roles such as mother, wife and caretaker. Paro is found entirely different from those which are mentioned above. Paro is found to be way more different than how a woman must be. She is found much more to be distinctive in nature from Priya who fears the society and embodies the societal ideals of womanhood. Priya explains about Paro success:

... her triumph at this declaration of love. Mockery and self-satisfaction clashed in their green depths. Then, suddenly she switched roles. She was now the free woman, symbol and prototype of emancipation and individuality. 'I am myself', she said theatrically, 'and no one else. I depend on nobody. I am my own person' (Paro 48)

Paro manifests the quest for autonomy by not prescribing to the rituals which the Indian society set for the women. She deliberately accepts her relationships while entertaining her sexual desires with various men which are out of the social acceptability. The freedom which Paro gains is of a great cost. Gokhale depicts Paro as a tragic as well as an empowered being. However Paro is a strong and independent woman, her social status is a hurdle for her to climb further to be a fully independent being. While being in the relationship with men of higher social class, Paro tries to climb up the social ladder with the influence she has with them. Though her interaction with the upper-class people, the lower-class status is still maintained around her and is not taken into the circle she tries to move in. The quest for autonomy is an intersection between gender and class difference while altering the growth of the women when she tries to be independent. When a woman tries to be independent, it is her social status that comes as threat to her.

Being in a married relationship with B.R gives Paro a social upgradation in her life, which provides power and control. This eventually leads to all the downfall that came to her. Through these relationships of Paro with various men, Gokhale tries to critic that a woman's quest for autonomy is achieved only through her connections with powerful men. Closely observing the conversation of Paro while trying to portray her power, she found to be a jeopardy to the whims of men in her life. To assert the relationship with these men, she often seeks validation from them who uphold the patriarchal concept with the post-colonial Indian society. The reliance on these relationships undermined the limitation of her autonomy. Through Paro, the difference between freedom and dependency reveals how women are seeking validation from men, she is showing up for herself. The autonomy of a woman is also depended upon the way on how a man sees and perceives it. One of the central themes of the novel is maintaining the societal cost of pursuing autonomy. Using Paro's fate, Gokhale critics that the woman is punished when she tries to come out of the traditional values which lead her to marginalization. The quest for Paro's autonomy is considered as a threat to higher order, which also leads her to marginalization.

Paro is found to be holding power in her relationship showcasing her beautiful and the charismatic side, while she discharges her sexual freedom and confidence. These kinds of relationship expose her limitation in autonomy. She has relationship with men who are found to be in the higher order of social class to have an elevation in her autonomy as a socially emancipated person. While being in a relationship with B.R, as his wife, Paro received the perks of higher order status and all the respect she wanted, just because of the higher-class man she is married to. Men like B.R also has multiple relationship with women but for his sexual desires which is acceptable.

Men are very insecure creatures. They need a lot of love. And they need beautiful women. Unfortunately beautiful women are seldom designed to provide love. (Paro 38)

While analyzing the novel so closely, Gokhale dwells into the psychological and emotional aspects of women who strives for autonomy. Paro had to pay back the cost for the fight she did to overcome her oppression from these societal norms. Through this novel and taking a closer view of Paro, her emotional life is filled with insecurity and jeopardy. The truth that has been put in front of us is, the independence of women is not achieved only through the one which we get externally but also the emotional freedom. The emotional journey of Paro is not marked as a distinct by the isolation where she has dwelled upon and longing for love. She was found fighting with the urge for independence and the want for social connection. The emotional graph of the lead role Paro as well of Priya seems to be fluctuating while dealing hard with the internal struggle and needs that feeds the emotions. This comes as a great threat for the autonomy of woman who seeks social approval whenever she wanted to be her own self. This novel clearly says that the women are denied of emotional freedom before the world is trying to hold back their physical freedom. Paro's inner conflict is more pronounced and the societal approach of her behavior is so clear.

Dr. Rashmi Gaur made several comments while analyzing *Paro* and Priya in her article regarding women's quest for autonomy, "*Paro: A Tale Of Two Ladies*." Dr. Gaur comments:

Namita Gokhale presents before us the complex gamut of the feminine search for identity against the backdrop of contemporary educated Indian society in a public manner. She successfully touches upon the traditional themes of women novelist....

Dr. Gaur while analyzing the women in her article, tries to prove that the women in the patriarchal society is meant to do the household chores. When she is trying to come out of the traditional social setting the society brags down her to be a failure.

Conclusion

Through this novel *Paro: The Dreams of Passion*, Namita Gokhale represents the independency of woman in post-colonial society to be bound by the patriarchal values, marital expectations, class disparity and the cultural set up for the woman. The novel argues the contradictions of being empowered and also submissive, where the women who is against the societal changes are often found to be unsuccessful. But the ones who are submissive and abide by the societal norms sacrifices their freedom. This research paper also deals with the quest for autonomy of women, which is intersected with the gender, class and personal relationship through the characters that are depicted in the novel. The novel raises the question of the possibility while attaining the autonomy for women in this oppressive patriarchal set up. But the quest for autonomy for women is based on the acceptance of men and this novel tries to prove that the men and women are entirely different. In the postcolonial era it is a hurdle for woman to seek independency without relying on her husband and the other men. While the societal norms are too harsh to women who are not subjugated to it.

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A Study of Social Realism and Human Values of Major Characters in Nayantara Sahgal's *A Situation in New Delhi*

T. Ananda Kumar and T.M.S. Maideen

Nayantara Segal came from a long line of political activists, and as a result, politics have always been an integral part of her life. Sahgal is the author of many political works of outstanding quality. Authors such as Kamala Markandaya, Shashi Deshpande, and Anita Desai centre the most of their writings on the challenges and obstacles that women experience in today's society, which is predominately male-dominated. Some of Anita Desai's writings, such as *Voices in the City* and *Where Shall We Go This Summer*, illustrate how difficult it can be for men and women to have healthy relationships with one another. She has made an effort to understand the emotions and thoughts of the key characters. Women who write books strive to bring issues to the attention of readers in the hopes that society will evolve as a result. The author Nayantara Sahgal is a feminist, and her writing demonstrates that she supports the idea that women should have the opportunity to lead independent lives. She is of the opinion that the conventional norms of Indian culture are harmful to women and make it difficult for them to discover who they are. Because she comes from a political background, she has a good grasp of the most recent events. In addition, she is distinct from other feminist novels since the majority of them approach the subject of feminism from the perspective of domesticity. However, Nayantara Sahgal takes a political stance in her point of view. She is the only woman I know of who writes in a forthright and courageous manner about politics.

A woman writer is another term that may be used to Nayantara Sahgal. The primary character of virtually all of her stories is a female protagonist who gradually gains an awareness of her own internal need. The private lives of women are dissected and investigated with a high level of intellectual clarity and compassionate awareness. It is not hard to see why she is concerned about the women who are forced to make a choice between maintaining their independence and freedom or the stability and protection that comes with marriage. She has a profound understanding of the challenges that women face and the circumstances in which they find themselves. She has utilised her talent to represent the thoughts of the women who are being abused in an accurate and convincing manner. She writes about women in a manner that is consistent with the feminist technique and point of view across all of the novels she has written. Her vivid and varied portrayals of their predicament demonstrate how well she grasped the lives of Indian women and how engaged they were in the study of their own thoughts. She also shows how well she recognised the difficulties they faced.

The research paper by Sulaxna entitled “New Perspective of Women in *A Situation in New Delhi* by Nayantara Sahgal” (2011) analysed the characters in feministic point of view. Further, she discussed how a girl’s parents brought up in conventional social milieu and importance of communication.

Chhote Lal Katri, in his work, “Nayantara Sahgal’s *A Situation in New Delhi: A Critical Study*” (2001) critically analysed themes and characters with special reference to *A Situation in New Delhi*. He discussed the patriotism of the characters, religious intolerance and Devi’s relationship with other minor characters.

Surender Singh Dhillon (2020) in his doctoral thesis titled “A Postcolonial Study of Nayantara Sahgal’s Fiction” focuses on the postcolonial view of India, Women’s cry of gender justice and Hindu as a prisoner of faith. The researcher concludes that Sahgal she deals with the topic of man-woman relationships, which serves as a parallel thread in all of her political novels, with a higher degree of surety, confidence, and aesthetic

integrity than any of her other works. When it comes to the topic of interpersonal connections, she has a better command of the information she is working with. It is possible that she would not have chosen to centre her novels on politics if she had not come from such a politically influential family. If she had, she may have shown herself to be a writer of higher value. Her narrative suffers from a number of creative flaws, but what gives it its significance is the ideological force that drives it. In order for postcolonialism to continue to be an oppositional and viable critical practise in the context of an increasingly dominant neo-colonialism, or New Imperialism, it must valorize the nationalist sort of works such as Sahgal's, which are packed with significant amounts of subversive energies. In this way, postcolonialism will be able to continue to be a viable critical practise in the setting of an increasingly powerful neo-colonialism.

There have been a large number of studies conducted on topics such as theme analysis, character analysis, the physiological problems of characters, domestic violence, gender prejudice, and male chauvinism; nevertheless, nobody has sought to examine human values and social realism. In addition, the researcher has the opinion that there is a need for an in-depth examination of Sahgal's whole contribution, including the human values and social realism that are shown in her characters. The results of this sort of comprehensive investigation, it is hypothesised, will shed new light on her accomplishment.

This paper does a content analysis of *A Situation in New Delhi* using Social Realism Theory. While the primary source is the novel and secondary sources include the previous research papers, reviews, M.Phil, dissertations, Ph.D. thesis and a few texts to human values and social realism theory. On the whole this paper describes the social realism reading of this novel.

The following research questions that guide this work.

1. Does Social Realism aptly fit to this novel?
2. Does this novel have the ideas of social realism, human values and political problems?

The present study aims to focus on the thematic study of the historical fiction of political novel writer Nayantara Sahgal in terms of social realism and human values. The works under consideration of *A Situation in New Delhi*.

Social realism is a term employed to refer to art done by painters, printmakers, photographers, writers, and filmmakers with the objective of drawing attention to the reality of sociopolitical problems of the working class and revealing the power structures that drive these conditions. The general themes of social realism are social injustice, racial discrimination and financial problems. For instance, Dickens's serious description of the life of the Cratchit family in *A Christmas Carol* gives them a spiritual light and humanity that Ebenezer Scrooge, despite his immense fortune, lacks in the story. This is because Scrooge lacks the compassion that Dickens attributes to the Cratchits. Scrooge does not become a fully functioning member of society unless he acknowledges their requirements and takes action to rectify the social wrong.

The term "basic human values" refers to those principles that are fundamental to being human. Honesty, sincerity, faithfulness, affection, and harmony are examples of some of the values that are regarded to be basic inherent values in people. These values are considered to be basic essential values because they give the innate goodness in human beings and in society as a whole. The behaviours, views, and words are guided by our ideals. Because they assist human beings in expanding and maturing, our values are very essential to us. They assist us in bringing into existence the kind of future that we would want to live through. Every individual and every organisation is responsible for making hundreds of decisions every day.

Nayantara Sahgal grew up in the middle of India's political turmoil, including the fight for freedom from the British and the influence of Gandhian ideas of liberation and nonviolence. Nayantara Sahgal is an Indian actor and popular singer. A.V. Krishna Rao says that she has kept and passed on a set of ideals and ways of thinking about life that can be constantly characterised as a multifaceted of political liberal

ideals, social complexity, economic balance, cultural catholicity, and Gandhian idealism that is always interacting with itself.

A.V. Krishna Rao asserts that she has preserved and transmitted a set of ideals and methods of thinking about life that can be best characterised as a constantly interacting complex that includes political liberal ideals, social complexity, economic balance, cultural pluralism, and Gandhian idealism.

The protagonist of Nayantara Sahgal's novel is a woman who gradually develops an awareness of her own psychological need. Since India gained its independence, the country has been going through a period of significant political and social upheaval, which is discussed in depth in the book written by Nayantara Sahgal. Even more impressive than Mrs. Sahgal's talent to create books is the fact that she is fluent in English and has a strong interest in politics. In addition to penning novels, she is a well-known political columnist who contributes to a variety of publications. Her art, in general, is unafraid to be clear and honest. Her writing is always up to date with the most recent political highs and lows, and it has an air of candour that comes from the Western world. Her works depict historical events and political realities in a manner that is both aesthetically pleasing and objectively accurate. Every single one of the novel's key protagonists ends up becoming involved in the chaotic political situation.

In her accounts, she also describes the struggles Indian women confront in their pursuit of sexual liberation and self-awareness. Sahgal, as a female novelist, writes books, and she is aware that the most important thing she can do is fight for the freedom of women. She has done a great deal of research into the psychology of women and reflected it in her works. In her book, she discusses the ways in which individuals and society in today's world continue to take advantage of women, even in this day and age. She made an effort to convey how women think and feel, as well as how they see themselves and the problems they face.

She considers her novels to be political works due to the subject matter as well as the style in which they are written. She is also of the opinion

that each work, to a greater or lesser extent, represents the political context of the period during which she was writing. The fact that her novels are works of fiction gives her the opportunity to discuss the challenges that women in today's society are up against, which is one of the most essential aspects of her writing. Her compassion for women and her fighting spirit shine through loud and clear in her writing, despite the fact that Sahgal is renowned mostly for her work as a political writer. The intimate realm of male-female relationships and the impersonal sphere of politics are juxtaposed head-to-head in every piece of writing that she has produced. One of the most accomplished Indian authors who writes in English and is a feminist, Nayantara Sahgal is a novelist. Her portrayal of female characters is feminist in nature, as is the way she brings attention to their unique qualities.

Nayantara Sahgal is not only an accomplished author, but she also contributes to several publications as a journalist. She claims that creating stories is her "enduring love" and that writing the news is her "conscience." In 1987, Sahgal shared with Ram Jha her experiences as a writer and a political journalist, despite the fact that they are distinct from one another, complement and support one another. This is due to the fact that her primary emphasis in both domains is the same thing: the concept of freedom in humans, both generally and specifically, as well as her expanding worries on feminism.

During the emergency, the book *A Situation in New Delhi* was banned because it was a work of fiction that talked about how education and politics were unstable in India after it became independent. It was first made available in other nations, and India only developed successive versions of the book after that. The feeling of disintegration that occurs just before the anarchy and chaos that sweep over the capital city is the primary emphasis of the narrative.

Sahgal builds a story around a few of the characters in this novel. These include Devi, the sister of Shivraj (Prime Minister), who is really Nehru in disguise; Rishad (her son), a young undergraduate student who was an associate of the Naxals and fatally died in an explosion at a movie

theatre; her friend Usman (Vice-Chancellor), who liked Shivraj's policies; and Michael Calvert, an old American. The author of this novel makes an attempt to examine the personal characteristics of the late leader, as well as his approach to nation building and his potential to have effect on the lives of individual people. It begins with the tragic news of the passing of India's idealistic Shivraj and then on to make a contrast between the times before and after Shivraj's tenure in office. In addition to this, it starts with the report of his passing away. The three primary characters of this novel are Shivraj, Usman, and Michael. They each represent one of the three major religious factions that make up the population of India: Hinduism, Islam, and Christianity. The latter half of the 1950s and the early 1960s have been decided upon as the historical era to serve as the setting for the events of the novel. It is around this period that Rishad, Devi's son, gets connected with a mysterious student terrorist outfit. Rishad, who was just nineteen years old at the time, was killed in one of his covert actions, and his sweetheart Suvarnapriya was taken under Devi's wing as a disciple after Rishad's death. The author presents a picture in the novel of a city that has been torn apart as a consequence of the ineffective leadership of the governing body and the violent unrest among the student population. It is possible, and not entirely inaccurate, to interpret the whole of the book as a kind of tribute paid to Nehru. Since then, he has left us forever. And with his death, the country, which he had so skillfully governed, started to fall apart right before our own eyes as we saw it happen. His closest followers, such as Devi, Usman, and Michael, strive to live in a manner that is congruent with the ideas that Shiraj espoused.

Devi, a lovely woman who is now in her early fifties and a widowed mother of a college student, takes the reins of the officer in her capable hands. Devi is now in her late forties. She chooses Usman, a longtime devotee of her recently deceased brother and a close personal friend, to fill the position of Vice Chancellor of Delhi University. Because Usman is dependent on Devi for his continued existence at the workplace due to the political viewpoint that they both have in common, he is pressured into accepting the offer. The issues of unrest and violence on the

university campus are putting an excessive amount of pressure on Usman. He is of the opinion that the major principles should not only be left as words in the text; in point of fact, the scriptures only come to life when they are followed by the people. Usman had assumed the Vice Chancellorship with the intention of bringing about some fundamental reforms. He opposes the political intrusion in the academic world and expresses his sadness at the loss of a leader with Shivraj's singular sense of insight. He is being pressured into readmitting three students who were rusticated in connection with a rape case. His wife Nadira constantly criticises him for taking such a position, and she often suggests that the two of them relocate to another nation if Pakistan is not acceptable. When the level of tension reaches its highest point, Usman gives Devi the suggestion to quit from both her position and the party she belongs to. He has come to the conclusion that his attempts to rescue the University from the shackles of political influence are fruitless. He makes the decision to step down from his position as Vice Chancellor. When Devi's husband Shivraj passes away, she is completely dependent on Usman, who consoles her by making love to her as she lays on her bed in grief for her late spouse. Ishwar's bed is still cold when Usman sleeps in it.

Michael, another significant character in the book, is a well-known English biographer who spent his infancy in India. Michael is one of the main protagonists of the story. He was enthralled with Shivraj while he was a little lad growing up in Britain. He travels all the way to India so that he may pay his respects to the great hero by writing his biography. The bond that Usman and Michael have with Devi is one of the most significant in their lives. They both loved her in the past, and their feelings for her have not changed. She had embraced their love in a manner that was extremely natural to her, and she continues to accept it. Even though he is not a native, he has experienced more than his fair share of disappointment with the new political system. Michael's observation of Devi was focused on how she interacted with her brother. Michael recalled Devi as a young lady who was popular and had a lot of suitors, but she preferred to spend her time with just her brother.

Her dedication to her brother was unreasonably strong and unwavering. The narrative of *Saghal* depicts an unusual connection between a brother and a sister. *Saghal* has never made it quite clear whether or not their connection was sexual, but the two of them acted like they were married or, at the very least, like they were lovers. Michael had observed that the brother and sister's "physical contact" with one another "was not constant, hand touching, his head bent to hers."

There are several female characters in the book "A Situation in New Delhi," all of whom are unique from one another in one way or another. Devi seems to be taking advantage of the situation, since she is using both Usman and Michael, and she has an unhealthy bond to her brother. Both Usman and Michael are working for Devi. She does not have any limitations and is able to manage on her own. She moves freely among the group of her guests and engages in conversation with an undeniable buoyancy and vivacity. She has a magical charm that endears her to the hearts of those who meet her. She has spent her whole life living in the shadow of her brother, who is older and more successful than she is. She lacks any knowledge whatsoever about any component of the administrative procedure. On the other hand, Pinky is willing to play any and all conventional roles that are expected of her. She is a cheerful young woman who is really ecstatic about her upcoming marriage, and she willingly and faithfully agrees to her parents' decision. "Girls like Pinky lived their lives in the same manner as their mothers and grandmothers had." Many people compare her to a younger version of the voluptuous Veena. Because of the terrible thing that happened to Madhu, she is not permitted to leave the home unless her mother gives her explicit permission to do so. However, she is ecstatic with the trousseau saris she purchased, and she considers herself quite fortunate. While Veena, Pinky's mother, is another example of a conventional Indian typical woman who is unable to think about anything other than her appearance and her responsibilities at home, Pinky is able to think about both of these things. Pinky has never received any assistance from her mother in terms of building her own and uniqueness. She has solely worked towards the goal of making Pinky into a conventional and

normal women. She only throws a party when her son-in-law Arvind is in town for a visit. A Son-in-law was sacred. The position of God came in second. Sons-in-law who were responsible for driving their wives' relatives to drunkenness, destitution, and bankruptcy for some reason managed to disappear without a trace into the family's Annals. Skinny Jaipal is another character. She throws herself wholeheartedly into all that she does because she is consumed by a love for the process of life. Another one of our female characters, Nadira, does not have a healthy relationship with her husband. Nadira continues to be defiant and unyielding, and she refuses to emerge from the fortress that she has constructed around herself, despite the fact that Usman's heartfelt want is for her to hear his most profound and private thoughts. Communication is crucial to a successful marriage relationship, as seen by Usman and Nadira's relationship, which demonstrates that communication is essential.

In this way, this paper concludes that Nayantara Sahgal has shown a variety of social realist themes as well as human values in "A Situation in New Delhi." Sahgal has shown that despite living in a democratic and free nation such as India, both men and women are subject to a great deal of suffering as a result of social injustice, racial discrimination, political issues, and economic conditions. Sahgal reveals to the readers the discussed characters lack truthful and honest aspects of the lives. In addition to this, she places a high priority on communication and regards it as an absolute need for preserving healthy relationships and ethical standards. The basic human values are the need of hour for being humans.

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Shifting Shadows in Will Eisner's *Fagin de Jood*: A Postmodern Lens

Sureshrajana and D. Joy Christina Sara Jayakodi

Introduction

Comics- once dismissed by academia, have gradually gained acceptance as “graphic novels,” highlighting that artistic hierarchies are never static. “It is interesting to note that sequential art has only fairly recently emerged as a discernible discipline alongside filmmaking, to which it is truly a forerunner” (**Eisner xi**). Through movies, television, and other media, visual storytelling has ingrained in us the ability to follow a narrative visually, with images providing a structural guide for interpretation. This shift helps explain the surge in popularity of graphic novels in the past decade. **Will Eisner** popularized the term **graphic novel** to distinguish his book **A Contract with God** (1974) from traditional comic strip collections. He described graphic novels as a form of “sequential art”—a series of illustrations that, when viewed in order, tell a story. In the first chapter of **Comics and Sequential Art**, Eisner cites Tom Wolfe, who summarized in the **Harvard Educational Review** (August 1977):

“For the last hundred years, the subject of reading has been connected quite directly to the concept of literacy... learning to read has meant learning to read words. But... reading has gradually come under closer scrutiny. Recent research has shown that the reading of words is but a subset of a much more general human activity which includes symbol decoding, information integration, and organization... Indeed, reading—in the most general sense—can be thought of as a form of perceptual activity. The reading of words is one manifestation of this activity; but there are many others—the reading of pictures, maps, circuit diagrams, musical notes...” (Eisner 1).

Broadly, a graphic novel can be defined as “a fictional story presented in comic strip format and published as a book.” Examining a graphic novel as a whole reveals that “the deployment of its unique elements takes on the characteristics of a language” (Eisner 1). This medium communicates through a visual experience shared between the creator and the audience. Modern readers are well-acquainted with this blend of image and text, understanding it as naturally as they do traditional text. Graphic fiction, also known as comics or graphic novels, has evolved significantly since its late 19th and early 20th-century roots. Today, the medium encompasses diverse styles and subjects, reflecting its growth and rising cultural significance.

In recent years, literary adaptations in comics and graphic novels have become increasingly popular, targeting readers of all ages, from condensed versions for younger audiences to detailed renditions for adults. Occasionally, these adaptations are crafted by the original authors themselves. Adaptations of literature in visual formats date back to the 19th century in Europe, where prints based on fairy tales and novels were common. In modern European comics, notable examples include Tardi’s adaptations of detective novels, Mattotti’s *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, and Proust’s *In Search of Lost Time*. Early adaptations in the United States include the 1921 comic version of **Swiss Family Robinson** and the serialized adaptation of *Ivanhoe* in the 1935 comic book **New Fun**. The trend of collecting comic stories in trade paperbacks began in the mid-1960s, with titles like *The Autumn People* and *Tomorrow Midnight*, which compiled Bradbury’s stories. In the 1970s, the first use of “graphic novel” was in Richard Corben’s *Bloodstar*, adapting a Robert E. Howard’s story and Marvel’s *Marvel Classics Comics* series offered adaptations of literary classics. This continued through the 1990s with works like Paul Auster’s *City of Glass*, recognized as one of the “100 Most Important Comics of the Century” by *The Comics Journal*. The late 1990s and early 2000s saw a rise in literary adaptations across various genres, influenced by the growing popularity and library presence of graphic novels. Some works were published directly as graphic novels, while others, especially Marvel’s

adaptations, were first serialized in comics. Many publishers, like Abdo's *Graphic Horror and Graphic Classics* series and Gareth Stevens's Bank Street Graphic Novels, have produced educational adaptations with biographical or historical themes aimed at young readers. Will Eisner is one of the popular writers cum cartoonists who constantly questions the stereotypes against racial discrimination in all his novels firmly.

Will Eisner was born on March 6, 1917, in Brooklyn, New York, and he passed away on January 3, 2005. He is internationally recognized as one of the giants in the field of sequential art, a term he coined himself. With a career spanning nearly eight decades—from the dawn of comic books to the advent of digital comics—Eisner is often referred to as the “Father of the Graphic Novel” and likened to the “Orson Welles of Comics.” He was a pioneer in the development of visual narrative and the language of comics, creating iconic characters such as **The Spirit**, **John Law**, **Lady Luck**, **Mr. Mystic**, **Uncle Sam**, **Blackhawk**, and **Sheena**, among many others. During World War II, Eisner utilized the comic format to produce training and equipment maintenance manuals for the U.S. Army, continuing this work after the war with the Army's **PS Magazine**, which is still in production today. He also taught Sequential Art at the New York School of Visual Arts for 20 years, with his textbooks based on his courses remaining bestsellers.

In 1978, Eisner wrote “*A Contract with God*,” which is considered the first modern graphic novel. Over the next 25 years, he published nearly 20 additional graphic novels. The **Eisner Awards**, often referred to as the “Oscars” of the comic industry, are named in his honor and are presented annually at the San Diego Comic-Con, America's largest comics convention. Wizard magazine named Eisner “the most influential comic artist of all time,” and his work inspired Michael Chabon's Pulitzer Prize-winning novel “*Kavalier and Clay*.” In 2002, he received the Lifetime Achievement Award from the National Federation for Jewish Culture, presented by Pulitzer Prize-winning cartoonist Art Spiegelman. His graphic novel ***Fagin de Jood*** makes a sounding effort to criticize and break down the barriers in the racial discrimination which is against Charles Dickens' *Oliver Twist*. **Dickens's Fagin** is crude, heartless,

cunning, and selfish but Eisner's Fagin is the victim of racial discrimination, innocent, benevolent, and kind.

The project originally began as an introductory piece for a pictorial adaptation of *Oliver Twist*. However, as Eisner delved into the history of Jewish life in London during Dickens's time, he discovered fascinating material that inspired him to create a new work. Through his research, Eisner grew convinced that Dickens did not intend to portray Jews negatively with his well-known depiction of Fagin as "the Jew." Nevertheless, Dickens's portrayal reinforced prevailing prejudices, and his character became ingrained in the public consciousness as a stereotypical image of a Jew. Using his acclaimed storytelling approach, Eisner reimagines the infamous villain as a layered, conflicted antihero, allowing Fagin to narrate his own story. By framing Fagin's decisions and actions within a historical context, Eisner vividly illustrates life in London's Ashkenazi community and masterfully brings the social atmosphere of Dickensian England to life.

Dickens as a Stereotypist

Charles Dickens's classic *Oliver Twist* has created one of the most famous Jewish stereotype characters in all of fiction ... **Fagin**. By referring to Fagin as "The Jew" Throughout the novel, Dickens reinforced stereotypes and prejudices against Jews, solidifying the image of Fagin as "the Jew" in popular culture and bias. Fagin is depicted as a character no self-respecting Jew could identify with—entirely devoid of decency and portrayed as barely human. Frequently likened to subhuman creatures like reptiles, he is also linked to the extreme evil of Satan. The harsh, deeply antisemitic illustrations by George Cruikshank further amplified the reading experience of *Oliver Twist*.

He was a very old man, with a bald head and a very long, thin, sharp nose. He had a great many rings on his fingers, and a watch chain around his neck (Chapter 2). This vivid description sets the stage for Fagin as a figure of suspicion and avarice. His **bald head** signifies age and a loss of vitality, while the **long, thin, sharp nose**

suggests a predatory nature as if he is always sniffing out opportunities to exploit others. The rings on his fingers and **watch chain** symbolize wealth and materialism, indicating that he values riches above all else. Dickens paints a picture of a man who is both physically and morally twisted, evoking the image of a miser who is more concerned with accumulating wealth than caring for the boys he lures into a life of crime. *He was a merry old gentleman, with a wretchedly small appetite and a great deal of money. (Chapter 7)* This quote contrasts Fagin's outward demeanor with his inner character. The phrase "**merry old gentleman**" is ironic, as Fagin's merriment masks his true nature as a manipulative and greedy criminal. His "**wretchedly small appetite**" suggests that, despite having abundant wealth, he is not a man who enjoys life in a traditional sense; rather, his wealth serves a different purpose—namely, the exploitation of children. The "**great deal of money**" he possesses emphasizes his materialism and hints at the lengths he will go to maintain his criminal enterprise, showing that his happiness is derived not from human connection or kindness but from the accumulation of wealth and control over others.

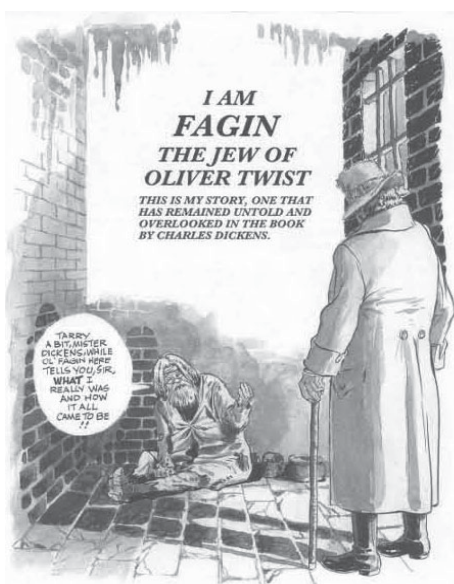
The law is a very good thing; it keeps people from being hanged. (Chapter 8). Fagin's flippant remark about the law highlights his cynical worldview. By stating that the law is beneficial because it prevents people from being hanged, he reveals his self-serving nature. This quote underscores his **moral corruption**; Fagin views the law not as a means of justice but as a tool for self-preservation. His casual dismissal of the law's role in protecting society from criminals reflects a deep-seated lack of respect for moral values. It implies that Fagin, who regularly breaks the law, is more concerned with avoiding consequences than with any sense of right or wrong. This perspective paints him as a character entrenched in a criminal mentality, prioritizing survival over ethics. *You'll be a great man yet, my dear boy; and when you are, remember the old man who took you in. (Chapter 9).* Fagin's statement to Oliver is laden with manipulative subtext. The phrase "**you'll be a great man yet**" reflects his own aspirations for Oliver, projecting his hopes onto the boy while simultaneously using flattery as a tool for

control. The term **“my dear boy”** feigns affection, masking the fact that Fagin’s true intent is to ensure that Oliver remains loyal and obedient to him. This disingenuous approach underscores Fagin’s **crude behavior**, as he exploits Oliver’s innocence to further his own ends. The use of the phrase **“remember the old man who took you in”** is particularly telling; it positions Fagin as a benefactor, though in reality, he is grooming Oliver for a life of crime. This manipulation illustrates Fagin’s heartlessness, as he is willing to sacrifice the boy’s future for his own gain.

It won’t do, it won’t do; I can’t afford to lose you. (Chapter 14). In this moment, Fagin reveals his cold, calculating nature. His repeated phrase **“it won’t do”** conveys a sense of urgency, indicating that his primary concern lies in the operational efficiency of his gang rather than the well-being of the child. The statement **“I can’t afford to lose you”** implies that, to Fagin, the boys are not individuals with hopes and dreams but mere commodities essential to his criminal enterprise. This heartless view underscores his lack of empathy; he values them only for what they can contribute to his schemes. By prioritizing his interests over the lives and futures of these children, Fagin embodies the darker aspects of human nature, revealing how easily one can become desensitized to the suffering of others when motivated by greed and self-interest.

Eisner as a Postmodernist

Fagin himself narrates the story, directly addressing the reader and acknowledging the damage inflicted by Dickens’s depiction of him. He argues that Dickens’s



portrayal has contributed to the misconception of Jewish people as inherently wicked and dishonest. I was born Moses Fagin, the only son of Abraham and his wife, Rachael. My parents came from Bohemia, forced out along with many other Jews from the region. They reached London, joining others escaping central Europe. How they managed the journey, only God knows. In England, they found a more welcoming community where Jews weren't subject to special laws or violent oppression. The country had long been a haven for Sephardic Jews from Spain and Portugal, who had settled and become established. In contrast, newly arrived Jews from central Europe—Germans, Poles, and others, collectively called Ashkenazim—were considered lower class. I was just a baby when my parents arrived, hoping to build a better life for us. But even in London, life was far from easy.

These were grim times, and yet the best of times for us newcomers. We were uneducated and endured pauperdom perfumed by the promise of opportunity. **The graphic novel then traces Fagin's life journey, starting with his family's arrival in London as refugees from Bohemia.** They had been expelled alongside other Jewish families,



forced to seek refuge and opportunity elsewhere. This historical context underlines the precarious position of Jews in 18th and 19th century Europe, frequently subjected to expulsion and discrimination. **Eisner portrays Fagin's childhood as one of poverty and limited prospects.** Young Fagin witnesses his father struggle to secure an honest livelihood, lamenting the scarce opportunities available to Jews in London. He is

“educated” on the streets, learning the art of deception and survival from other marginalized individuals. This challenging environment compels Fagin to engage in petty theft and trickery to survive, shaping his worldview and pushing him toward a life of crime.

Throughout his life, Fagin encounters pervasive anti-Semitism. While his father acknowledges England’s relative tolerance compared to other European nations, urging Fagin to pursue education, the comic depicts



instances of verbal and physical harassment targeting Jews. Eisner also examines the internal tensions within the Jewish community, highlighting the pressure to assimilate. Fagin interacts with figures like Mr. Solomon, a wealthy Jewish leader who promotes assimilation and modern education while rejecting traditional practices. Solomon represents a segment of Jewish society seeking integration into broader English society, often distancing themselves from less fortunate members of their community. This conflict between maintaining tradition and striving for acceptance adds complexity to Fagin’s quest for belonging. **Fagin’s narrative is intertwined with *Oliver Twist*’s arrival in London.** Their relationship, however, is portrayed differently than in Dickens’s novel. While Fagin remains involved in criminal activities, Eisner’s interpretation suggests that these actions stem from his struggle for survival and the limited options available to him.

He is The graphic novel culminates in Fagin’s arrest and eventual transportation to a penal colony, reflecting the harsh legal system of the

time. Despite his fate, Eisner avoids portraying Fagin as purely villainous, prompting readers to consider the complex interplay between individual agency and societal forces in shaping a life path. By providing Fagin with a backstory rooted in historical reality and by humanizing his character, Eisner encourages a reevaluation of the stereotypical portrayal of Jews in 19th-century England. He challenges the anti-Semitic caricature presented by Dickens and presents Fagin as a product of his social context. The sources do not directly state Eisner's stance on whether Fagin's actions are entirely excusable. This ambiguity allows for a nuanced interpretation, inviting readers to consider the intricate relationship between personal choice and social constraints in shaping a life path. Eisner's reinterpretation of Fagin serves as a commentary on the lasting impact of literary stereotypes and the importance of understanding historical context when examining social identity. Through *Fagin the Jew*, he seeks to dismantle harmful prejudices and encourage a more empathetic understanding of marginalized groups.

Examining Jewish Identity Through Fagin

Will Eisner's graphic novel *Fagin the Jew* reframes the character of Fagin from Charles Dickens's *Oliver Twist* to offer a more nuanced perspective. While Eisner's work is a fictionalized account, it draws on historical context to illuminate the complexities of Jewish identity in 19th-century England. Eisner acknowledges the prevalence of anti-Semitism in his own life experiences and recognizes the lasting influence of Dickens's portrayal of Fagin. He points to the continued use of "Jew" as a pejorative term and the acceptance of anti-Semitic imagery in art and literature. By retelling Fagin's story from his perspective, Eisner aims to challenge the simplistic and often negative understanding of Jewish identity that prevailed in 19th-century England. Eisner's Fagin recounts his family's arrival in London from Bohemia, where they had sought refuge after being expelled. This historical detail highlights the precarious position of Jews, who often faced expulsion and were forced to migrate in search of safety and opportunity. **Fagin describes the limited options available to Jews in London at the time.** He details

how he was “educated” on the streets, learning the “emulating of others” to survive. This suggests that societal pressures and economic circumstances often pushed Jews into marginalized occupations, leading to negative stereotypes.

Fagin’s narrative highlights the prejudice and discrimination experienced by Jews. His father

encourages him to study, pointing out that England is a “tolerant country” compared to other European nations. However, the comic depicts instances of verbal and physical harassment directed towards Jews. The story emphasizes the internal divisions within the Jewish community. Fagin encounters both welcoming and exclusionary figures. This internal conflict is further demonstrated in the character of Mr. Solomon, a wealthy Jewish leader who advocates for assimilation and rejects traditional Jewish practices. Through Fagin’s interactions with various members of English society, Eisner explores how Jews attempted to navigate their identity in a society that was often hostile society. Fagin’s story illustrates the complexities of the Jewish experience in 19th-century England, ranging from economic hardship to religious prejudice and social marginalization. **By humanizing Fagin and providing him with a backstory rooted in historical context, Eisner encourages readers to reconsider the prevailing stereotypes surrounding Jewish identity in 19th-century England.** His interpretation suggests that Fagin’s “criminal” activities were, in part, a consequence of the limited choices available to him as a Jew in a society marked by prejudice and economic inequality. Importantly, the source does not explicitly state whether Eisner intends to absolve Fagin of responsibility for his actions completely. This ambiguity allows readers



My parents arrived in London along with other Jews fleeing Middle Europe. How they managed the journey, God only knows.

Here they found a better community, where Jews were not subject to special laws or legal pogroms. England was a country that had long been a refuge for Spanish and Portuguese Jews known as Sephardim. They were the earliest to arrive and had become well established, whereas the newly arriving Middle Europeans were regarded as lower class. Germans, Poles, and the like were called Ashkenazim.



to grapple with the complex interplay of individual agency and societal pressures in shaping one's life choices.

Fagin as a Social Victim: Eisner's Reframing of Dickens's Stereotype

The story then traces Fagin's life, starting with his family's arrival in London as refugees from Bohemia. They were part of a wave of Jewish migration to England following expulsion from other European regions. This historical context highlights the precarious position of Jews in Europe, constantly seeking refuge and facing discrimination. **Eisner portrays Fagin's childhood as one marked by poverty and limited opportunities.** Young Fagin witnesses his father struggling to make an honest living and bemoaning the lack of options for Jews in London. He learns the "trades of the streets," resorting to trickery and petty theft to survive. This upbringing shapes his understanding of the world and sets him on a path toward a life of crime. **The graphic novel depicts numerous instances of anti-Semitism that Fagin encounters throughout his life.** His father, while encouraging him to study, acknowledges that England is a "tolerant country" only in comparison to other European nations. Despite this relative tolerance, Fagin is subjected to verbal abuse and physical harassment, illustrating the pervasive prejudice against Jews. Eisner also explores the internal divisions within the Jewish community and the pressure to assimilate. Fagin encounters Mr. Solomon, a wealthy Jewish leader who embraces assimilation and modern education. Solomon represents a segment of Jewish society that sought to integrate into the larger English society, often



But for us, even London life was not so simple. These were grim times, and yet the best of times for us newcomers. We were uneducated and endured a pauperdom perfumed by the promise of opportunity.

Aye, 'twas, not to put too fine a point on it, a time when opportunity bloomed in the dirty streets of London. It was where, when I was still a mere tyke, my parents put me out to peddle needles and buttons.



distancing themselves from traditional practices and those less fortunate. This tension between tradition and assimilation further complicates Fagin's struggle to find his place in the world. **Through these experiences, Eisner presents Fagin as a victim of his social and historical circumstances.** The novel suggests that Fagin's involvement in criminal activity was not a product of inherent Jewish wickedness, as implied by Dickens, but rather a consequence of poverty, limited opportunities, and social exclusion.



Conclusion

Through Fagin's narration and the visual depiction of his experiences, Eisner challenges the simplistic and prejudiced view of Jewish identity presented in *Oliver Twist*. **Fagin's story becomes a testament to the challenges faced by a marginalized community in 19th-century England.** The novel suggests that while Fagin is undeniably involved in criminal activity, his choices are shaped by a combination of poverty, prejudice, and limited opportunities. By providing a nuanced and humanizing portrayal of Fagin, Eisner compels the reader to reconsider the origins of prejudice and the complex interplay of social forces that can lead individuals down different paths. This graphic novel doesn't only challenge the stereotypes, goes one step ahead and proclaims "**Fagin is a product of the society**" but Charles Dickens unconsciously victim of the power-play thus he projected himself as the most villainous character ever existed, whereas Eisner shattered this racial prejudice and questions this existing notion through the most appealing form of writing thus readers could easily relate and understand Fagin as a kind and benevolent.

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Survival Conflict in Margret Lawrence's *The Stone Angel*

S. Kather Nooruni Rekha and K. Maheshwari

Introduction

Gender and socio-cultural affinities are stifled by modern literary ideologies. The topic of feminism is still relevant today, as evidenced by the numerous references to it in newly published books on literature. The present paper proposes to examine the emergence of the new woman from the hardship treatment of society and political restriction, both as a concept and reality in the fictional world of Margaret Laurence. Her works also explore the place of women in contemporary society visualized by Laurence, which is an attempt to evaluate the feminist perceptions of Laurence on men and women relationships in society.

If history is the greatest story ever told, then a woman's story is the greatest story never told. History narrates the saga of man, but it excludes his life partner, the woman. Most often women remain voiceless, subaltern and invisible. The history of mankind is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations on the part of men, establishing an absolute tyranny over women. Virginia wolf points the position of women in society:

Imaginatively she is of the highest importance; practically she is completely insignificant. She pervades Poetry from cover to cover, she is all but absent from history. She dominates the lives of Kings and conquers in fiction. In fact she was the slave of any boy whose parents forced a ring upon her finger. (44-45)

Masculinity as a concept has evolved over centuries based on human experience, cultural patterns, religious beliefs and social psychology born of economic determinism. In religious systems and mythologies, certain attributes have been assigned to masculine being. Religious systems

also attribute cosmic function to masculine entities. Gods, not Goddesses, are credited with cosmic function d creation of mundane universe, invention of moral subsistence, and established of moral codes.

In *Sexual Politics* Kate Millett, the main theoretician of the new feminism believes that the story is designed in order to blame all this world's discomfort on the female. Accordingly, in her inferiority and vulnerability, the woman succumbs and eats a simple carnal thing that she is affected by Satan's flattery. Only after this does the male fall, and with him the humanity. Adam's curse is to toil in the "sweat of his brow"; Eve's sentence is in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children, and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee" (25).

The history of Canada is the history of a colonial culture's journey from being a colony to being a nation. It still struggles to attain the longed-for distinction as a recognizable and recognized nation. Unlike most colonial nations which have known subordination under one mother country', Canada has been a colony paying allegiance to several mother countries. For a little over a hundred years, Canada remained a colony of the British Empire until it was granted a sovereign status by the British North America Act in 1867.

The problem of the Canadian identity is compounded by the contiguity of a dominating and imperialistic culture such as the U.S.A. The American invasion' became a horrendous reality in the post-Second World War years, when the American influence through mass media and commerce infiltrated alt spheres of Canadian socio-cultural ambience. Margaret Atwood states:

The United States of course was the giant and Canada was in its footsteps, though some joker wondered whether Canada was in footstep just before or just after the foot had descended (380).

Canadian Literature

The major issue concerning Canadian culture today is the ensuing racial tension between the French-speaking tower of Canada and the English-speaking upper Canada; the French and English Canadians have always

remained apart. This vertical division has frustrated the image projection of Canada as one nation both within and without the national borders. These complex pressures add to the psychic burden of Canadian

One of the characteristics of recent Canadian fiction is the emergence of women writers. The women's liberation movement in the 1960s acted as a catalyst to generate a great awareness of the need for self-definition and self-assertion among Canadian women as it did everywhere in the world. The movement served to release Canadian women from many of the restrictions of the socio-cultural ties and helped to create the "new woman" who, as Barbara Gobard observes, "astonished, amused, and frightened Canadians as the purveyor of dress reforms, women's rights and a promised new lifestyle"(72).

Adele Wiseman, W.O. Mitchell, and Hugh MacLennan are notable Canadian writers. Wiseman's most successful and challenging novel is *The Sacrifice*. However, *Crackpot* also set in Winnipeg, deals with large social issues such as immigration, lower-class life, the Winnipeg General Strike, and the Depression, although its scope is less ambitious than *The Sacrifice*.

W.O. Mitchell's most ambitious novel of the period, *The Vanishing Point* is set largely on a Stony Indian reservation and deals with a white administrator-teacher's attempts to bridge the gap between the white and Native ways of life. One of these attempts is through his love for a young Native girl, symbolically named Victoria, whose disappearance into the city instigates a desperate search. The search gives the novel a compelling mystery and addresses crucial social issues. Although *The Vanishing Point* is weakened by Mitchell's failure to portray the well-meaning Sinclair as successfully as some secondary characters, parts of the novel are characteristically lively, and its perceptions and dramatizations of contemporary Native life are always convincing. Mitchell's *How I Spent My Summer Holidays* has a title that suggests a reprise of his classic *Who Has Seen the Wind*. Despite the similarities in setting, character, and theme, *How I Spent My Summer Holidays* is a sombre mystery novel involving murder, insanity, and

suicide as seen from the points of view of a boy and the man he becomes. The 'adult' narrative frame, which emphasizes the difficulty of recalling and interpreting the past, is solemn and deliberate.

Hugh MacLennan's novel *Voices in Time* envisions the end of Western civilization in Quebec in 2030, following the devastation of cities around 1990. The protagonist, John Wellfleet, attempts to reconstruct the past from various sources, analyzing self-destruction stemming from the decline of traditional values. The book serves as a didactic and solemn reflection of MacLennan's values, presented more explicitly than in his other works.

July 18th 1926, one of Canada's greatest authors, Margaret Laurence, was born to proud parents Robert and Verna Weymss. Verna's father, John Simpson, was a self-made man. Born in 1853 in Middletown Ontario, John attended school, training to be a cabinetmaker. Margaret Laurence's grandmother, Margaret Weymss, whom she was named after, came from a proud family. Margaret Weymss' great grandfather was the Minister of Agriculture.

This was only the beginning of the many tragic deaths that Margaret's family endured in her first twenty years of life. At the young age of four, Margaret's mother Verna Simpson died. The death of Margaret's mother had a profound effect on the once bright and bubbly girl. It was Verna who first nicknamed her daughter Margaret, "Peggy," a name by which Margaret was addressed as for almost 40 years. After Verna's death, her older sister, Margaret Simpson, quickly moved in with Peggy and her father. A year after moving in, Margaret Simpson married Robert Weymss becoming "mother" to Peggy. In 1935, another tragedy shook the Weymss household. Peggy's father Robert died after catching pneumonia. Margaret's last family death in her early years was in 1936 when Peggy's grandmother Jane, contracted Polio. It was around this time that Peggy began to write, in an attempt to escape the horrible nightmare she was living, by creating imaginary worlds. Margaret found that writing was the only way she could control external events, such as life and death.

At the age of thirteen Margaret Laurence's first story "Pillars of a Nation" was published in the newspaper The Winnipeg Free Press. The fictional town name Manawaka first appeared in this story. Her second work published in The Winnipeg Free Press was "The Case of the Blond Butcher" only a few months after the first. In high school, Margaret was always competing for top marks in her class. While she got perfect marks in English and Arts, her high school rival Mildred Musgrove got honours in Math and Science. Teaming together Mildred and Margaret joined the school newspaper, where Margaret eventually became editor. Due to her good grades and extra-curricular activities, Margaret won the Governor General's award in 1944 and got a scholarship to the United College in Winnipeg.

It was at United College that Margaret really became involved in writing. While there, she published poetry and many stories in the school newspaper Vox. Often times when submitting a piece to be published, she would use the name Steve Lancaster because of the sexism that existed in that time.' The pinnacle of Margaret's college life came in her second year, when she was accepted to the exclusive "English Club." Back then English professors obviously recognized Margaret as a student with much potential. To be offered membership to the English Club was an incredible feat for Margaret because second-year students rarely were asked to join. Away from her home, Margaret grew increasingly fond of her upbringing in the Prairies, especially her town Neepawa. It is a small town which is occupied in her mind with a lot of pain, agony and crimes. She cannot forget this town because of what she had experienced violence which given sensational changes to her so she called this town as prairie which means prairie is a plain of grassy land without many trees.

The writing of Margaret Laurence has inspired all Canadian readers. She was one of Canada's best writers and all around the world people applauded her work. Her writing is outstanding work and has attracted many young readers in this modern society. Also, by her writing, Laurence has turned a town in Manitoba into a new human experience. She has even helped us to learn about the life she has lived by writing fictional novels.

Throughout the writing career of Margaret Laurence, she brought her readers to Manawaka, recreating the world in which her heroines Hagar (Zhe Stone Angel), Stacey (The Fire-Dwellers) and Rachel (A Jest of God), grew up in. Through these novels, Margaret showed how the apparition of power by women could be conducted according to principles of self-interest. Even though Margaret Laurence was a celebrity in Canada, she had a chronic shyness at public events. Her warmth and kindness were obvious with her public, and she was much beloved because she reflected and expressed the hopes and fears of Canadians for all of society. As for her accomplishments, in 1967, Margaret Laurence became the first woman and youngest person to be Honorary Fellow of United College, University of Winnipeg. In 1969, despite her success, her seven year separation came to an end. At the same time she served an academic year at University of Toronto as Writer-in-Residence, Massey College. Furthermore, in 1971 she was made a companion of the order of Canada and many other honours were bestowed upon her. Laurence received the Governor General's Award for *A Jest of God* (1967) and for *The Diviners* (1975). Margaret Laurence first lady of Manawaka an hour long documentary Film Board of Canada, and premiered in Winnipeg on May 7, 1979. Even though she was recognized as a novelist, she also wrote several children's books: *Jason Quest*, *Six Dam Cows*, *The Olden Days Coat*, and *A Christmas Birthday Story*.

Margaret Laurence supported novice artists and writers by aiding them financially through the Three Guineas Foundation and spiritually through encouraging words. Through lectures, letters, essays and fundraising campaigns, peace, social justice, the equality of women, and environmental protection have been the main focus of the last years of her 'life. Few who attended Lakefield or Toronto knew that Margaret Laurence had chosen to end her own life in the face of terminal cancer on January 5, 1987. Her kindness, generosity and good heart are legendary. It is widely recognized that some of the best Canadian novels and stories were written between 1960 and 1982. During this time, Canadian fiction writers gained international recognition, with authors

such as Margaret Laurence, Robertson Davies, Mordecai Richler, Mavis Gallant, Margaret Atwood, Alice Munro, Norman Levine, and Michael Ondaatje achieving widespread acclaim. Additionally, many other talented writers emerged during this period, demonstrating more than just basic competence or craftsmanship in their work.

Survival Conflicts

The Stone Angel published in 1964, Margaret Laurence's debut novel and is set in against the backdrop of rural Canada. The story revolves around Hagar Shipley, a resilient ninety-year-old woman who is determined to maintain her dignity while carrying the weight of life's emotional burdens until her final moments. Hagar Shipley, the formidable, unyielding, and resolute nonagenarian in Laurence's inaugural Manawaka novel, stands out as one of the most audacious and enduring characters in Canadian literature. The best fictional character that brought the reader closer to Margaret Laurence was the character, Hagar Shipley, in the novel *The Stone Angel*. Hagar is the most unforgettable female character in all Canadian fiction.

Hagar Shipley's life, spanning over ninety years, unfolds in *The Stone Angel* through a shifting between two time periods: the present and the past. The novel's events transpire over a brief three-week period, yet the narrative delves into the story of three generations of Hagar's family. Hagar, representing the second generation, serves as the link between her father's generation and her son's, narrating their stories. In her final days, Hagar reminisces, defends, reacts, and questions her life choices, seamlessly oscillating between the present and the past.

Hagar's troubled mind, her distant past, her perplexing present, and the disparity between her public image and her true self are all portrayed through first-person narratives in the present tense. Laurence explains that she opted for the first-person perspective in writing the novel to effectively convey. Hagar fearlessly frees herself from the grasp of patriarchy society when it opposes her independent will. Feminist theory asserts that women primarily suffer due to their fear of enforced silence

a silence stemming from misguided devotion, the need to maintain the illusion of a successful marriage, and the desire to avoid scandal. Hagar endeavours to shatter this silence by casting off the shackles of patriarchal society. Furthermore story of Hagar's life, including her conflict with her father as a young woman, her rebellion against Bram as his wife, and her time in the self-chosen run-down house, are examples of her resistance to the patriarchal system upheld and celebrated by society.

During an interview with Michel Fabre, Laurence says that when trying to think of a name for the protagonist, Hagar came to her because of Biblical history. Though there are certain parallels between the Hagar of the novel and the Hagar of the Bible, Laurence says she "did not want the parallels to be too exact" (198) as she did not want to create an allegory. Both the Hagars are destined to roam in the desert wasteland, but in the case of Lawrence's Hagar, the wilderness is also 'within'. Patricia Morley says, "The myth becomes an analogue for the journey of the human spirit out of the **bondage** of pride, which isolates into the freedom of love, which links, the lover to other human" (79).

The stone angel, a symbol of death, is paradoxically linked to Hagar as it rests in a cemetery. The angel represents antipathy towards life, while Hagar is assertive and capable of love. However, she refuses to acknowledge her feelings. The marble angel is actually a tribute to Hagar's mother, who passed away as Hagar came into the world. Despite being ninety years old, Hagar still feels a mix of guilt and disdain towards her mother, wondering why her mother didn't die when her brothers were born but instead "saved" her death for her. The image of her frail and anxious looking of her mother in the picture given to her by her father contrasts sharply with Hagar's own awful strength and sturdy appearance. It is primarily because of her mother that Hagar associates womanhood with weakness.

Hagar's internal struggles are rooted in her deep spiritual pride, which ultimately led to the breakdown of her relationship with her son, John.

When John brought his girlfriend, Arlene, home to stay, Hagar's refusal to accept her due to prideful reasons had devastating consequences. Tragically, both John and Arlene were killed in a car accident, leading Hagar to realize that her inability to compromise had cost them their lives. Stricken with grief, Hagar found herself unable to express any emotions, resembling the emotionless, rigid stance of a stone angel, which becomes relevant to the story's title. Laurence points the woman as frozen in the society thus:

Pride was my wilderness, and the demon that led me there was fear. I was alone, never anything else, and never free, for I carried my chains with me and they spread out from me and shackled all I touched. Oh, My two, my dead. Dead by your hands or by mine? Nothing can take away those years (292).

In this statement, the author vividly portrays the protagonist's life as one devoid of joy, love, care, and affection. Despite exuding pride, the character is burdened with deep emotional pain and unresolved wounds. Hagar returns after two years with a whole lot of accomplishments which have nothing to do with life on the Canadian prairies. Her training makes her more of a snob. She alienates her to a greater extent from others in the small town. Hagar is not what she seems to be to those around her. Her tragedy lies in the fact that for ninety long years she has lived a crippled life keeping her inner self securely apart from her socially conditioned self.

Hagar entertains a romantic notion of love, which Bram can neither understand nor appreciate. She admits He had a banner over me for years: "I never thought love...Love, I fancied, must consist of words and deeds delicate as lavender sachets, not like the things he did, sprawled or the high white bedstead that rattled like a train" (77).

Hagar's stubbornness was a significant cause of both her own unhappiness and her family's. Because of her stubborn nature, she struggled to find true love. As Hagar aged, she required more care. Her daughter-in-law, Doris, always tried to help her, but Hagar was unwilling to rely on anyone's assistance. Even when Marvin tried to help, she

would just decline and reply. Hagar's stubbornness was a significant cause of both her own unhappiness and her family's. Because of her stubborn nature, she struggled to find true love. As Hagar aged, she required more care. Her daughter-in-law, Doris, always tried to help her, but Hagar was unwilling to rely on anyone's assistance. Even when Marvin tried to help, she would just decline and reply.

Hagar believes that good appearances and nice decorous behavior are seen as necessary conditions for social acceptability. She greatly values good manners, good clothes, and good furniture. Hagar gets irritated when Marvin places his elbow on the dining table and angrily tells us, "High day or holiday or judgment day, no difference to Marvin. He would put his elbow on the table if he'd been an apostle at the Last Supper" (34). Hagar spends her first few months' salary earned from Mr. Oatley entirely on clothes in order to appear decent. She loves her lilac silk dress, "a real silk, mine spun by worms in China, feeding upon the mulberry leaves." (29) Convinced of the correctness of her own taste, she finds Doris' choice of clothes deplorable. According to her, Doris "wouldn't know silk from flour sacks" (29).

The Manawaka cemetery with its rigid marble angels and portly peonies symbolizes order. Jason Currie desires order even after death. He leaves money in his will for the care of the family plot "so that his soul need never peer down from the elegant halls of eternity and be offended by cowslips **spawning on** his grave." (63) Laurence, a passionate advocate for human liberation, envisions a society where every individual can fulfill their most fundamental needs for survival in a state of sanity, rather than experiencing insanity.

The Stone Angel is narrated in the first person by Hagar Shipley, providing a unique perspective on her experiences. The novel delves into the complexities of Hagar's character and her struggles within a patriarchal society. It highlights how both men and women are affected by societal forces, leading to Hagar's unyielding and compensatory behaviour. The novel skillfully avoids becoming overly didactic by presenting Hagar's inability, due to historical context, to express a feminist interpretation of her own story.

The imagery and depiction of the cemetery at the opening of the book subtly project one of the themes of the rest of the novel. Hagar notes the constant battle between cultivated ground and wild growth, reflecting both her wild nature and the society's rules that contain her. Another pervasive theme is the inability to act in a prescribed way, which is evident in Hagar's struggles with her emotions and her disdain for weakness. The stone angel stands as a symbol of Hagar's strength and her mother's perceived weakness.

The recurring bird imagery sometimes acquires symbolic importance, as when Hagar injures a seagull and it lies on the ground, beating its wings helplessly. The seagull symbolizes Hagar's state of non-freedom. The bird batters itself "in the terrible rage of not being able to do what it is compelled to do," an apt description of the reality of Hagar's life, in which her desire to live independently, which her pride demands, is no longer possible. The symbolism of the Stone Angel

Another symbol is the stone angel that stands over the family plot at the Manawaka cemetery. The novel opens with a description of how the white marble statue was brought from Italy by Hagar's father and stands as a prominent monument in the cemetery, symbolizing Hagar's pride and resilience. Like the stone angel, the statue represents Hagar's unyielding nature and her inability to express emotions, particularly after her son's death. Just as the stone angel is carved with eyeballs but is blind, Hagar also lacks self-awareness and the ability to see beyond her own perspective.

Hagar is the central character in the novel *The Stone Angel*. IT takes us into the memories and the viewpoint of its central character, Hagar Shipley. She often wonders why one discovers so many things too late. She calls these the jokes of God. Any mention of raging also takes us to Hagar, for her rages are one of the most vividly memorable things about her. Some of these are roaring reactions against meekness; some grow from impatience with her physical frailty; but all are connected with pride and typified by the clan motto her father has dinned into her: "Gainsay who dare (78)". Who does dare, when Hagar rages? Her

husband, Bram, and her second son, John, dare certainly, and in another way, Time itself. In the memories of her men and reminders of her morality, Hagar's character is unfolded. The novel, told from Hagar's point of view, develops very much as an unfolding. Layer on layer of irony, character and meaning are revealed in the succession of events that the present brings back to the old lady's mind. The present and past are brought together actually contributes to the irony of the characterization.

The Stone Angel is the first novel by Laurence using the Canadian socio-cultural ethos as its canvas. The narrative technique of the first-person persona provides authenticity to her portrayal of the multi-dimensional problem of the Canadian identity. The novel's protagonist, Hagar Shipley, a ninety-year-old woman, is not coincidental but deliberate, serving as a critique of the identity crisis at spiritual and psychological levels. This crisis arises from the inability to come to terms with one's past. The choice of Hagar as a strong and determined protagonist, facing significant challenges at the age of ninety and reflecting on her past from childhood onwards, serves as a form of catharsis for Laurence. During the writing of *The Stone Angel*, Laurence was separated from her engineer husband John Laurence and living in England with her young children. These were difficult times for her, as England did not provide her with the sense of belonging and rootedness she needed to confront her predicament.

Conclusion

In Margaret Laurence's emotionally rich and intricate novel, we are introduced to the character of Hagar Shipley, reflects on her life with unflinching honesty. Through her perspective, we are taken on a journey through her past, as she vividly paints portraits of herself at different stages of her life. The story unfolds through Hagar's eyes, revealing layers of irony, complexity, and deep meaning as she revisits the events and experiences that have shaped her. The novel delves into Hagar's psychological exploration of her past, as she seeks to understand her present by grappling with the truths of her origins.

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Taslima Nasrin's Suranjan: An Unheroic Hero

Rajeswar Pal

Taslima Nasrin, a feminist writer of Bangladesh wrote *Lajja* to which she claims to be a 'political novel' while it is filled with rape, ransom, tumult, 'nefarious motives' and murder against Hindus as a repulsion against the demolition of controversial Babri Masjid in Ayodhya. She has to leave Bangladesh and came to Kolkata. The novel *Shameless* is a sequel to *Lajja* to which she claims "a novel about society, about the interplay of religion, caste, gender and about human relationship" and "a story based on psychological currents"(P. viii). Undoubtedly Taslima is a stout humanist avoiding religious bias. Main themes of the novels are feminism and humanism and social injustice against women. After thirteen years Suranjan comes to know through Kajal Debnath that Taslima was also living in Kolkata and finds her. This is how the story of *Shameless* begins in Kolkata and she "felt nothing but pity and sadness for him" in the same way as she felt 'for the Taliban' (P.5). Taslima here compares her hero with Taliban.

Taslima is keen to know about Maya who is supposed to have been murdered and thrown into the lake after rape in Bangladesh. She comes to know that Maya is alive. Both of them Suranjan and the novelist show their intense intimacy in each other in Chapter One. Suranjan has no job here which for Taslima is sad. He gives tuition to two boys in late afternoon and two boys come at evening and he himself takes nap in the noon while his mother sells *saris* in the streets. The family of mother and son has been suffering from poverty while Maya has been married with a drunkard and adulterer. His father in Bangladesh was herbal physician. After moving to Kolkata Sudhamay was asked by Shankar Ghosh – a kith and kin to Kiranmayee, to give four lac *Taka* to Gautam Saha. Shankar Ghosh did not keep his word and said that the payment

was to be returned by Pratap Mandal who ran his garment business in Bangladesh and travelled from Bhopal to Bombay. In the meantime Suranjan tries to get job but failed. He drank heavily at one night and demanded the money from Shankar Ghosh, punched in his jaw and said to him, “Give back the money, you bastard, or I’ll murder you right now” (P.19). He is unable to tolerate the general problems of life and proves himself as drunkard, abusive and melodramatic character.

Suranjan’s father has a doubt whether he is with the boys who are making piracy of *Lajja* and he does not know where he lives throughout the day. At this Suranjan becomes angry and wants to sleep out of home on pavements. He is not an obedient son to his mother. He says before Shobhon that “I hate my mother” (P.160). Suranjan joined RSS and BJP but resigned the same day. In frustration he started to smoke again though he has no money. Suranjan does not believe in any religion but he hates Muslims because Muslim boys had raped his sister. He was married with Sudeshna, a teacher and he himself taught history in the same school but after sometime they divorced. It was the fault of Sudeshna that she insisted Maya to get married soon and Suranjan did not tolerate it. He drank heavily and beat his wife and in the case of domestic violence he was in jail for two years. Taslima is happy at this that he was punished yet it proves suranjan a violent person against women. Taslima recollects her memory that he had already committed this type of crime in Dhaka where he took Shamima to his home, raped her and beat her. Actually Suranjan did not beat her. She was poor to sell her body for ten Taka. Suranjan brought her to his home and made physical relation with her and paid her in the morning. “He had actually sought her permission for the act” (P.55). It was adultery not rape but it is the extremity of Taslima’s feminism as she calls it rape because this relation was due to the hatred against Muslims and the compulsion of a woman in the necessity of money. A person having a jail record is the protagonist of the novel.

Taslima Nasrin presents herself as a character in the novel. She visits with Suranjan in the restaurant to have lunch. After lunch Suranjan does not go to his home and asks Taslima, “You want to know why I am

still sticking to around in your flat?" He replies this question himself, "It's because I feel close to you." The novelist does not come to understand the meaning of this word 'close' whether it was for elder sisterhood or a childhood friend and asserts that, "I considered him close too" because it had given her "a warm sensation" and despite her problems with Suranjan, she adds, "what he had said gave me a strange sort of pleasure – there was *someone* who considered me close" (P.31). She brings Suranjan in her bedroom and she herself goes to reading room where she could not read or think because her "mind was elsewhere, thinking about Suranjan. I was furious with him, but it was also true that I felt close to him ...so intimate" (P.32).

Taslima gave ten thousand rupees to Kiranmayee but Suranjan returned the money to Taslima and went away. At this, she asserts that she 'felt lonely'. Once, Suranjan goes to meet Taslima at her home with Zulekha. Taslima did not like it and after their departure her soliloquy is interesting when she thinks that "If he'd come alone, he'd have known how interested I am in him ... I didn't like seeing Zulekha with him" (P.116). Zulekha also notices it and she says to Suranjan, "you're a little too devoted to Taslima. I don't like it" (P.117). Before Shobhon he assumes that Taslima Nasrin has "fallen in love with me" and adds that after writing *Lajja* about me Taslima made us known to the country about our plight and they had to leave their country. He goes many times on long drive with Taslima, smokes, drinks and eats at the cost of Taslima and dances with the village women and Taslima in the night yet he says, "I want to toy with her. She toyed with me in her book. I want to toy with her in real life" (P.161). That is why on the way he proposes her to stay in the hotel at night and calls her as 'darling' but Taslima says, "Learn to respect women first. Then we can spend as many nights as you want" (P. 243).

Kiranmayee tells to Taslima that Suranjan is "as lazy as always ... no idea where he wanders about ... good for nothing as ever. I had to beg and plead with him to start coaching students" (P.39). Suranjan is living in the disguise of a Muslim in Muslim neighborhood because he wants to make India a Hindu nation and he had friendship with Amjad and

claims himself as ‘hardline Hindu’. Amjad tells him about Zulekha and her husband Mohabbat and with the help of Achinta wants to murder Mohabbat because he had beaten two boys for begging money. One day Achinta, Subrata, Gopal and Vishal took Suranjan in a car to kill Mohabbat for revenge and to take money. Mohabbat was not at home and they kidnapped Zulekha to a lonely place. They drank and except Suranjan and Gopal they raped her, slapped her, bite her and pinched her. Suranjan objected to this violence but basically he was not against the rape. He objected this violence and during the fight Suranjan was beaten and left alone with the warning to ‘dump her’. After sometime Suranjan came into sense and he lifted Zulekha to her home and next day provided medicines for her.

Undoubtedly, Suranjan’s help of Zulekha is heroic activity but it followed into nefarious activity of adultery. Suranjan admired Zulekha too much and visited her home for adultery when her husband was at shop and son at school. After some days Mohabbat caught them red handed at his home and divorced to Zulekha. She started to live on rent, worked in a showroom for her living and frequently visited Suranjan’s house where he used her as his enamored beloved in his bedroom in the presence of her mother but “never told Zulekha that he loved her” (P. 45). This was barely immoral, emotional and sexual exploitation of a true and gentle woman who was seeking love in Suranjan. He never married her. Zulekha declined the offer of Amajd to get married with him though he was rich enough because he had also raped her. She is so good that she wanted to marry with a poor man like Suranjan ‘thirsty for love’. Suranjan is “responsible for what had happened to Zulekha. The abduction. The divorce.” (P.71). On the other hand, Zulekha was giving “...both her heart and her body to him, unhesitatingly, unconditionally” (P.91) but it was not possible to give it all throughout life.

Maya was not happy with Suranjan’s relationship with Zulekha and claimed that he had to choose either Zulekha or she while Kiranmayee was of the opinion that it is better for lovers to meet at home in place of going outside to meet. Moreover she was prejudiced for her son to meet a woman as he had no wife and he needed companion. Suranjan

did not marry Zulekha and he was not ready to settle his relations with Sudeshna while she still did not marry with anybody. He never repents for his mistakes and never learns from the old experiences.

Shankar Ghosh gives shelter to Sudhamay family but it was not for the sake of humanism. He used to rape Maya at night forcefully. It was his daily routine. Maya sometimes had dark circles under her eyes, sometime scratches on the neck and arms and sometime her lips could be seen swollen. Maya did not object this continuous rape lest they should be thrown out of home. She compromised this evil activity to have meal for two times. Women in the novel suffer constantly and the males find no solution as Sudhamay is unknown to this place to run his clinic and Suranjan is unable to find any job. They seem helpless and did not dare to ask Maya any questions because for Suranjan, "Knowing would mean having to take on the responsibility of rescuing all of them from this hellhole" (P.97). Poverty is the main reason of this plight as the protagonist thinks but self-respect and honour should not be compromised. Though he loves his sister enough yet he dragged her home and 'beat her to pulp' because he found her waiting for clients at the Dunlop Road to earn bread and butter for the family. "Suranjan was of no material use to her" (P.169).

Though Suranjan loves his younger sister too much yet he could not save her from disasters. Several times she was on the verge to commit suicide but she desisted eventually. She was tired from rapidly worsened situations and married a low caste person Tapan Mandal who was unemployed and drunkard. He occasionally visited his home to meet his family or Maya. He lives in the house of a 'lovingly middle-aged woman' in Kolkata. She is a widow whose both of the children live abroad and she had Tapan as her companion at the cost of wine. Maya came to know it all just after her marriage and tried enough to save Tapan from this immoral path but in vain. She had two children now and at last she had to leave the house of her in-laws and came to live with mother and brother. Though Suranjan does not believe in 'destiny' yet he never tried to talk with Tapan for the sake of his sister.

Suranjan makes friendship with a Muslim software Engineer named Shobhon but he never asks for help to get any job rather he demands wine from him, goes in the restaurants with him to have dinner and abuses Shobhon and all Muslims. He further asserts that “Whenever I am angry with someone, I rape them” and he is still a rapist “I still rape women” and about his relationship with Zulekha he utters that “Actually I’m cheating her. Because I rape her. My relationship with Zulekha is one of a rapist” (P.158). For Taslima also he says that “I want to rape her ...I can fuck that bitch any time” (P.162). Once he was entangled in the abduction and rape activity by Achinta – a Naxalite, yet he comes in his contact. Suranjan forgets that he was beaten badly by the company of Achinta.

Nearly every male character in *Shameless* is evil monster except Shobhon and Sudhamay. It is obvious that female characters are superior to males in *Lajja* and *Shameless* and among all of these characters Zulekha seems to be the heroine of the novel because after every tragic incident she tries her best to come out of it. Whenever she meets any dilemma she makes it an opportunity as she says, “The rape came as a huge boon” (P. 279) as she got further education and made a group of women to fight against violence against women. Maya too finds solution to her plights, no matter through the immoral ways. Her brother though a protagonist of the novel seems to be escapist. He closes his eyes as he meets problems and engages himself in the odd activities. “Suranjan was a man, so he was answerable to no one; he was allowed to do as he pleased” (P.106). Taslima Nasrin also admits it that “Suranjan was nothing more than the protagonist of my novel” (P.113) – an unheroic hero.

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The Portrayal of Patriarchy and Gender Inequality in Sudha Murty's *Mahashweta*

T. K. Sivakumar

Demographic research in 2024 reveals that half of the global human population is women. In every walk of life, women encounter inequality, discrimination, suppression and subordination. They are often oppressed, depressed, marginalized and exploited. The root cause of these problems is the patriarchal system prevalent in our society.

The term “patriarchy” derives from the Greek word “pater” which means “father”. Patriarchy is described as the unequal social relations that make woman suffer. Women writers and thinkers have waged a war with this system that always aims to control and suppress women. In our society, even before a woman is born, society shapes her future by establishing predetermined roles for her. A woman should be in her father’s or brother’s control before her marriage, her husband’s control after the marriage and her son’s control in her old age. She has been treated as ignorant, secondary, subordinate, slave, child-bearing machine or for sexual gratification. These roles are fixed and defined by gender norms, which attribute certain traits to femininity and contrast them with masculinity. In patriarchal society frames men often hold the power in social structures, leaving women marginalized on the outskirts. There are different unwritten rules for men and women that control, suppress, and deprive the liberty of women. That is why women suffer from inequality, injustice, discrimination, domestic violence and social stigma.

Due to the stereotypical roles traditionally imposed upon them, women often find challenges in getting opportunities for their education, career option and progression, and personal development. Pressures related to marriage, including age, appearance, and social status, lead to significant stress, and societal expectations impact on their mental health. Straying

from the expected norms leads to adverse criticism and social stigma, fostering isolation and shame. The suppression around domestic violence, influenced by gender stereotypes, makes women weak enough for exploitation due to fear of societal judgment. Educational disparities, economic dependence, and reproductive pressures contribute to the complex the suffering women endure. Healthcare discrepancies, emotional burdens, and balancing personal goals with societal norms create a web of challenges. Challenging these stereotypes is crucial to creating a more inclusive and fair society that values and respects women's diverse experiences and aspirations, alleviating the many pains they face in Indian society.

Women writers in India like Toru Dutt, Kamala Das, Arundhati Roy, Anita Desai, Nayantara Sahal and Sudha Murty present the issues of women as the central theme in their novels and focus on the gender bias practised against them by their patriarchal society. Sudha Murty, an Indian educator, eminent writer and philanthropist, consistently brings out in her novels the socio-psychological issues the contemporary women are experiencing. Suffering as silent victims of deep-rooted patriarchy, her female protagonists struggle

to overcome the age-old injustice thrust upon them. Sudha Murty's novels not only provide a new hope, happiness or a life lesson to the women who are oppressed and suppressed but also insist on the need for their men to treat their opposite sex equally, gently and respectably. She uses a simple and lucid language to reach her reader.

Sudha Murty expresses the emotions of Indian women in general through her female characters. In ***Mahashweta*** she poignantly depicts the sufferings and mental agony of a middle-class woman in a rich in-laws' house. When all the things at her in-laws' house go against her, the protagonist Anupama suffers helplessly and seeks to meet and communicate her agony to her husband, Dr Anand. The novel brings to light how the male-dominant society treats a woman in the name of traditions and superstitions. Anupama's struggle is definitely an epic struggle to defy all the traditional and age-old male-dominant system in India and establish her identity and lead an independent life of her own.

Sudha Murty titles her novel as ***Mahashweta*** as it is the name of the heroine of the earliest Sanskrit novel ***Kadambari*** written by Bana Bhatta. ***Kadambari's*** female protagonist Mahashweta succeeds in love but her lover meets with an untimely death. She does severe penance in the forest to bring her lover back to life and they are united. The female protagonist of Bana Bhatta struggles deeply to bring back **her true love. In Sudha Murty's novel, Anupama enacts the role of Bana Bhatta's heroine in the opening** of the novel.

“Like Rohini to Chandra, like Lakshmi to Narayana, am I to him. Just as the creeper depends on a tree, emotionally I depend on him. I cannot live without him, and for his sake, I am ready to renounce everything. Let society say anything it wishes, I do not care... “
(Murty, *Mahashweta*, P-14)

Anupama has good complexion, long black hair and big eyes. Seeing her beauty, Dr. Anand falls in love at the first sight like Pundarika in *Kadambari*.

“Anand looked up from his notes, and was stunned to see a young girl of extraordinary beauty standing before him. He had met countless girls over the years, but never had he seen anyone so startlingly lovely. With her beautiful large eyes, exquisite complexion, and face framed by long, jet-black hair, she looked like an apsara”
(Murty, *Mahashweta*, P-8).

Anupama's fairy tale love ends in a happy marriage, but Dr. Anand's wealthy mother is reluctant about this idea. Soon the new woman finds out that her husband's love is only skin-deep. He leaves her in the lurch when she gets leukoderma. Anupama is completely broken by the words of the villagers, relatives and her own family when she comes from her husband's house. They start to blame her and ill-treat her for her skin disease. They attribute her skin disease to her sin in her previous birth. The symbol of that sin is her white patches on her skin. They hurt her feelings by telling her that she is not fit for any auspicious occasion and holy rituals in the family. Completely depressed by their cruel words Anupama goes to a mountain temple to appeal to the god to save her

from mental agony. There she hears about the second marriage arrangements of Dr. Anand. The psychological trauma imposed by her family, village and society pushes her to contemplate suicide. Through Anupama, Sudha Murty shows the real condition of contemporary Indian middle-class women who suffer from the neglect of Indian husbands who are a party to the superstitions and myths in a patriarchal system. At last the protagonist Anupama emerges as Mahashweta to do penance against all the injustice inflicted upon her in the male dominated society. The author adroitly exploits a mythological character to differentiate a classical love from modern love. Classical love centers on inner beauty of the soul whereas modern love is based mostly on physical beauty and money. Through Anupama's painful journey of life, the novel challenges conventional ideas of beauty and urges readers to reassess their judgments based on looks.

Being a feminist writer, Sudha Murty describes the pathetic marital conditions of some Indian women through her protagonist Anupama. A patriarchal society always blames women if she happens to live with her parents after marriage. Being away from her husband is the biggest social stigma a married woman has to bear with. The author clearly brings out the problems of modern women in society. The protagonist suffers from her husband's negligence, her step-mother's barbs and the ostracism that accompanies her leukoderma. She is ill-treated by her own step-mother and step-sisters. She feels alienated from her own family. She looks fair but her step sisters, Vasudha and Nanda look plain. So, Anupama is treated as a stranger in her own family. Her society blames her as the reason for her mother's death. Her father too does not raise his voice against her step mother. He is a submissive and polite school teacher. He never supports his daughter directly and hence leaves her suffering a lot mentally. However, Anupama never gives up her confidence and hopes. She faces every part of her hard life with determination. She motivates herself and grows up like a wild tree. She breaks all her boundaries and flies like a bird. The author gives a strong note that a woman can rebuild her life against all odds if she determines so. With the help of her friend Sumithra Anupama goes to Bombay

where she finds a job, respect and success. Once her friend's husband tries to misbehave with Anupama. She taunts him:

“You should be ashamed of yourself. You have called me your sister.....Will you behave with your sister like this? I have always considered Sumi as my own sister and I will certainly tell her all about your edifying qualities. Get out of my way; I want to go out.”
(Murty, *Mahashweta*, P-88)

She leaves the house and stays in her colleague Dolly's bungalow. She now has the courage, confidence and fortitude to live independently in a new environment. Here the author does not fail to depict the dangers awaiting women when they are forced to get out of the house to lead an independent life. Many were shocked when 22 years old physiotherapy intern, Jyoti Singh was beaten, gang-raped and tortured in a private bus in which she was travelling with her male friend in New Delhi, the capital of India. Though there are several laws to protect women, the mind of the male should change to create a safe environment to hapless women. Through the story of *Mahashweta* the author motivates Indian women to gain confidence to live independently in a male dominated society.

At the end of the novel Dr. Anand comes back and begs her to join him in his life. He wants to restart their life. He regrets his actions and tries to persuade her to join him. But Anupama says

“You knew that I did not have this disease before our marriage. You could have told your mother.....but you didn't. You were scared that I would be disfigured because of this disease.....I ended up a victim because you chose to dishonour the vows you took”
(Murty, *Mahashweta*, P -146-147)

Anupama defies traditional gender roles and makes her own path in life as a pragmatic woman, refusing to be confined by societal expectations of serving her husband. This novel serves as a powerful source of inspiration for all women, showcasing the courage and determination necessary to break free from oppressive norms. Anupama starts her daily routine life teaching her students about drama and acting.

In *A Vindication of Rights of Women*, Mary Wollstonecraft, a British philosopher and feminist writer says: “*I do not wish them (women) to have power over men; but over themselves*” (Mary, P-70). Like this, Anupama in *Mahashweta* never takes power over her husband or her in-laws. But she is not ready to accept her husband, because she doesn’t want to hurt herself again. She takes care of herself. She defies all suppressions on her. She lives her own life and gets satisfaction in her job. She loves her job and trains her students for stage plays. Under her guidance all the students perform well. Like this, she moves on with her passion and satisfaction.

Warsan Shire, a feminist, says: “It’s not my responsibility to be beautiful. I’m not alive for that purpose. My existence is not about how desirable you find me.” in the same vein, Anupama thinks she is not accountable or responsible for her skin condition. For her skin disease she is suppressed and doubly marginalised. Everyone thinks that her beauty is spoiled by the white patches. Society, family members, and even her beloved husband neglect her. But she proves to them all that she is quite beautiful and confident in her inner heart and soul. She breaks all her suppression and comes out of the state like a real phoenix bird. She never bothers about her obstacles.

No family, society or nation can be fully developed without uplifting women. Keeping this idea in mind, Sudha Murty voices for the women rights through her novels. Malala Yousafzai, Pakistani woman education activist, has rightly said:

“I raise up my voice — not so that I can shout, but so that those without a voice can be heard... We cannot all succeed when half of us are held back. ... No struggle can ever succeed without women participating side by side with men. There are two powers in the world; one is the sword and the other is the pen. There is a third power stronger than both, that of women.”

Anupama also fights and comes back successfully from the patriarchal structure of the society.

As Maya Angelou, American poet and women rights activist, says,

“Each time a woman stands up for herself, without knowing it possibly, without claiming it, she stands up for all women.”

In contemporary society, women have been socially considered as the weaker sex. Discrimination, gender disparity, superstition, hatred, domestic violence, inequality, poverty, verbal and sexual abuse – all have turned a naive Anupama into a pragmatic woman at the end. Sudha Murty portrays Anupama as a modern woman who can use her mental strength and courage to overcome her adversities caused by the male dominated society and cultural myths around marriage. Culturally, breaking stereotypes is reflected in evolving narratives in literature, art, and media that offer authentic and diverse portrayals of women’s experiences, challenging misconceptions and promoting a nuanced understanding. Thus, the novel *Mahashweta* shows the capability of modern Indian women to fight against and overcome all forms of cruelty in a deep-rooted patriarchal society.

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Translating Culture: Rising Popularity of Subtitles

Chingangbam Anupama

Translation work has seen a major leap not only in the field of academics but also in other industries, like entertainment, business, technical, legal, and medical fields, to name a few in the last few decades. With the exponential growth in digital and online content, the ever-growing translation business also faces many challenges and issues regarding accuracy and quality. This has further added to the academic field in exploring and discussing the intellectual challenges and methodologies of various forms of translation. New theoretical frameworks and methodologies are developed to handle the cultural, ethical, and technical gaps. Furthermore, the advancement in machine and artificial intelligence in translation fields has posed serious questions about the quality of the work and the boundaries to be maintained.

The major surge in translation is seen in film and streaming platforms like Netflix, Amazon Prime, YouTube, etc. i.e., in the field of audio-visual translation. As audiences have become global, to cater to the demands of diverse and varied linguistic backgrounds consumers, the rise in dubbing, subtitling, closed captioning, etc. is rampant, most of the time, without proper quality checks. For this paper, the focus is given to subtitling or subtitle translation, its mechanism, issues, and challenges. Before further discussion on the various issues of subtitle translation, it is imperative to understand what exactly subtitle translation is, the different methods and types of subtitle translation, and the processes.

According to Jorge Diaz Cintas and Aline Remael, subtitling is

'a translation practice that consists of presenting a written text, generally on the lower part of the screen, that endeavors to recount the original dialogue of the speakers, as well as the discursive elements that appear in the image (letters, inserts, graffiti, inscriptions,

placards, and the like), and the information that is contained on the soundtrack (songs, voices off)' (Diaz Cintas, Remael, 2007).

So subtitling is a translation method that involves displaying written text, at the bottom of the screen, aimed at conveying the original dialogue of the speakers, along with textual elements visible in the imagery, including auditory information from the soundtrack.

Subtitling as a method comes under Audio Visual Translation. It is a specialized field of translation that involves audio and visual content (combined). AVT includes translating the audio and script of films, TV shows, video games, advertisements, online videos, and other media. AVT helps audiences who speak different languages or come from different cultural backgrounds access different media other than their own.

Audiovisual Translation

'Audiovisual translation is generally a translation of verbal component of the video. Its main specific feature is the synchronization of verbal and nonverbal components. While dealing with an audiovisual product translators do not work only with text but also with other aspects of media art which are of polyphonic nature.' (Matkivska)

Audio-visual Translation has become an important part of media content in recent years with the proliferation of social media, streaming platforms, online video, and television channels. The days when television was limited to several channels available only in vernacular languages have passed. With almost every screen connected to the internet, users are consuming more media from languages that aren't their own. This has created a need in viewers where subtitles in multiple languages become a necessity in any program they are watching.

As viewers watch more media from international sources, they require correct and culturally appropriate translations to understand the meaning of what they see on the screen. Often, due to lack of cultural equivalent, the meaning is lost in translation which is why there is a need to put

more focus on translations that are focused on the cultural understanding of their target audiences. Such meanings could be anything from local traditions, vernacular, or historical understanding of stories and local motifs.

Audio-visual Translation in the age of the internet has seen exponential growth. Subtitles in multiple languages are available with almost every program on streaming services like Netflix and Amazon Prime. Viewers can choose the kind of subtitles they would like to see. There are three ways the subtitles can help viewers understand the media.

1. The viewer's first language is different from the language of the media.
2. The viewer is hearing impaired.
3. The viewer is trying to learn the language.

Audio-visual Translation is not limited to television programming. It can also work for video games, plays, musical shows, web pages, and much more.

Types of Audio-visual Translation include Subtitling, Dubbing, Voice-Over, Closed Captioning, etc. Dubbing and subtitling both deal with translating the script, where dubbing can be considered 'freer' compared to subtitling which is more 'faithful'.

Luyken et al. (1991) define voice-over as the faithful translation of the original speech which is delivered in an approximately synchronous delivery. It is normally used only in the context of a monologue such as an interview response or a series of responses from a single interviewee. (Ayonghe and Ategha)

Dubbing is a process of replacing the original audio with a different language, dialect, etc., and one of the major concerns is the synchronization of the lips with the sound. While the difficulties of the translation process are involved in dubbing, the auditory factors also play a vital role. One example can be matching the emotions, and personality of the original character with the voiceover professional. While dubbing is translating the text with audio, subtitling keeps the

original audio with translated text at the bottom. Dubbing can bring the audience closer to the target culture with localized accents and adapted idioms and expressions, subtitling on the other hand stays more faithful to the source language in comparison to dubbing.

There can be multiple ways of translating subtitles. The following steps are not particularly in order but could be utilised according to suitability.

Pretranslation - Translating the script from the source language to the target language implies translating the meaning and making adjustments to meet the linguistic and cultural requirements of the target receivers. It may or may not help the translator see the translated content. It is important to consider certain issues, for example, humor, culture-specific terms, and technical jargon which may need certain attention and may be solved creatively.

Adaptation - Subtitles should reflect the attitude of the characters and the mood of the scene (formal, humorous, sad, etc). Dialogue could be abbreviated as necessary to meet character constraints and improve the overall legibility without changing the essence of the text. The on-screen visuals and the translated text should be consistent (e.g. actions, facial expressions). Dialogues could be rephrased to suit the timing and pace of the scene.

Spotting - Spotting is the process of linking the subtitles to the video file making sure that they appear and disappear at the right time. Subtitles should start and end with the dialogue or pauses of the speaker. They need to be on screen for enough time so that the viewers can be able to read them easily.

Subtitles have to be well-timed concerning the scene changes or any transition to avoid chaos. This alignment assists in preserving the flow of the film or series, thus enabling the viewers to be able to watch the sequences and the dialogue at the same time without being disrupted by the subtitles appearing and disappearing at irregular intervals. For example, during the transition of scenes, the subtitles should also change to suit the new scene and in doing so not lose the viewer's interest.

Sudden shifts in subtitle timing, such as appearing too early or too late concerning a scene change, can break the immersion and distract the audience from the story. Proper synchronization enhances the viewing experience by creating a seamless connection between the visual elements, the dialogue, and the subtitles.

Restrictions in Subtitling

There are four main types of restrictions in subtitling. First is the normative restrictions which can be further understood in terms of determining the nature of equivalence. Formal equivalence is the direct translation from the source language to the target language. It is referred to as word-to-word translation or literal translation in translation studies. The restrictions might arise in case two different families of languages are concerned in the process of translation. Dynamic equivalence is semantic translation or meaning-to-meaning or sense-to-sense translation. This particular approach is important for AVT translation as the purpose of the subtitle is to invoke the same emotional and cognitive response from the audience that was originally intended in the source text.

Secondly, social restrictions encompass the culturally specific, religious sentiments, values, and ethics in the process of subtitle translation. For a target audience to understand a different culture or an entirely different system and way of living across the globe through the media, subtitling here plays a crucial role. An appropriate approach should be developed to translate such phenomena effectively. In some cases, these restrictions may require the translator to significantly alter the original text, particularly when there are differences in the target audience's perception of the AV context due to specific background knowledge unique to the source culture, which is often assumed to be understood. This also applies to intertextuality in all its forms, including allusions, citations, parodies, and more.

Third is personality restriction includes the personal factors of the translator such as his/her linguistic background, perspective, and worldview. Each individual interprets the world differently through their

unique prism. As AVT is an act of individual creativity, the translator's worldview often intersects with the national-specific worldview of their own culture. This can result in the selection of unique translation choices, but it can also lead to significant errors if the translator's personal biases influence the interpretation in ways that deviate from the intended meaning or cultural context.

Finally, physiological restrictions deal with the physical aspects of how subtitles are presented such as limitations of human perception, and cognitive processes involved in receiving and understanding different types of translation. Such restrictions often place the subtitle translator in a constrained environment. Viewers need time to associate the subtitle with the corresponding image on the screen, so there must be a natural rhythm to the subtitles to make them comfortable to read. Such restrictions often place the subtitle translator in a constrained environment. Viewers need time to associate the subtitle with the corresponding image on the screen, so there must be a natural rhythm to the subtitles to make them comfortable to read. In some cases, a single sentence may need to be split into multiple lines or even separate subtitles, requiring the translator to maintain the overall meaning while considering the images displayed on the screen.

Types of Subtitling

According to Gottlieb, there are two aspects of subtitle studies, linguistic and technical. Thus, subtitling can be classified linguistically as,

1. Intralingual (both the target and source are the same language. This type of translation is for differently abled, hearing impaired, or non-native speakers)
2. Interlingual (translation between two languages)

Technically subtitling can be categorised as,

1. Open subtitle (that goes with the original content)
2. Closed subtitles (transcription, verbatim as well as voluntarily added)

Translating Culture

'The Director of the Humanities Center at Harvard University Homi K. Bhabha called culture a strategy for survival and said that it is "both transnational and translational" (Bhabha, 1994). The development of the media and cinema industry makes cultures - as sources of different values, experiences, customs, or traditions - translate all these mental attitudes transnationally. Here by translation, Bhabha meant not literary translation from one language to another, but translation of issues which culture signifies and which are signified by culture. Although we may state that, the most important tool of translation culture values and peculiarities on the global scale is translation from source into target language.' (Malenova)

Homi K. Bhabha describes culture as a "strategy for survival" that is both transnational and translational. What can be inferred from this concept is that the process of translation is the bridge of different cultures that share values, experiences, and traditions across borders. Audio and visual media like cinema and the translation of such media transcends language to address the meanings and values represented by culture. Subtitling, as a crucial tool for conveying cultural nuances globally, encounters challenges due to the increasing globalization of cinema and the accessibility of audiovisual content. Particularly in genres such as comedy cultural differences can lead to communication failure as humour arises from the background knowledge of the culture. References and allusions might get lost in translation leading to an ineffective response from the audience. Culture-specific concepts, which can represent material or social culture (e.g., historical events, customs, institutions), pose significant challenges to translation. Further with the limitation of subtitling like format, space, and time, without the leverage of footnotes or explanations, the challenges are heightened.

Thus, it is the responsibility of the subtitle translators and by large audiovisual translators to understand the limitations and navigate cultural differences while ensuring coherence across multiple channels like visuals, music, and sound. Neutralizing culturally specific elements, using

cultural equivalents, and adapting to the target culture while preserving the original content, accommodating technical constraints become the task for the subtitle translator. The following table contains a sample of subtitle translation where the above-mentioned challenges have been handled by the translator as well as certain nuances missed during the process of translating content from Hindi to English.

Sample of subtitles with culturally specific nuances from the popular series Panchayat

Original Hindi	English Subtitle
<i>Chabi janeyu me nahi bandhoge to yahi hoga?</i>	What else do you expect when you tie it to your waist?
<i>Jaldi jake jaldi aa</i>	And hurry up, hurry up
<i>Phatak</i>	Omitted in the subtitle
<i>Pradhanji</i>	Pradhan sir
<i>Isai logo ki pandit</i>	Christian Priest
<i>Aage kuwa hai bhaiya piche khayire</i>	Stuck between the rock and a hard place
<i>Chikni khai</i>	Slippery floor
<i>Sidhi ungali ghee na nikale tedhi ungli de</i>	When things don't get solved one way it is time to change your way
<i>Lungi uthake bhage hum</i>	Ran for my life

Language limitation in subtitle translation where strict rules for the length of sentences and time of appearance can hamper the intended meaning. The lack of equivalents for specific terms, puns, or idioms that are not easily translatable poses a significant challenge for the translator. In the above table, the first sample '*Chabi janeyu me nahi bandhoge to yahi hoga?*' is translated as 'What else do you expect when you tie it to your waist?'. In the context of the story, a person loses a key since he didn't tie it in the '*janeyu*' (a thread tied around the body by Hindus for religious meaning). In the subtitle, there was no space for such an explanation thus making it difficult to understand or entirely miss the point for people who are not familiar with the religion or the culture.

Translators must decide between localization and literal translation, which can enhance comprehension or diminish humor. For sensitive topics modifications according to cultural norms can further lead to censorship.

Conclusion

The demand for subtitle translation is ever-high with globalization and the spread of easily accessible media. Subtitles as a form of cultural translation bridge the cultural gap produced by language barriers. Subtitles enable people from different backgrounds to experience and appreciate the traditions and cultures of others through movies, shows, and other media. On the surface, subtitling seems like a translation of words; but they are also a source for cultural expression. Properly translated subtitles with cultural nuances and expressions with an understanding of the source material can communicate with the target audience. It makes subtitles not a simple linguistic conversion but more of a medium of cultural transfer.

The popularity of subtitles among the younger generation is another indicator of how they prefer to consume media in a heavily digital and globalized world. Preply survey found that more than 70 percent of Gen Z viewers switch on the subtitles (same language as well as foreign language media) in comparison to millennials and baby boomers in America.

‘The same survey found that younger viewers are turning on the captions and subtitles more often, with 70% of respondents aged 18 to 25 (Gen Z) and 53% aged 25 to 41 (Millennials) saying they watch most of their online video content with captions or subtitles. Surprisingly, older respondents – those in the Gen X and Baby Boomer brackets – fell into the groups ‘least likely’ to be frequent caption and subtitle users.’(Mykhalevych)

Korean series, K-pop, Japanese anime, and shows are popular among the youth and subtitles provide an easy way to understand the content that one might not speak. Without subtitles, it would be impossible to access so many varied contents.

Subtitling is an important tool in fostering understanding and respect among people from all walks of life through its ability to bring the world closer together. By carefully balancing linguistic accuracy and cultural sensitivity, subtitling helps to preserve the artistic and communicative essence of the original content, allowing audiences from different parts of the world to share in the experience. Ultimately, subtitling plays an essential role in today's globalized world by facilitating communication across language barriers and creating a shared space for cultural exchange.

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The Evolution of Trauma Studies in Literature and Medicine

Alia Khalid and Dinky

Introduction

Traditionally, trauma referred to severe physical injury or shock caused by an accident or a violent external event. It was largely seen as damage or harm to the body. However, today, trauma is more often understood as a psychological experience, focusing on the mind. Key texts that shape and define trauma theory, especially in its application to literature, include Sigmund Freud's *Moses and Monotheism*, Cathy Caruth's *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative and History*, Dominick LaCapra's *Writing History, Writing Trauma*, and Jeffrey Alexander's *Cultural Trauma*.

In the 1960s, several pressing social issues led to the development of trauma theory. These included widespread violence against women and children—such as rape, domestic abuse, and incest—as well as the growing recognition of post-traumatic stress disorder among Vietnam War veterans. The horrors of torture, genocide, and especially the Holocaust also highlighted the psychological damage caused by extreme human suffering. Although Sigmund Freud often focused on the drama of internal conflicts, he did acknowledge the reality of incest in some of his early female patients' accounts. He also explored how combat experiences, with their psychological shocks and disillusionments, could lead to symptoms like flashbacks, recurring nightmares, and compulsive, repetitive behaviours.

In its broadest definition, trauma theory studies how literary texts process and are influenced by traumatic events. Trauma theory aims to understand the various ways that traumatic events are shown, digested, revealed,

and suppressed through a range of literary and historical texts. “Trauma” is the term used to characterize the sudden and unexpected knowledge that abruptly enters a person’s mind, usually as a result of an abrupt experience with death or violence. This traumatic experience causes a psychological division in identity and awareness, leaving the survivor emotionally and intellectually divided between what they felt or knew at the time of the incident and what they know or know now. The survivor is often left feeling frightened, perplexed, and unsettled by this division. An abrupt contact with death’s existence or probability, coupled with a sudden and unexpected realization of one’s own mortality and vulnerability, can trigger a traumatic incident that profoundly disturbs the victim’s emotional state.

In 1860s, medical professionals like Herbert Page and John Erichsen published the earliest descriptions of the consequences of trauma on people. The term “railroad spine” refers to the repercussions of trauma that are mostly linked to railway accidents. From this beginning, it was recognized that mental variables, particularly anxiety and the need for recompense, had a role in the development of symptoms. (Erichsen in Young, 1995). Thus, the idea of trauma as a bodily harm (wound) was expanded to encompass psychogenic illnesses whose primary cause was the perception of fear as a recollection of painful experiences during a traumatic event. Early research revealed that fear appeared to have a significant role in both surgical and nerve shock cases. Doctors connected the power of emotions to the deaths of scared patients who occasionally passed away before to surgery (Young, 1995). According to Van der Kolk, McFarlane, and Weisaeth (1996), there has been a correlation between psychological trauma and hysteria ever since psychiatry was acknowledged as a legitimate scientific field. According to Janet (1925), a traumatic memory differs from a regular memory since the person experiencing it was unable to comprehend its significance. It was also observed that dissociation resulted the inability to integrate traumatic memories.

Sigmund Freud, known as the father of psychoanalysis, explored the causes of hysterical episodes from 1892 to 1896. After World War I, he

also turned his attention to the origins of “war neuroses.” Initially, Freud believed that trauma and neurosis were primarily rooted in real sexual experiences during infancy and early childhood. However, as he began working with war veterans, he recognized the role of actual traumatic events in developing neuroses. He then differentiated between traumatic neuroses, which arise from real experiences, and anxiety neuroses, which can stem from imagined events or internal conflicts.

Freud theorized that anxiety neuroses stemmed from violent or sexual fantasies, often tied to early exposure to the “primal scene,” while traumatic neuroses were triggered by actual events like fights, accidents, or death. In his 1915 essay *Thoughts for the Times on War and Death*, Freud suggested that, deep down, everyone harbours a belief in their own immortality. He noted, however, that the loss of a loved one can feel like a mixed experience, as it brings a strange sense of survival or victory to the mourner. The trauma of such events is intensified by the grieving process, which involves mourning not only for the lost person but also for parts of oneself: the pre-trauma identity, the past, and feelings of guilt over survival and change.

Freud also made a comparison between the fear of ending one’s own life and the fear of losing one’s own. This implied that an individual could also experience trauma as a result of the violence they inflict on others, meaning that a soldier could experience trauma from both causing and receiving violent acts. This observation creates space for both traumatic dread and painful guilt.

According to Freud, the pathogenic agency has an interest in the trauma the patient remembers. Memories of traumatic occurrences become commonplace recollections that are conscious mind accessible when the associated influence of the experience is released. However, it is not always possible to discharge a reaction, and memories that are not discharged are considered to enter a “second consciousness” (1966 153) where they become secrets, either isolated from the conscious personality or available to it in a highly summarised form. In the 1920 paper *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, Freud describes his observations

of soldiers who had survived incredibly terrifying experiences during World War I and who displayed a need to repeatedly recall and reenact some of the most terrifying parts of the encounter, as if doing so was necessary to control the anxiety it caused.

Smith and Wolfsohn noted that during World War I, many military doctors believed that inherited traits and physical constitution played a significant role in most cases of war neuroses, leading to a stigma around the condition. Throughout the twentieth century, the impact of war and its destructive consequences on humanity profoundly shaped the understanding of trauma. Herman Oppenheim, a German neurologist, introduced the term “traumatic neurosis” in 1885, theorizing that minor molecular changes in the central nervous system could lead to functional issues. Identifying a biological basis for traumatic neuroses in soldiers was important because it offered a resolution that satisfied all involved parties (Van der Kolk, McFarlane & Weisaeth, 1996).

An American psychoanalyst during World War II named Abram Kardiner (1941) characterizes the symptomatic response that follows traumatic events as a type of adaptation. It is an endeavour to get rid of or manage uncomfortable, anxiety-inducing alterations that the trauma has caused to the organism’s internal and exterior surroundings. A person’s psychological resources and relationships to his or her major social group will determine the type of adaptation that takes place in a given situation (Kardiner, 1959). According to Kardiner, traumatic experiences cause levels of excitement that the organism is unable to handle, severely impairing the entire ego organization. The person perceives this as an abrupt loss of effective control over his surroundings, which results in a changed understanding of who he is in connection to the outside world. Prior to the Vietnam War (1969-1975), psychological interest in trauma decreased following World War 2.

Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) became the main way to define and understand trauma, largely due to the severe mental health impact of the Vietnam War on soldiers. The study and documentation of PTSD gained momentum during this period as many American veterans

returned home with unrecognized psychological scars from their experiences. Unlike previous wars, the Vietnam War was widely seen as horrific, senseless, and without clear purpose, with low public support and significant societal criticism. In 1978, psychiatrist Chaim Shatan identified a set of symptoms in veterans, which he called “post-Vietnam syndrome,” including feelings of scapegoating, detachment, emotional numbness, guilt, and anger (Shatan, 1978). By 1980, the American Psychiatric Association officially classified PTSD, incorporating it into the psychiatric lexicon.

The effects of trauma on individuals have been referred to by a number of titles throughout the years, including “combat neurosis,” “shell shock,” “train station spine,” “traumatic neurosis,” “cardiac neurosis,” and “war neurosis.” Eventually, post-traumatic stress disorder was coined to describe this condition. The close relationship between people’s approaches to traumatic stress and their cultural, social, political, and historical contexts may be the most significant lesson to be learned from the history of psychological trauma. (Fischer-Homberger, 1975)

Psychoanalytic discussions of trauma often overlook that Freud used the term “trauma” quite loosely across various situations (Greenacre, 1967), a habit that continues among both psychoanalysts and other mental health professionals today (Yorke, 1986). As explained by Laplanche and Pontalis (1973), the concept of “trauma” in psychoanalysis implies three interconnected ideas: a violent shock, a wound (often related to fears like castration anxiety or harm to self-esteem), and lasting effects that reorganize the psyche as a whole.

The conscious and unconscious mind are two separate systems, according to the psychodynamic viewpoint. Both systems function in parallel when we are dealing with an emotionally charged situation because they have different ways of experiencing and comprehending what is going on (Langs, 1988). The conscious reaction solves problems and is rational. All those horrible urges and agonizing ideas and sensations that the conscious mind finds too upsetting to even recognize, much less process, are part of the unconscious response. A cornerstone of the

psychodynamic method is the idea that conflict between the unconscious and conscious systems produces behaviour. Human behaviour results from the conscious mind's defences against the unconscious mind's attempts to express and satisfy its needs.

In order to explain the connection between the conscious, unconscious, and a person's formation of moral principles, Freud (1923) developed a theory of mind. The id, ego, and superego are the three parts of the topological organization of the psyche that he developed. Each of the three is influenced by the others as well as having their own areas of influence. The pleasure principle governs the completely unconscious id, which demands that all of its requirements be met right now. The ego organizes experience and behaviour, deals with reality, and comprehends reasoning. The ego's primary job is to control the environment and the id. (Brenner, 1973). The superego is defined by Cameron (1963) as "an organisation of mental systems whose major functions are those of scanning ego activities at all levels, of supplying approval and disapproval, self-criticism and self-esteem" (188). Some theorists claim that the superego holds the ego ideal and functions as conscience on the conscious level as well as being punitive on the unconscious level. In essence, the ego ideal is the belief that one is wonderful and flawless. It's an inward perception of perfection devoid of frailty. Whether or not these ideals can be realized, the ego nonetheless aspires to achieve them. One's self-esteem is greatly impacted by their ability to satisfy their ego ideal, which results in positive emotions of self-worth and confidence.

In an attempt to keep some degree of control over the id and superego, the ego makes an effort to appease them. A person feels guilty when their ego gives in to their id's overindulgence and fails to appease their conscience. When the ego falls short of the ego ideal's expectations, feelings of shame follow (Piers & Singer, 1971). The ego feels anxious when it expects to be overcome by powerful id urges or shame or guilt in the near future. When the ego is unable to eliminate the source of the anxiety, it employs defence mechanisms to prevent experiencing anxiety (Freud, 1920). However, the ego's use of defence mechanisms comes at a price as they "deny, falsify, or distort reality". (Hall & Lindzey 49)

The ability of conflicting impulses and emotions to coexist side by side and demand simultaneous satisfaction is one of the id's characteristics. However, the ego is unable to stand for the coexistence of conflicting desires, viewpoints, or emotions toward someone or something. The sense of both love and hate for someone or something at the same time is referred to as "ambivalence." Ambivalence has a multifaceted nature. First of all, ambivalence is defined by the contradictory sensations operating simultaneously, and secondly, ambivalence permeates all emotional experiences to some extent. Thirdly, suppression is employed to prevent one conflicting sensation from becoming conscious while permitting the other to become conscious when the opposing feelings get so strong that the ego is unable to control them. In conclusion, it is typically the case that the positive emotion gains access to consciousness while the negative emotion is suppressed (Moore & Fine, 1968).

Ordinary memories tend to fade with time, blending with other memories until they feel like fragments of the past. Eventually, they evoke feelings of nostalgia, regret, or longing, tied to what no longer exists. Traumatic memories, however, are different in all of these ways. They remain vivid and separate, replaying the original experience over and over, sometimes for years (Horowitz, 1976). According to Van der Kolk, McFarlane, and Weisaeth (1996), post-traumatic stress arises because time cannot fully mend these deep wounds. Trauma memories don't integrate into the person's past in the usual way and remain detached from other life experiences. These memories are dominated by intense images and bodily sensations, resembling early childhood memories in their rawness and intensity (Herman, 1992).

Nearly everyone experiences intrusive thoughts about what happened immediately after a stressful event (McFarlane, 1992). According to Horowitz and Kaltreider (1980), these intrusions assist them in either gradually accepting what has happened and readjusting their expectations (assimilation) or learning from the event and planning for restorative activities (accommodation). Time changes how the brain interprets the information associated to the trauma in one way or another. One of two things happens: either the unpleasant experience is assimilated into

memory and preserved as a historical event, or the associated feelings and sensations take on a life of their own (Van der Kolk, McFarlane & Weisaeth, 1996). Reliving the experience causes sensitization, and as a result, suffering increases with each reliving of the trauma in individuals with post-traumatic stress disorder. For those people, what was initially a social and interpersonal process—the traumatic event—becomes ingrained in their bodies, with difficult-to-reverse subsequent biological effects. The lingering symptoms of trauma—such as heightened arousal, difficulty with focus, and sensory processing issues, along with various psychological defences—are deeply connected to these biological misadaptations.

It is thought that there are stages and cycles to the psychological process that leads to the assimilation of conflicting memories: the conscious mind interacts with the traumatic memory. This interaction makes me anxious. The conscious mind separates itself from the memories by self-medicating with drugs or alcohol, engaging in denial, and so forth. When anxiety decreases, the conscious mind revisits the traumatic memory and tries to comprehend it (through responses one and two), which causes anxiety to rise and starts a new cycle. Cycles of processing typically continue until the memory is metabolized, at which point it is incorporated into the person's inactive memory. It's practically buried in the past. In this regard, PTSD is unique since the painful memory causes a great deal of anxiety. As a result, the memory cannot be erased, and the engagement phase is short and ineffectual. It endures for many years, causing pain and leading to maladaptive social and psychological behaviour (Horowitz, 1986).

According to Horowitz and Kaltreider (1980) and Van der Kolk, McFarlane, and Weisaeth (1996), trauma survivors often feel as if they are reliving the traumatic event in the present because these memories remain unprocessed and outside of time. Van der Kolk, McFarlane, and Weisaeth (1996) also observed that a single traumatic event can trigger forgotten memories of past traumas, creating a “domino effect” that complicates healing. This means that someone who previously had no intrusive memories of earlier trauma may start experiencing them after

a new traumatic incident. Ellenberger (1993) described traumatic memories as “pathogenic secrets”—hidden elements that can fuel psychological distress. These memories are “pathogenic” because they’re considered sources of mental illness, and they’re “secrets” because they involve concealment. This can happen in two ways: sometimes individuals actively hide their memories from others and try to push them to the edges of their own awareness. In other cases, the memories are so deeply buried that individuals hide them from themselves, knowing the memories are there but unable to consciously access them. As Young (1995) explains, people may even forget that they’ve forgotten, often needing a therapist’s help to uncover these hidden memories.

The patient’s anxious dream provided Freud with a place to store the pathogenic secret. According to Freud, the unconscious desire or compulsion of the patient to revisit the scene of the pathogenic experience is the source of these nightmares. According to him, dream anxiety plays a crucial role because it tries to predict the threat that caused the trauma, whether it was that danger in the past or not.

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Diaspora Dynamics: Navigating Cultural Differences and Forging New Identities

Abhishek Singh and Suruchi Sharma

Introduction

The word "diaspora" originates from the word "dia," which means "away," and "speirein," which denotes "scatter" or "sow." Several explanations have been offered for the term "diaspora". Instead of referring to the dispersion of Jews outside of Israel, the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary now defines "diaspora" as "the movement of people from any nation or group away from their own country." It is often possible to distinguish between diasporas with a capital "D" and those with a lowercase "d"; the former relates to Jewish displacement, while the latter refers more generally to cross-cultural displacement. The word "diaspora" is sometimes used to describe the spread of human civilization throughout the world. The diasporic situation and diaspora are represented by various societies worldwide. The phrase "diasporic literature" is remarkably inclusive and includes any literary works written by authors who are not native to their country but are yet associated with its history and culture. The term "diaspora" is occasionally used to refer to the globalization of human civilization. Different societies around the world illustrate the diasporic predicament and diaspora. Interestingly, the term "diasporic literature" encompasses any literary works authored by authors who are not local to their territory but are yet connected to the country's past and culture.

One of the biggest and most varied diasporas in the world, the Indian diaspora is made up of people of Indian descent who are dispersed over several continents and represent a wide range of experiences influenced by historic, social, and cultural elements. These people's identities and

experiences have been changed by migration, whether it was voluntarily or forced, and as a result, literature has a diverse range of cultural manifestations. This research aims to disentangle the complex facets of relocation, nostalgia, and the want for belonging while taking the diasporic writer's point of view into account. This intricacy is reflected in Indian diaspora writing, which provides a sophisticated examination of culture, identity, and belonging via the prism of displacement and migration. In order to shed light on the varied experiences of people and groups negotiating the intricacies of diasporic identity, this article will examine a few literary works in order to explore the intricate web of narratives produced by Indian diaspora authors.

Theoretical Framework

Feeling isolated from a community that goes beyond physical distance

Diaspora literature frequently sheds light on the complexities of diasporic identity by interacting with academic frameworks such as cultural memory, hybridity, and transnationalism. In writing from the Indian diaspora, Homi Bhabha's concept of cultural hybridity-which emphasizes the interplay between multiple cultural influences-is a great asset. In order to develop novel approaches to identity formation, authors depict individuals who navigate several cultural contexts. Additionally, Benedict Anderson's concepts of imagined communities and Stuart Hall's view of cultural identity as a "production" shed light on how diasporic cultures establish and manage an awareness of belonging that cuts beyond national boundaries.

The Conflict for Cultural Identity

Indian diaspora authors often deal with cultural identity since their characters face challenges related to cultural preservation, assimilation, and authenticity. By depicting people who struggle to balance several cultural allegiances, authors explore the complexities of how cultural identities are established. By examining cultural identity, Indian diaspora literature sheds light on the different ways individuals cope with their sense of oneself in diasporic settings.

Blending Cultures and Using Third Space

Hybridity and integration, which show the blending of numerous cultural components within diasporic groups, are characteristics of Indian diaspora literature. Authors depict people who reside in "third spaces," where cultures coexist and new identities are formed that transcend national boundaries. Through themes of hybridity, Indian diaspora literature celebrates the creative potential of cross-cultural interaction while also acknowledging the challenges of balancing many identities. "The concept of 'third space' as defined by Homi Bhabha offers crucial background information for comprehending the intricacy of writing by Indian diaspora authors. Bhabha asserts that the sensation of being diasporic offers a unique place that subverts conventional ideas of belonging as well as identity. "The 'third space' shifts the eras that constitute it as well as develops new political efforts as well as power frameworks that have yet to be completely recognized by conventional wisdom," argues the writer. This concept highlights the fluidity of diasporic identities, which are influenced by people's capacity to transition between numerous cultural contexts and forge new identities along the way. In Indian diaspora literature, the concept of 'third space' emphasizes the creative potential offered by hybrid cultures and the emergence of new forms of ethnic expression that challenge traditional boundaries.

A sense of yearning and a sense of belonging to one's own homeland

Characters' views of themselves and their birthplace are shaped by memory and nostalgia, which are important themes in Indian diaspora literature. In order to highlight the persistent ties that exist between people and their cultural heritage, authors arouse recollections of the past and incorporate them into the story. Indian diaspora literature examines memory in order to reflect on the conflicts between the past and present, the intricacies of diasporic identities, and the desire for a sense of attachment. "The only member of my family without any recollection of India is me... Since I have never experienced those things myself, I am unable to evoke the same sense of melancholy that my

parents do. However, even in my birthplace, I do have a profound sense of loss and alienation."The concept captures the nuanced bond that diasporic people frequently have with their native country. It expresses the need to feel connected to a location that holds cultural and familial memories, even while one is geographically separated from it. Lahiri's words resonate with themes essential to Indian diaspora writing, evoking a deep sense of alienation and longing for a being rooted that transcends geographic limits.

Migration and displacement: experiences akin to exile

The challenges of leaving one's native country and adjusting to new cultural environments are reflected in the major themes of migration and displacement that arise in Indian diaspora literature. The writers explore issues of loss, yearning, and the quest for identity while illustrating the opportunities and difficulties that come with migration. Indian diaspora literature illustrates the various routes people and groups take in their pursuit of belonging through migration stories. The experiences of fleeing one's own country and acclimating to new cultural settings are often reflected in Indian diaspora literature, which regularly discusses migration and displacement. As they delve into the opportunities and challenges associated with migration, authors examine concerns of loss, yearning, and the search for identity. "Exile is oddly intriguing to speculate about but miserable to experience," as Salman Rushdie articulately states. This mindset emphasizes the detrimental psychological impacts of relocation and encapsulates the literary representation of yearning and connection in Indian diaspora literature.

Migration's role narrative to convey issues of identity crises, belonging, and diasporic ethnicity

Through the challenges and prospects faced by immigrants living abroad, elements of loss, yearning, and the search for identity are depicted, reflecting the challenges of leaving one's home country and acclimating to new cultural contexts. Through migration narratives, Indian diaspora literature demonstrates the different paths taken by migrating individuals and communities in their quest for a sense of belonging.

The search for authenticity, cultural conflict, and identity negotiation are just a few of the many topics that are prevalent in Indian diaspora writing. With his groundbreaking book "Midnight's Children," Salman Rushdie examined the turbulent history of postwar India and the effects of partition. Rushdie's story explores the intricacies of national and personal identities in the diaspora in addition to discussing the political changes of the subcontinent.

Another well-known author of diasporic literature, Jhumpa Lahiri, captures the subtleties of immigrant life in pieces like "The Namesake" and "Interpreter of Maladies." Readers are moved by Lahiri's moving depictions of people torn between two cultures, which emphasize the difficulties of overcoming cultural dissonance while seeking for a sense of acceptance. The conversation on diasporic identity gains depth from her examination of the immigrant psychology and the conflict between cultural heritage preservation and assimilation.

In her critically acclaimed book "The Inheritance of Loss," Kiran Desai presents a gripping account of estrangement and dislocation. In an increasingly worldwide society, Desai's art illustrates the connectivity of various lives amid the backdrop of the financial movement and globalization. Desai highlights the common themes of yearning for domicile and the pursuit of meaning in the midst of chaos from the perspectives of characters coping with loss and displacement.

Conclusion

The intricacies of diasporic identities are profoundly reflected in Indian diaspora literature. Diasporic writers provide light on the many experiences of people and groups struggling with issues of belonging by examining relocation, ethnic hybridity, and identity negotiation. Indian diaspora literature enhances our comprehension of diasporic identity and the complex processes of cultural belonging by serving as a powerful vehicle for cultural expression and investigation.

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Fractured Belongings: The Sindhi Diaspora and the Quest for Identity Post-Partition

Geetika Khatri and Vishnu Kumar Sharma

Introduction: The Sindhi Diaspora

In 1947, the Indian subcontinent was cleaved in two by a swift and violent act of division. This Partition, like a scalpel dragged across ancient soil, left scars that bled long after the borders were drawn. Amidst this sweeping upheaval, the Sindhi community found itself displaced, cast out of Sindh—a land their ancestors had called home for millennia. Unlike Punjab or Bengal, where Partition led to a divided homeland, the Sindhi people were rendered stateless, forever exiled from their birthplace. “No flag, no country, just our language and memories,” recalls a Sindhi elder in an oral history from the Sindhi Sangat (Sangat Foundation 1997). This paper sets out to explore the legacy of that displacement, the fractured identity of the Sindhi diaspora, and their ongoing search for belonging in foreign lands.

The Sindhi experience of Partition was unique, often overlooked in mainstream narratives of Indian history. The Partition forced many Sindhi Hindus to migrate overnight to India, while Sindhi Muslims who stayed in Pakistan faced a cultural transformation that altered their sense of identity. The Sindhi diaspora is thus marked by what Salman Rushdie calls a “sense of loss and melancholia” in *Imaginary Homelands* (Rushdie 12). But unlike the visible scars of physical wounds, the trauma of exile and dispossession exists more subtly—interwoven into memory, language, and fragmented stories passed through generations.

A distinctive feature of the Sindhi diaspora is this memory—both a source of comfort and a wellspring of sorrow. For Sindhis, memory becomes a homeland, a repository of identity that endures even as

geographical ties have been severed. As Edward Said wrote, “Exile is strangely compelling to think about, but terrible to experience” (Said 173). For many Sindhis, exile became a permanent state, an unending longing for a place that exists now only in stories and rituals. The community’s tales are woven with nostalgia, echoing memories of rivers and marketplaces that are more real to them than the cities where they now live. Cultural historian Ayesha Jalal describes this as “a diaspora of feeling, a homeland of the heart” (Jalal 223), a sense of belonging that transcends maps and political boundaries.

At the same time, the Sindhi diaspora’s identity is anything but static. Living in liminal spaces, Sindhi migrants navigate a delicate balance between preserving their past and adapting to their present. The tension is palpable: they are forever Sindhi, yet unable to return to Sindh. They live in cities like Mumbai, Ulhasnagar, Jaipur, etc. and overseas in the UK; where they are simultaneously insiders and outsiders. Their dialect shifts, their customs blend with those of the surrounding culture, and yet, within their hearts, the memory of Sindh remains a central anchor. The anthropologist Arjun Appadurai calls this phenomenon “cultural hybridity,” where identities are “constantly reassembled from fragments, memory, and imagination” (*Modernity at Large* 13).

For the Sindhi diaspora, this process of reassembly is a form of survival. Memory, language, and ritual keep alive a fractured sense of belonging. Yet, it is not an easy peace. Memories often bring pain; they are “haunted landscapes,” in the words of Amitav Ghosh, filled with longing and loss (*The Shadow Lines* 29). The longing for Sindh is tinged with the bittersweet knowledge that returning home is impossible; the Sindh they remember no longer exists as they knew it. Their memories of the homeland are tinged with sepia tones, coloured by the trauma of a forced departure and the ache of unfulfilled dreams.

In this paper, we will trace the journeys of these displaced Sindhis. We will examine how they reconstruct their identity, drawing strength from memory even as they inhabit new worlds. Through literary narratives and oral histories, this study seeks to unravel the layers of cultural

hybridity, resilience, and nostalgia that characterize the Sindhi diaspora. Faiz Ahmed Faiz in *Poems by Faiz* (1971) has said that they remain “parched travellers of unknown deserts, forever carrying with them the water of home” (Faiz 47). Their journey is unfinished, a perpetual quest for identity in a world that is never truly theirs.

The Long Partition

Partition did not end in 1947. It seeped, like a slow poison, through the years that followed. For the Sindhi community, who found themselves stranded in a post-colonial twilight, the trauma lingered, transforming from event to epoch. Historians like Vazira Zamindar have argued that for many, especially those from communities without a homeland, Partition was not a singular event but a “Long Partition” – a period of endless displacement and fragmented belonging (Zamindar 3). The Sindhi diaspora, living between memory and exile, became emblematic of this protracted loss.

The idea of the “Long Partition” suggests that Partition was not a clean cut. Instead, it was an unhealed wound, one that left communities, like the Sindhis, in perpetual liminality. Zamindar writes in *The Long Partition and the Making of Modern South Asia* that “boundaries did not settle, nor did they create safe havens” (4). For the Sindhi diaspora, this meant carrying the scars of a broken past into an uncertain future, a haunting continuity rather than a closed chapter.

Unlike other Partition-affected communities, Sindhis faced a peculiar plight. The absence of a “Sindh” within the new India meant that they did not have a provincial identity to fall back on, as Punjabis or Bengalis did. This statelessness turned their search for identity into an endless journey. Urvashi Butalia, in *The Other Side of Silence*, describes how “memory plays strange tricks” on the displaced, turning their yearning into an ache for what never fully was, nor could ever be again (Butalia 105). For Sindhis, this haunting manifests as a nostalgia for a homeland where they no longer belong, which exists now only in their memories and songs.

The Long Partition, for the Sindhi diaspora, became an inheritance. The post-1947 decades saw the community dispersed across India, with many moving further afield to places like Hong Kong, Dubai, and London. Yet, they carried Sindh within them, fragmentary and often idealized. This diaspora experience turned their cultural identity into something fluid, what Homi Bhabha calls “a third space” of hybridity, where they negotiated between past and present, Sindhi and non-Sindhi, Indian and global (Bhabha 55). Living in this “third space” meant that their sense of self was always in flux, pieced together from fragments of memory, culture, and adaptation.

The Long Partition was not just about geographic displacement but an ongoing loss of self and community. Sindhi families, in stories and oral histories, speak of a “ghost homeland” that lingers, “ungraspable yet undying,” as poet Agha Shahid Ali might say (Ali 89). This homeland exists in dreams, memories, and inherited narratives but resists physical form. This state of in-betweenness, both here and there, captures the essence of what the Long Partition has meant for Sindhis. It is an exile without return, a journey where home is remembered but unreachable.

The legacy of the Long Partition continues to shape Sindhi identity. Even as generations grow distant from 1947, they inherit its memory, its fractures, and its unresolved pain. Zamindar’s work highlights how the Long Partition “redefined borders not only physically, but within people’s sense of belonging and history” (Zamindar 13). For the Sindhi diaspora, then, this is a journey that does not end; it only evolves, a state of exile and adaptation across generations.

In the following sections, this paper will examine how Sindhi narratives of the Long Partition offer a rare insight into what it means to live perpetually in exile. Their stories are like unclosed doors, remnants of an incomplete departure, lingering “in the shadows of what we lost,” as Butalia eloquently observes (Butalia 110). These stories are vital testimonies, revealing how historical trauma transforms into cultural memory, how communities survive the endless act of saying goodbye to a homeland that never quite releases them.

Memories of Home: Displacement and Cultural Memory

For the Sindhi diaspora, memories of home are not just nostalgic recollections; they are lifelines, fragile yet enduring. Displacement stripped them of their homeland but left them with vivid memories of it—memories that are stitched together like a quilt from fragmented stories, rituals, and cultural practices. The sociologist Maurice Halbwachs famously argued that memory is “socially framed,” meaning that our personal memories are molded by collective experiences (Halbwachs 38). In the case of Sindhis, these collective memories serve as a link to a homeland that, in reality, exists only in their minds. They are memories infused with resilience, though shaped by loss.

Displacement often turns memory into a sacred act. The writer Svetlana Boym speaks of “restorative nostalgia,” a yearning that seeks to reconstruct lost spaces through rituals and storytelling (*The Future of Nostalgia* 49). For Sindhis, home is often a ghostly presence, haunting them through smells, songs, and inherited stories. These fragments of memory become precious, a form of cultural preservation against the erosion of time and assimilation. Songs, for instance, are sung as prayers, bringing back to life the marketplaces, rivers, and temples of Sindh. Such memories are delicate, but they form an “imaginary homeland,” a term Salman Rushdie uses to describe the mental spaces diasporic communities construct to stay connected to their origins (Rushdie 10).

As Aleida Assmann explains, displaced communities often transform personal memories into shared narratives, creating a “collective framework that stands as a testament to their endurance” (*Cultural Memory and Western Civilization* 54). The Sindhi diaspora has forged a cultural memory that transcends individual experience. In this shared memory, the past is both sanctuary and burden, allowing them to hold onto their roots while navigating the complexities of exile.

Displacement heightens the need to remember, but it also alters what is remembered. Memories of home become tinted with idealism, often romanticized to offset the pain of separation. Cultural historian Marianne

Hirsch calls this “postmemory”—a phenomenon where descendants of displaced communities inherit memories so vivid they feel as though they lived them (*Family Frames* 22). Younger generations of Sindhis may never have seen Sindh, yet they carry its stories as though they are their own. Through stories, they learn to see themselves as part of a lineage marked by resilience, loss, and the longing for a homeland that is as mythical as it is real.

Displaced Sindhis gather around these stories, treating them as sacred truths. Paul Connerton writes that communities use “ritualized remembrance” to keep their cultural memory alive, embodying the past in collective rituals and traditions (*How Societies Remember* 46). These rituals are acts of survival, a way to bridge the gap between past and present. For Sindhis in India, Hong Kong, and beyond, such traditions connect them to their Sindhi heritage, forming a sense of continuity even in the face of dislocation.

Yet memory is not always gentle. For many, recalling home stirs a painful awareness of what was lost. Sociologist Avery Gordon describes this as a “haunting,” an enduring sense that the past shadows the present, never fully gone but never fully accessible (*Ghostly Matters* 63). The Sindhi diaspora is haunted by the memory of a place that is simultaneously near and distant, tangible in their hearts yet unreachable in the real world. Through this haunting, they keep alive a connection to their origins, a testament to their refusal to let go.

Ultimately, memory serves as both anchor and drift. It roots the Sindhi diaspora to a homeland that exists now only in stories, yet it allows them to create new meanings in the present. Through memory, they cultivate an “internal homeland,” a place woven from shared stories and nostalgia. As Toni Morrison so aptly wrote, “Memory is a monster; you forget—it doesn’t. It simply waits. It watches” (*Beloved* 73). For Sindhis, memory watches over them, guiding them back to Sindh, a land they can visit only in the sanctuary of their hearts.

Cultural Hybridity and the Sense of Belonging (or lack thereof)

For those who live between worlds, cultural hybridity is both a blessing and a burden. The Sindhi diaspora, scattered across foreign lands, inhabits a realm of mixed identities, adapting to new cultures while clinging to remnants of the old. But this fusion of identities brings with it an enduring tension. W.E.B. Du Bois famously called it “double consciousness”—a sense of “two-ness,” being “an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts” (*The Souls of Black Folk* 3). For the Sindhi diaspora, it is a similar struggle, a constant negotiation between old loyalties and new demands.

Cultural hybridity can create a fluid sense of belonging. It allows diasporic individuals to draw from multiple cultural wells, blending traditions and languages to form something uniquely their own. This fusion brings a creative richness, allowing the Sindhi diaspora to reimagine what it means to be Sindhi in Mumbai, Hong Kong, or Dubai. As Gloria Anzaldúa writes in *Borderlands/La Frontera*, “I am cultureless because, as a feminist, I challenge the collective cultural/religious male-derived beliefs... yet I am cultured because I am participating in the creation of yet another culture” (102). Like Anzaldúa, the Sindhi diaspora creates new identities from the fragments of their heritage and their host societies.

Yet, hybridity does not always result in belonging. The patchwork of identities that hybridity creates can also feel like a fracture, a feeling of being suspended between worlds but fully at home in neither. Frantz Fanon describes this experience as one of profound alienation, writing that “the feeling of inferiority...arises when the native comes into contact with the culture of the mother country” (*Black Skin, White Masks* 11). For the Sindhi diaspora, a similar disorientation occurs. Their sense of self is shaped by Sindh, yet they must adapt to societies that view them as outsiders. This duality creates a complex sense of identity—part nostalgia, part alienation, always unfinished.

The younger generations of Sindhis inherit this sense of hybridity and its conflicts. They may never have set foot in Sindh, yet they are taught its

customs, its language, its spirit. They wear the culture like a coat that doesn't quite fit—familiar, yet foreign. As Salman Akhtar writes in *Immigration and Identity*, “Cultural hybridity...entails both a sense of loss and a sense of discovery” (89). For young Sindhis, this hybridity can feel like a space of both possibility and exclusion, a way to belong and yet remain on the margins.

In the end, cultural hybridity is neither home nor exile. It is a state of becoming, a journey with no final destination. For the Sindhi diaspora, belonging is elusive, a place they construct but can never fully inhabit. As Edward Said once observed, “Exile is strangely compelling to think about but terrible to experience” (*After the Last Sky* 16). Cultural hybridity offers glimpses of belonging, but it is an uneasy home, marked by both connection and distance, an identity that is constantly remade, and never complete.

Liminal Spaces and the ‘In-Between’ Identity

The concept of liminal spaces finds its essence in the Sindhi diaspora's experience post-Partition. Liminality, as conceived by anthropologist Victor Turner, represents an ambiguous space “betwixt and between” (Turner 93). For the Sindhi community, this state is not just metaphorical but a lived reality. They inhabit an existence that oscillates between the homeland they lost and the host nations they struggle to embrace. This space, which Homi Bhabha describes as “the in-between,” becomes a site of both possibility and disquiet (Bhabha 2).

After the Partition of 1947, the Sindhi people found themselves in a constant state of flux. Unlike other communities granted defined territories, the Sindhis were left rootless, devoid of a homeland. Theirs was an identity shaped by unmoored dislocation. Ashis Nandy highlights this feeling of suspension: “For the refugee, the past is a lost country, the present an uncertain battlefield, and the future a distant mirage” (Nandy 5). This sense of living “in-between” places has etched itself onto the collective consciousness of Sindhis, fostering a duality marked by nostalgia and adaptation.

The ‘in-between’ identity emerges from these fragmented narratives. Edward Said’s reflections on exile come to mind: “Exile is strangely compelling to think about but terrible to experience” (Said 181). For Sindhi migrants, the trauma of being uprooted created new cultural expressions that blended elements of their past with those of their present. This hybridity, however, did not come without struggle. The desire to maintain a distinct Sindhi identity often conflicted with the pressures to conform and belong in new sociopolitical landscapes. As Trinh T. Minh-ha notes, “Identity is a process, never a fixed product” (Minh-ha 142). Sindhis embody this ongoing negotiation, where identity remains a site of contention and resilience.

Scholarly works like Vazira Fazila-Yacoobali Zamindar’s *The Long Partition and the Making of Modern South Asia* illuminate the enduring effects of this in-betweenness. She argues that the experience of prolonged displacement blurred the boundaries of home and diaspora, creating a sense of “perpetual exile” (Zamindar 14). Oral histories gathered from the Sindhi community reveal how individuals managed to preserve cultural memory despite fragmented realities. Songs, stories, and rituals served as vessels to transmit identity across generations, even as they adapted to new surroundings.

Thus, the liminal space occupied by the Sindhi diaspora is more than a backdrop; it is the narrative itself. It is a testament to survival, “a place where the old is not entirely lost, and the new is not fully won” (Bhabha 2). In navigating this space, the Sindhis demonstrate how communities can forge a complex identity that is neither wholly integrated nor completely estranged. Their existence in this ‘in-between’ world captures the essence of post-Partition trauma while illustrating the strength to craft spaces of belonging amid displacement.

In the words of poet Agha Shahid Ali, “...to be exiled / is to love from distance” (Ali 35). For the Sindhi diaspora, the liminal is not just transitional; it is enduring, shaping an identity that is both fractured and resilient.

Narrative as a Tool for Healing and Preservation

Narratives hold immense power for communities grappling with loss and dislocation. For the Sindhi diaspora post-Partition, storytelling became both a balm and a bulwark. Through narrative, pain could be voiced, shared, and softened. Salman Rushdie, in *Imaginary Homelands*, asserts that narratives are “a way of shaping experience” (Rushdie 12). For displaced Sindhis, recounting stories was not just an act of remembering but of reclaiming identity. Oral traditions passed from elders to younger generations preserved more than memories—they preserved belonging.

Narratives serve as tools for healing. They offer a structure to chaotic experiences, turning fragmented recollections into coherent stories. This helps individuals and communities find meaning in trauma. As Toni Morrison wrote, “Narrative is radical, creating us at the very moment it is being created” (Morrison 37). For Sindhis, stories woven with memories of home and tales of resilience became collective lifelines. These stories acted as both testament and therapy, a communal practice that allowed for grief and continuity.

Storytelling is also a vessel for cultural preservation. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, in *Can the Subaltern Speak?*, highlights how subjugated voices must reclaim their narratives to preserve identity (Spivak 84). For Sindhis, oral histories filled gaps left by official records. Songs, folk tales, and personal accounts kept the past alive in the present. This fusion of memory and narrative fortified a shared sense of identity, even when physical roots were severed.

To listen to these stories is to witness the resilience of displaced people. It is to understand that narrative, as Chinua Achebe believed, is “a way to keep the past alive for the future” (Achebe 45). For the Sindhi diaspora, storytelling is not only a means of survival but of reclaiming agency, stitching fragmented selves back into wholeness.

Implications for Diasporic Studies and Memory Work

The Sindhi diaspora's narratives post-Partition offer rich insights for diasporic studies and memory work. As Svetlana Boym notes, "Nostalgia is not always about the past; it can be a rebellion against the modern idea of time" (Boym 49). For the Sindhis, memories intertwined with oral histories resist erasure. They challenge linear notions of history and place, instead revealing identities as fluid and multi-dimensional.

Diasporic studies must consider the emotional terrain of such memories. Paul Gilroy's concept of "routes" rather than "roots" (*The Black Atlantic*) underscores that diaspora is a space of movement and hybridity (Gilroy 19).

For the Sindhis, narratives stitched from past and present experiences highlight that diasporic identity is always in negotiation. Memory work also faces implications for how stories are archived and valued. Marianne Hirsch's notion of "postmemory"—how later generations inherit trauma and memories not lived but deeply felt—applies here (Hirsch 22). For the Sindhi diaspora, descendants continue to bear the weight of loss, using storytelling to keep collective memory alive and evolving.

Thus, studies of diaspora must embrace the complex interplay of memory, loss, and resilience. These are essential for understanding how communities reconstruct identity in the shadow of historical trauma.

Conclusion: The Ongoing Search for Belonging

The Sindhi diaspora's post-Partition journey embodies resilience, loss, and the ongoing search for identity. Forced into exile without a homeland, the Sindhis preserved their heritage through memory and narrative, crafting an "imaginary homeland" from the fragments of their past. The concept of the Long Partition reveals that this displacement was not a single event but an enduring legacy that continues to shape identity. Living in liminal spaces, the Sindhi community balances nostalgia with adaptation, forming hybrid identities that are complex and ever-evolving. Oral histories, stories, and rituals serve as tools for healing and cultural preservation, sustaining a sense of belonging even in exile. The interplay

between memory and narrative becomes essential in reconstructing a fractured sense of self. For scholars of diasporic studies, the Sindhi experience underscores the need to view displacement as both historical trauma and a site of cultural endurance. Their story, marked by perpetual in-betweenness, speaks to the strength required to keep one's identity alive in the face of loss.

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