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## Editorial...

Writing in English literature is a global phenomenon. It represents ideologies and cultures of the particular region. Different forms of literature like drama, poetry, novel, non-fiction, short story etc. are used to express one's impressions and experiences about the socio-political-religious-cultural and economic happenings of the regions. The World War II brings vital changes in the outlook of authors in the world. Nietzsche's declaration of death of God and the appearance of writers like Edward Said, Michele Foucault, Homi Bhabha, and Derrida bring changes in the exact function of literature in moulding the human life. Due to Globalization and liberalization, society moves to the post-industrial phase. Migration and immigration become common features of postmodern society. These movements give birth to issues like race, ethnicity, gender, crisis for identity, cultural conflict, dislocation, isolation and many others. Thus multiculturalism becomes the key note of new literatures written in English. The colonial legacy, immigrants and migrated authors attempt to define Britishness in literature and the result is postethnicity in English literature. The writers like Salman Rushdie, Hanif Kureishi, Andrea Levy and many others attempted to redefine and reevaluate the singular authority of text and plead for the plurality of themes. There is another form of literature growing consciously in the country like India. This literature is called as Fourth World Literature or the literature of protest. The marginalized sections of society attempt to protest against upper caste ideologies in Dalit Literature. All these issues are reflected in the present issue of Literary Endeavour.

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01

## EXAMINING THE THEME OF LOVE AND SEDUCTION IN DONNE'S *THE FLEA* AND SHAKESPEARE'S *SHALL I COMPARE THEE TO A SUMMER'S DAY?* A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

*Prof. Dr. Munthir Habib, Department of English Language, Literature and Translation, Zarqa University, Zarqa, Jordan*

### **Abstract:**

*This paper has provided a comparative analysis of Shakespeare's 'Shall I Compare Thee to a Summer's Day' and Donne's 'The Flea'. The main aim has been to unearth some of the parallels that could be drawn between the two poetic works, as well as the authors' points of divergence. It is further notable that the analysis has focused on the specific theme of love and seduction. In the findings, Shakespeare's Shall I Compare Thee to a Summer's Day is easier to understand and more accessible while The Flea is a deep and layered poem. Regarding the theme of love and affection, the aspects of language and style form the major point of Donne and Shakespeare's divergence in relation to the theme of love and affection. On the one hand, The Flea depicts a shadowy and oppressive feeling (via dark imagery). On the other hand, Shall I Compare Thee to a Summer's Day has a positive ambience and is warm - due to positive and vivid imagery that Shakespeare embraces. A major similarity in the poems is that they are driven by human power, with both authors keen to find partners. Thus, the poems are strangely similar works, but they are at odds. In summary, The Flea and Shall I Compare Thee to a Summer's Day are comparable because they focus on love and seduction and the theme's associated mysterious forces but the authors' conclusions are made from different perspectives.*

**Key Words:** *Love, seduction, human power, positive ambience.*

### **1.0 Introduction**

In the English verse, John Donne and William Shakespeare were renowned, early masters. Their body of work exhibited creative metaphor, skillful turn of phrase, and textual dexterity. Also, their poetry's praise of lovers while referring to nature's commonplace objects made them unique from conventional love poetry. With love affecting everyone and present in everyday life, the two poems suggest that the theme is inescapable. In *Shall I compare thee to a summer's day*, Shakespeare describes a woman's beauty to such an extent that he ends up debating on whether or not he should compare it (the beauty) to a summer's day. His feelings for the woman are also strong, and the obvious contrasts and complements depict his emotions. He also indicates that the beauty of his lover is unlikely to fade. From this stance, it is evident that Shakespeare holds an attitude towards the theme of love as that which is worth displaying openly.

On the other hand, Donne's *The Flea* treats love as a delicate topic and assumes an argumentatively and liberalistic structured persuasion to emotion. Particularly, Donne uses the flea, a pest, to associate with a coy and pure mistress; with the central motivation being a quest to finish the courtship he has with her. As such, Donne's poem is similar to Shakespeare's work in such a way that they both refer to the dominant theme of love. However, Shakespeare's *Shall I compare thee to a summer's day* emphasizes emotional love while Donne's *The Flea* emphasizes physical love. It is further notable that in Donne's *The Flea*, the love poem depicts human bodies as microcosms to such an extent that when individuals are in love, other issues in the world do not matter much. Instead, the enraptured lovers perceive themselves as the only existing beings. Despite this difference, the two poems exhibit commonality whereby the authors emphasize that love needs to be displayed openly. This paper provides a comparative analysis of the poems.



## 2.0 Focusing on The Theme of Love and Seduction in Donne's *The Flea* and Shakespeare's *Shall I Compare Thee to a Summer's Day*?

*Shall I Compare Thee to a Summer's Day* and *The Flea* emerge as different poems, but they are very similar. The dominant theme in both poems concerns love and seduction. Whereas this commonality suggests that parallels could be drawn between Donne and Shakespeare's works, the two authors assume different stances in approaching the theme. As a core theme in Donne's *The Flea*, the subject of love and seduction is presented in such a way that the mistress continually rejects his advances. However, Donne is keen to ensure that they copulate. The author says, "It sucked me first, and now sucks thee... And in this flea our two bloods mingled be... A sin, nor shame, nor loss of maidenhead" (3-4, 6). In a quest to better Donne's chances, he writes the poem to the mistress. Indeed, *The Flea* forms a darkly seductive work through which comparisons of previous and current relationships between the mistress and Donne could be made; with the relationships compared further to the case of a flea. The author says, "And in this flea our two bloods mingled be" (4).

It is further notable that Donne's seduction of the mistress is that which is marked by curiosity. He proceeds to indicate that through the flea's blood, they are linked. He states further that the linkage is so strong that it almost surpasses a marriage tie. The author says, "It sucked me first, and now sucks thee... And in this flea our two bloods mingled be" (3, 4). Donne proceeds to seduce his mistress by indicating that given the linkage they already have (through the blood of the flea), sex should not be much of a moral issue. With the linkage perceived to be eternal and so strong that it surpasses marriage vows made in formal religious institutions, Donne illustrates that sex with his mistress is unlikely to bring a loss of manhood or shame. He says, "A sin, nor shame, nor loss of maidenhead" (6).

In Shakespeare's *Shall I Compare Thee to a Summer's Day*, the poem deviates from the flea's nature but still presents the subject of love and seduction. In this poem, the central direction is that Shakespeare does not demonstrate what he wants (as in the case of Donne). Instead, he uses *Shall I Compare Thee to a Summer's Day* to indicate what he feels about the issue of love and seduction. Also, Shakespeare's declaration of his eternal love is achieved when he likens it to heaven. Particularly, he employs personification to demonstrate his relationship as that which is reflective of eternal summer. The author says, "But thy eternal summer shall not fade" (9). Similarly, Shakespeare's *Shall I Compare Thee to a Summer's Day* demonstrates that with time, beauty declines. He says, "And summer's lease hath all too short a date... every fair from fair sometime declines" (4, 7). In so doing, he emphasizes the need for his lover to support him in the love while the beauty lasts. Despite the differences in Donne and Shakespeare's poetic illustrations, the two works demonstrate the authors' love from their respective mistresses as a central objective.

Whereas similarity in the poems concerns the central subject that involves the theme of love and seduction, the style and language employed by Shakespeare and Donne are different. For instance, Donne's *The Flea* reflects a visually dark poem when he employs dark imagery to present the intended message to the audience. To achieve this objective, he refers to the "Purpled thy nail..." (20), and "living walls of jet" (15); aspects that end up creating the poem's funeral theme capable of inducing depressive and dark atmospheres. Notably, Donne uses this dark imagery purposely to aid in persuading the mistress to acknowledge the gloomy nature of the life that surrounds her at that time, and that he is better placed to improve it. Hence, dark imagery as a persuasive agent is used to support Donne's quest to induce love into the mistress' life.

The issue of style and language as a major point of divergence between the two poems is also evident when Shakespeare's *Shall I Compare Thee to a Summer's Day* succeeds in inducing a joyous atmosphere - having employed positive and vivid imagery. Specifically, Shakespeare uses "a summer's day" (1) to refer to their love. The love that he has with the mistress is also timely in such a way that it comes after winter and the author proceeds to state that neither a force of death nor evil will stall the progress of

their love. He says, "...Nor shall death brag thou wand'rest in his shade" (11). From the perspective of the reader, such positive and vivid imagery that Shakespeare employs to present the theme of love and seduction ends up creating uplifting emotions. Also, Shakespeare succeeds in establishing a linkage between the sun and the reader's imagination via the choice of words. Some of the words that depict this linkage include "shines" (5), "gold" (6), and "temperate" (2). Based on these affirmations regarding the divergence in the style and language used by Donne and Shakespeare, it is worth inferring that both poems address the theme of love and affection but *The Flea* depicts a shadowy and oppressive feeling (via dark imagery) while *Shall I Compare Thee to a Summer's Day* has positive ambience and is warm - due to positive and vivid imagery.

Another difference is that Donne's *The Flea* presents the central theme of love and seduction via evidence of interaction involving the mistress and the author. On the one hand, Donne's advances are rejected. On the other hand, he succeeds in personifying the mistress' decision to kill the flea by saying, "Purpled thy nail, in blood of innocence?" (20). The eventuality is that the relationship between the mistress and Donne changes. Particularly, there is a shift from lust to sorrow; depicted further by Donne's emotions. The author says, "Just so much honor, when thou yield'st to me... Will waste, as this flea's death took life from thee" (26, 27). By saying so, Donne's sorrowful reaction to the mistress' killing of the flea suggests that her decision to reject his advances (just like the dead flea that has the blood of the two) might translate into a greater loss for both parties rather than be a loss only on Donne's side.

### 3.0 Conclusion

In the two poems, the intermediate form associated with the theme of love and seduction is presented. Under analysis and from afar, Shakespeare's *Shall I Compare Thee to a Summer's Day* emerges as a work that is not only easier to understand but also more accessible. The poem is successful in conveying the author's emotions, intended to be understood by the lover. On the other hand, Donne presents a deep and layered poem. Occurring in a short space, *The Flea* conveys a lot of information. Based on the comparative analysis in this paper, the major difference between the two works concerns the issues of language and style. *The Flea* depicts a shadowy and oppressive feeling (via dark imagery) while *Shall I Compare Thee to a Summer's Day* has positive ambience and is warm - due to positive and vivid imagery. An additionally notable aspect is that the human drive powers the two poems, especially due to the authors' quest to find partners. Also, Donne and Shakespeare's works express the inner emotions of the poets in relation to mysterious forces surrounding the theme of love and seduction. Hence, the poems emerge as strangely similar works, yet they are at odds. Overall, *The Flea* and *Shall I Compare Thee to a Summer's Day* are worth comparing because Donne and Shakespeare are concerned with the central theme of love and seduction, but the conclusions that they make regarding this subject are established from different perspectives.

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02

## HOMO-SOCIAL FOUNDATION OF DEMOCRACY: AN ASSESSMENT OF SELECT WALT WHITMAN POEMS

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Affiliated under the University of North Bengal*

### **Abstract:**

*Walt Whitman is often considered to be one of the foremost social champions in American literary canon. Whitman is politically, emotionally and ethically one of the most democratic poets of all times in the history of Anglophone literature, whose oeuvre negotiates the social, sexual and moral axes of democratic vision in a number of ways. He champions the cause of the oppressed classes and races, advocates an ethics of homo-social intimacy, postulates a sexual democracy beyond the hierarchic libidinal economies and criticizes the regressive, coercive ideologues of nineteenth century American stratified society. Out of all the groups of poems in Leaves of Grass, the “Calamus” group is the most autonomous one, attracted together by a sublimation of manly attachment, which Whitman termed manly “adhesiveness”. “To a Stranger” is a lyric of hospitality, welcome and remote kinship between a man and a stranger, and, hence a representative poem belonging to this group. Walt Whitman's “I Sit and Look Out” was included in the Leaves of Grass group in 1860, but with the present title it was included in 1881 in “By the Roadside” group of poems. This paper assesses the concept of democracy and nation-building in Whitman's oeuvre through a study of his select poems.*

**Key Words:** *Walt Whitman, Democracy, Homo-sociality, American Literature, Nation-building.*

View'd today from a point of view sufficiently overarching, the problem of humanity all over the civilized world is social and religious, and is to be finally met and treated by literature . . . Never was anything more wanted than, to-day, and here in the States, the poet of the modern is wanted . . . a great original literature is surely to become the justification and reliance, (in some respects the sole reliance,) of American democracy

- Walt Whitman, *Democratic Vistas* (1871).

“I dreamed in a dream of a city where all the  
men were like brothers,  
O I saw them tenderly love each other I  
often saw them, in numbers, walking  
hand in hand;  
I dreamed that was the city of robust  
friends. . .”

- Walt Whitman, *Live Oak, With Moss*, No. IX

Walt Whitman is politically, emotionally and ethically one of the most democratic poets of all times in the history of Anglophone literature, whose oeuvre negotiates the social, sexual and moral axes of democratic vision in a number of ways. He champions the cause of the oppressed classes and races, advocates an ethics of homo-social intimacy, postulates a sexual democracy beyond the hierarchic libidinal economies and criticizes the regressive, coercive ideologues of nineteenth century American

stratified society. In his own words, democracy is the interface between the 'Self' and the 'Other' meeting co-extensively:

“One's self I sing, a simple separate person  
Yet utter the word Democratic, the word En-Masses”

(One's Self I Sing)

In “I Sit and Look Out”, Whitman assumes the status of a roadside watcher and catalogues a number of internal and external sufferings. He receives secret guilt of young people, observes the abject condition of the senile and neglected mothers, the abuse of wives by patriarchal husbands, the sexual exploitation of young women by treacherous seducers, the agonies of jealousy and not responded love. He also observes events of public shame and suffering like battles, epidemics, tyrannies, punitive systems violating human rights. He mentions the pathetic events like comrades drawing lots to decide who should be killed during a famine at sea. The bathos of human suffering is concluded in socialist and anti-slavery voice: “I observe the slights and degradations cast by arrogant persons upon labourers, the poor, and upon Negroes, and the like” (“I Sit and Look Out”).

By enumerating these apparently objective and passing images of human suffering, the poet actually diagnoses the unjust, stratified, oppressive social conditions that dehumanize the citizens. Gender, race, class, age different parameters of hierarchy damage the community's harmony and breed injustice. The poet eventually criticizes the “indifference” of the literator-figure or the observer of being passive, inert, unresisting to what he records: “See, hear and am silent.” (“I Sit and Look Out”).

The implied but unuttered clarion call is quite clear. For a proper democratic initiation of the society, the poet should get rid of his elitist neutrality and 'engage' actively and progressively into the project of a new Nation-building:

“My call is the call of battle I nourish active rebellion,  
He going with me must go well armed,  
The road is before us!”

(“Song of the Open Road”)

In “To a Stranger”, Whitman is more prognostic and remedial. He postulates “manly attachments” or male-male bonding as an essentially democratic politics of friendship in the entire “Calamus” group. Corporeal co-extension between the 'Self' and the 'Other', or more aptly, sexual relation, is posited as a democratic vista because the ethics of intimacy, welcome, hospitality etcetera can alone put the community's foundations on a liberal, egalitarian base. In many ways, the responsibility of the Self towards the Other's body as Whitman emphasizes it in “To a Stranger” anticipates Levinas' theories on meeting a meeting the Stranger/Other, as well as Cixous' notion of the “Jouissance” beyond the phallic cannibalism of hierarchic libidinal economy. In this poem Whitman does not want to possess or appropriate the Other's Jouissance but situates both the self and the other in a rhizome of mutual sharing:

“. . . your body has  
become not yours only, nor left my body mine  
only,  
You give me the pleasure of your eyes, face, flesh, as  
we pass you take of my beard, breast, hands,  
in return,”

(“To a Stranger”)

This permeable ego-boundary, so prominent in the sexual union in love, should be the first principle in the democratic structuration of society. Interestingly, Whitman chooses a “passing stranger” as a memory and a mirror of the self's relation to the other, thus expanding the scope of male-bonding into an altruistic solidaire humanity. The poem breaths in and out a deep respect for alterity, and the sexual morality of the “totality” as Levinas would argue: “to be for the other is to be good”. “Pioneers! O Pioneers!” is a longer



poem, ventilating an urgent and immediate call for a pro-democratic revolution:

“Come my tan-faced children,  
Follow well in order, get your weapons ready. . .”  
 (“Pioneers! O Pioneers!”)

In this poem there is a strong trochaic beat, obviously designed to be a “marching song”. In this overtly political poem, which Whitman has finally put in the “Birds of Passage” group of poems, there is a plea to the youth to take up the “burden” and “lesson” of insurrection against the status quo and oppressive regimes. The sense of movement, energy and change dominate the effective map of this text. The poet motivates the young comrades to reject the past and “debut upon a newer, mightier world”. The revolutionaries thus should be called “pioneers” of the world: “Fresh and strong the world we seize, world of labour and march” (“Pioneers! O Pioneers!”).

The journey is not sure or pre-designed but contingent upon political necessities, as Whitman uses the phrase “daring, venturing as we go to the unknown ways”. But the telos is a steady vision of nation-building, of freedom, justice and democracy. As it is a mass movement, defeat or death cannot stop its momentum:

“O to die advancing on!  
Are there some of us to droop and die? has the hour come?  
Then upon the march we fittest die, soon and sure the gap is fill'd,  
Pioneers! O pioneers!”  
 (“Pioneers! O Pioneers!”)

The privileged and hedonistic life-style is rejected by the participants in such committed political movement they eat “hard diet” and sleep on the “ground”, abandoning the fantasies of “the cushion”, “gluttonous feast”, “tame enjoyment” etcetera. This image of abstaining from shallow comforts of life speaks of an essential ingredient in the politics of democracy sacrifice. Selfish or material gains are to be forgotten if the installation of democracy be the goal of a nation in its way towards nation building.

Various critics have appreciated Whitman's democratic poetic engagement. In spite of contextual, typically the American localisms of Whiteman's verse, his lyrics can ignite a universal urge for unity and new world order. In the words of Havelock Ellis, Whitman represents “himself as the inhabitant of a vast and coordinated cosmos, tenoned and mortised in granite” David S. Reynolds has interpreted Whitman's democratic enthusiasm in terms of his political choices “He espoused . . . fierce rejection of entrenched authority with equally intense praise of simple artisan values” as he “shared” the “outlook” of the Republican politics. In reference to poems like “To a Stranger”, the following remark by Karen Sanchez Eppler is highly relevant:

“Merger and embodiment are linked strategies in this poetics: merger the perfect melding of opposites into a complete undifferentiated oneness, is best exemplified for Whitman in the physical imagery of the sexual embrace” (*Touching Liberty: Abolition, Feminism, and the Politics of the Body*).

When Matthiessen named Whitman “the central figure of our literature affirming the democratic faith” he did so because he saw Whitman as the champion, not only of liberty and equality, but also of fraternity the mastery of union as social love. In Whitman's poetry we discover a re-writing of hierarchies soul/body, I/you, nation/state, individual/collective, sexual/political etcetera. This is an inaugural strategy of “democratic poetics”, because “democracy” is not simply an electoral condition of universal adult franchise but a field or possibility of what Derrida calls in his *The Politics of Friendship*, “two dimensions in the relation to the other: respect and responsibility.”

**Assessment of “To a Stranger”**

“as I pass, O Manhattan! your frequent and swift flash  
of eyes offering me love,  
Offering response to my own--these repay me;  
Lovers, continual lovers, only repay me.”

- Walt Whitman, “City of Orgies”

“We two boys together clinging  
One the other never leaving.”

- Walt Whitman, “We Two Boys Together Clinging”

Out of all the groups of poems in *Leaves of Grass*, the “Calamus” group is the most autonomous one, attracted together by a sublimation of manly attachment, which Whitman termed manly “adhesiveness”. “To a Stranger” is a lyric of hospitality, welcome and remote kinship between a man and a stranger, and, hence a representative poem belonging to this group. The lyric ennobles the sentiments of male-bonding into an ethics of intimacy, which is suggestive of both a universal fraternity and a vision of a homo-social fabric of new America.

The poem begins with an address to a “passing stranger”, whose gender is quite unsure in the beginning: “You must be he I was seeking, or she I was seeking” (“To a Stranger”). As in an oneiric vision, the poet roams through an unconscious memory of sharing an ecstatic togetherness with the stranger. As they pass each other in the civil society, the memory is triggered off. The poet recalls infantile moments of their intimacy, as if he and the stranger were very familiar to each other while growing up, indicating corporeal sharings:

“I ate with you and slept with you, your body has become not  
Yours only nor left my body mine only.”

(“To a Stranger”)

The bliss of such passionate bonding almost became a mutual interchangeability and co-extension between the 'Self' and the 'Other'. Even today as they pass each other, their mutual jouissance is re-climaxed:

“You give me the pleasure of your eyes, face, flesh, as  
we pass you take of my beard, breast, hands,  
in return,”

(“To a Stranger”)

The boundaries between the 'Self' and the stranger 'Other' dissolve as they constitute each other by the gifts of belonging and physical pleasure, even if unconsciously felt. The dissolution of difference means also the end of possessive desire of the cannibalistic self or the subject for its 'Other' or 'Object', because the poet decides not to appropriate the other's jouissance by the spoken desire to arrest the other in language, but to facilitate one's own fantasies with the freedom of the other:

“I am not to speak to you I am to think of you when  
I sit alone, or wake at night alone,  
I am to wait I do not doubt I am to meet you again,”

(“To a Stranger”)

This is almost what Cixous or Kristeva would label as the 'feminine' or 'semiotic mode', beyond the hierarchic and possessive libidinal economy the liberty of the 'Other' and not the forfeiture of the 'Other' in the process of language, sex and love, the destructive usucapion of the 'Other' gives birth to the 'melancholic subject', while the non-obtentive sharing of jouissance with the 'Other' gives birth to an ethics

of love beyond the sense of loss and mourning”

“ . . . I do not doubt I am to meet you again,  
I am to see to it that I do not lose you.”

(“To a Stranger”)

In this particular poem eros is not sex, i.e. Whitman does not name the gender of the 'stranger-intimate'. But read in the context of the whole group “Calamus” and Whitman's philosophy of manly affiliation between democratic individuals, and, hinted by the isomorphic corporeal exchange [“you take of my beard, breast, hands. . .”], we can assume that the ethics of *jouissance* is situated in the framework of male-bonding in this poem. The original design of the “Calamus” was a set of twelve Shakespearesque sonnets on male-male love affair, which later became the famous “Live Oak” sequence as the critics today call it.

Both in terms of psychological and political cohesion among men and in terms of the importance given to 'Cohort' of males-as-comrades in the 'nation-building' process, Whitman prefers and celebrates “songs. . . manly attachment” [“In Paths Untrodden”] elsewhere, he exults: “Who but should be the poet of comrades?”

(“These, I, Singing in Spring”)

Or

“For the one I love most lay sleeping by me under the same cover in the cool night,  
In the stillness in the autumn moonbeams his face was inclined toward me,  
And his arm lay lightly around my breast and that night I was happy.”

(“When I Heard at the Close of the Day”)

Two things are significant in this ethics of male-bonding implied in the poem “To a Stranger”:

1. A celebration of physical love as an integral part of universal harmony as well as the democratic morality.
2. A validation of “friendship” and “amour” as what Levinas calls the moral urge toward the “stranger's face”.

Regarding the first 'telos', the following observation made by Havelock Ellis becomes highly relevant:

. . . there is one keen sword with which Whitman is always able to cut the knot of this doubt the sword of love . . . He discovers at last that love and comradeship adhesiveness is, after all, the main thing . . . deeper than religion, underneath Socrates and underneath Christ. With a sound insight he finds the roots of the most universal love in the intimate and physical love of comrades and lovers (*The New Spirit*).

Elsewhere Whitman expresses this fiery and passionate version of corporeal-spiritual universalism:

“I mind how once we lay such a transparent summer morning,  
How you settled your head athwart my hips and gently turn'd over upon me,  
And parted the shirt from my bosom-bone, and plunged your tongue to my bare-stript heart,  
And reach'd till you felt my beard, and reach'd till you held my feet.  
Swiftly arose and spread around me the peace and knowledge that pass all the argument of the earth,  
And I know that the hand of God is the promise of my own,  
And I know that the spirit of God is the brother of my own,  
And that all the men ever born are also my brothers, and the women my sisters and lovers,  
And that a kelson of the creation is love,”  
(Section V, “Song of Myself”)

In this poem also, the sexual images are integrated to the morality of merger: innocent memories, un-

aggressive passing of each other, and thinking about the beloved in lonely evenings lie side by side with the periphrasis of sex (“slept together”) and bodily contacts. And all that is elevated to a liberal humanist scale from the anatomical scale by keeping the amorous partner an 'anonymous stranger' an abstract Man or solidaire Humanity.

The coalescence of the 'Self' and the 'Other' in a non-competitive, non-appropriative jouissance anticipates what Levinas would say long after the time Whitman has written. D. H. Lawrence remarks about Whitman's sexual ethics with the following words:

He seeks his consummation through one continual ecstasy: the ecstasy of *giving himself*, and of being taken. The ecstasy of his own reaping and merging with another, with others; the sword-cut of sensual death . . . it is the great sacrament. . . (*Studies in Classical American Literature*, “XIII Whitman”)

Such sacrifice is made by the Self to its Other, by the lyric's speaking ego to the 'Stranger' an act that Levinas would call “strangeness destitution as freedom” the “stranger” or the “other” appeals to the self's responsibility not by power but by its “face”. In *Entre Nous* Levinas writes: “Love is the I satisfied by the thou, grasping in the other the justification of its being . . . the affective warmth of love is the fulfilment of the consciousness of that satisfaction, that contentment, that fullness found outside the self, eccentric to it. . .” and in *Totality and Infinity*, Levinas writes: “Someone who expresses himself in nakedness the face is in fact one to the extent that he calls upon me . . . I must already answer for him, be responsible for him . . . the other individuates me in my responsibility for him”.

In “To a Stranger”, Whitman composes an ode to this intimate-other, to manifest an ethical statement of erotic engagement into friendship, comradeship, democracy and a homo-social nation-building process.

### **Critical Assessment: “I Sit and Look Out”**

“Here's a good place at the corner I must stand and see the show.”

- Walt Whitman, “A Boston Ballad”

“The question, O me! so sad, recurring What good amid these, O me, O life?”

*Answer.*

That you are here that life exists and identity,  
That the powerful play goes on, and you may contribute a verse.”

- Walt Whitman, “O Me! O Life!”

Walt Whitman's “I Sit and Look Out” was included in the *Leaves of Grass* group in 1860, but with the present title it was included in 1881 in “By the Roadside” group of poems. The entire group “By the Roadside” suggests the notion of “wayside” topics as they strike the mind during one's passage through life, and also a poetic miscellany or a mélange held together by the common bond of the poet's experience as a roadside observer passive but alert and sympathetic. “I Sit and Look Out” can therefore be considered the representative piece in this group of poems, both in terms of the title and the themes.

The poet records, presumably from his window which may imply his democratic and populist 'imagination'; the “sorrow of the world” as they manifest in roadside events. He records the secret laments and guild-ridden anguish of young men after their injudicious or immoral deeds, the neglect of the dying mother by her offspring, the wife-bashing of the misogynic patriarch, the corruption of innocent women by seductive men, and the desperate attempts to conceal one's jealousy or unrequited love. With these miseries of private or domestic life, the poet also observes larger, public issues of suffering and anxiety



wars, epidemics, tyrannies, martyrs' death and prisoners' human rights violations; equally moving and pathetic is the observation that sailors working in the same vessel have to draw lots to decide who shall be killed next to save food and water during a famine at the sea. The bathos of human sufferings comes to a conclusion with the oppressions of the proletarians and the blacks in a class-divided and racist society. The poet confesses at the end that he watches these plights and meanness without the zeal to resist these:

“All these All the meanness and agony without end, I sitting, look out upon,  
See, hear, and am silent” (“I Sit and Look Out”).

The poem is a strong critique of social injustice and oppression in the mid-nineteenth century America, including a self-critique of a poet who records but cannot challenge actively the causes and instances of human sufferings.

It is designed like a 'roadside observations' poem, but we do not have a detached phenomenon of life; instead, we have quite a focused discussion on individual and human sufferings and perils. Although the poet claims an objective and neutral role: “am silent”, he betrays his emotional and political “engagement” into the topics he refers to. Words like “shame” and “agony without end” betrays a sense of shared guilt and remorse in the mind of the observer too. Thus the use of the first person speaking subject “I” and the anaphora of “I see” and “I observe” become meaningful it is a lyric or an intensely subjective poem after all, although the described object is public strife from which the poet disclaims any apparent concern other than witnessing and recording: “See, hear and am silent” (“I Sit and Look Out”).

Whitman has been appreciated as the pro-democracy poet of America, whose voice has been hailed as a representative one in the American ideals of liberty, justice and populism. In *Democratic Vistas* (1871), Whitman diagnoses that elitist literature has always failed to justice to the “people”, because the “masses” appear so 'ungrammatical', 'untidy' and amorphous to the elitist, educated literator that “taste, intelligence and culture (so-called) have been against the masses”. In this poem as well as in many other committed and engaged pieces, Whitman tries to reverse the latent elitism of poetic art, by delineating the working-class life and also by a self-reprimanding confession of the poet's silence to these issues. He tends to assert that a poet's contribution to democracy should at least be an attempt to activate a social engagement of his own poetic self:

“I am the man, I suffered, I was there.”

Or

“I am not an earth nor an adjunct of an earth,

I am the mate and companion of people, all just as immortal and fathomless as myself”

(“Song of Myself”).

The tendency to extend the poetic persona of the observer-speaker into public domains of mass existence is both political and spiritual. Havelock Ellis defines it as “the sword of love”; “his heart goes out to every creature that that shares the loved one's delicious humanity”. David S. Reynolds claims on the other hand that Whitman's affiliation to the Republican Party, his ideology of free labour and taking up the cause of the oppressed workers and slaves, and, his wish to wrest the word “America” from the partial definitions to seek the largest possible applications for the term have influenced his democratic poetics. In this poem we discover both of these tendencies merging into a powerful estimate of common men's strife. What is striking and praiseworthy is that Whitman is sensitive to all the parameters of hierarchy gender (abuse of mother and wife and sexual coercions of young girls), class, race, (the plight of Negroes), age (the neglect of senile and dying mothers). He is equally disturbed by the psychological turmoil guilt of youth, lust and perversion, treachery, arrogance, jealousy and hypocrisy. Interestingly Whitman uses the verb “see” more in cases of private sufferings and “observe” more in cases of public issues. Such variations guide the reader to “read” the poem both in terms of internal anxieties and uneasy emotions, and external and social ills.

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## ANCIENT TRADITIONS AND VALUES REGARDING INDIAN WOMEN - A STUDY OF KARNAD'S *YAYATI*

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### **Abstract:**

*The research paper examines the influence of ancient traditions and values regarding Indian women in shaping Girish Karnad's Feminine sensibility. For this purpose, the paper examines Karnad's play Yayati. The paper researches how Karnad interprets the impediments that society puts before women in their progress from the traditional to the modern life. The paper tries to examine whether traditional or modern sensibility is employed by Karnad to interpret the role and status of his women, and also examines, how he judges his women characters. The paper presents the view that Indian women have to look within their own traditions and find solutions for their contemporary problems.*

**Key Words:** *Ancient traditions, feminine sensibility, impediments, modern sensibility.*

The objective of this research paper is to analyse the influence of ancient traditions and values regarding Indian women in shaping Karnad's feminine sensibility in *Yayati*, in the light of the ancient Indian values which the dramatist advocates and upholds, and which determines his feminine tone and temper. *Yayati*, based on the theme of responsibility, depicts the dilemma of the modern man caught between responsibilities and individual desires. The paper seeks to understand how Karnad interprets the impediments that contemporary society lays before women in their progress from the ancient to the modern world. It examines how he portrays and judges the women, and whether he sees them in the light of the ancient Indian traditional sensibility or the modern sensibility.

*Yayati* examines how Karnad employs ancient Indian philosophy to solve the dilemma of the modern man, and how an ancient myth is used to bring out the contemporary significance of traditions and conventions. Karnad's reshaping of the old myth of *Yayati* to include two new women characters, and his giving voice to the other females, reaffirms his faith in the ancient Indian philosophy and traditions as torch bearers to the modern chaotic society. The women in *Yayati* are ambassadors of Indian spirituality and philosophy. The aim of the chapter is to determine Karnad's feminine sensibility in the light of his affirmation of faith in traditions as the guardian of feminine identity and freedom.

M.K. Naik has justly commented that Karnad was aware that, "If Indian English drama wishes to go ahead, it must go back first, that is, only a purposeful return to its own roots in the rich tradition of ancient Indian drama, both in Sanskrit and folk drama in Prakrits, can help it shed its lean and pale look, and increase its artistic haemoglobin count, and make it cease to be the 'sick man' of Indian English Literature" (43-44).

Karnad wrote his first play, *Yayati* (1961) in Kannada language when he was just twenty-two years of age. The play reinterprets the myth of King Yayati from the *Adiparva* of the *Mahabharat*. *Yayati*, considered one of the most significant plays by Karnad, established his position as a dramatist of great repute in Kannada literature. The play continues to be performed all over country and has been translated into several Indian languages. *Yayati* was first translated into English by Priya Adarkar, but later Karnad translated it himself.

Karnad gave some interesting twists to the original myth of *Yayati*, by the juxtaposition of the dual forces of tradition and modernity. *Yayati* retells the myth of *Yayati*, an ancestor of the *Pandavas*. It follows

the traditional style of *Yakshagana* in which either the *Sutradhara* or the Chorus enters on the stage. The play opens with the *Sutradhara's* address to the audience, in the Prologue, "Our play this evening deals with an ancient myth. But, let me rush to explain, it is not a 'mythological'. Heaven Forbid!" He further adds that, "A key element in its plot is the 'Sanjeevani' vidya' the art of reviving the dead, which promises release from the limitations of the fleeting life this self is trapped in" (Karnad 5).

Unlike the myth, Karnad's King Yayati undergoes a major transformation when he sees the dead Chitrlekha. He accepts old age by embracing Pooru. Pooru regains his youth, but only after losing his bride on the nuptial night. *Yayati* is a tale of a king's longing for eternal youth and carnal pleasures at the cost of his own family and subjects. It depicts the crisis of values, leading to the misery of an irresponsible modern man, and the suffering of his loved ones.

*Yayati* represents the modern, self-centred materialistic man. In the original story Pooru is unmarried, but in Karnad's play he is married. Swarnalata, is another addition. Why Karnad felt the need to add two female characters, to an already existing story, makes interesting study. Karnad's sensibility is deep-rooted in Indian traditions. The use of *Yakshagana* tradition, principles of *Natyashastra* and the influence of Sanskrit drama is evident in his plays. Bharata in his *Natyashastra* has elaborated that drama as an art was meant to promote the fulfilment of the four *Purusharthas* namely *dharma*, which relates to the spiritual sphere, *artha* to economic and political power, *kama* to sexual and aesthetic gratification, and *Moksha* to liberation from human bondage and the cycle of birth and death. Karnad's *Yayati* shows his traditional sensibility, because he depicts how deviation from the path of *Purushartha* leads to destruction and chaos. In *Yayati*, Karnad follows these traditions of the *Natyashastra*.

Female oppression and materialism are social evils of the recent Indian past, having no base in traditional Indian sensibility but Karnad depicts them in his plays because he is aware that the evil forces in society have marred its pluralistic character today. In order to make his plays socially relevant, Karnad mingles the ills and crisis of modern society in the mythical plot and attempts at a traditional solution.

Karnad's creativity required that he invent the characters of Chitrlekha and Swarnalata. The research examines *Yayati*, with an opinion that Karnad's reshaping of the myth does not prove his faithlessness in one of the richest tradition, philosophy, and culture of the world. His treatment of female as well as male characters shows the influence of ancient tradition and values on his sensibility. Wherever Karnad deviates towards western influences he just wants to provide a socially relevant modern context.

Even though Karnad restructured the myth, he trusted and retained the basic principles and propagated the ancient Indian value system. As a responsible dramatist he has given his female characters a rebellious strain and the courage to rise. His women speak against the loss of traditional values, the old glory of women which is an inherent characteristic of Indian culture as reflected in its oldest texts and scriptures. His women are willing to die rather than compromise with their values. The females in *Yayati* are ambassadors of Indian spirituality. Karnad propagates the principles of *Dharma* through them. It is this angle in the play that the research attempts to explore.

*Dharma* is the path of righteousness and living one's life according to the codes of conduct as described by the Hindu scriptures. It is a combination of spiritual discipline and moral codes guiding one's life. Its observance helps humans to be contented and happy and saves them from degradation and suffering. Hinduism suggests that there are ways to enjoy worldly bliss as well as attain supreme happiness on earth itself. It endorses the idea that it is one's *dharma* to marry, raise a family and look after it, and the one who strays from the path is left discontented.

The word *Dharma* also refers to *nyaya* (justice), that which is right in a given circumstance, moral values, obligations, and right conduct in all activities. It is the law that maintains the cosmic order as well as the individual and social order and brings harmony in human life. Human society is sustained by the *dharma* performed by its members. These basic principles of *Dharma* as mentioned in the ancient scriptures are echoed again and again throughout the play. The tragedy in *Yayati* is due to loss of traditional

values and Yayati's failure to uphold his *Dharma*. In fact the entire play seeks to bring Yayati on the path of *Dharma*.

When the men forget their *Dharma*, the women take lead. None of the female characters in the play are decorative dolls. They reflect the pride, intellect, and honour bestowed on them by traditions. Karnad endows even the servant Swarnalata with intellect, compassion and sensibility.

The play opens with the *Sutradhar's* address to the audience. The concept of the four *ashramas* or stages of life according to Indian Vedic philosophy that is *Brahmacharya*, *Grihasthaashrama*, *Vanaprastha* and *Sanyasa* find an echo in the *Sutradhar's* words in Karnad's *Yayati*, "The two must enter this space and on this bed they must create for themselves the magic kingdom of love, ambition and power" (Karnad 6).

*Grishthaashrama*, the second stage of life requires an individual who completes his education to marry, and enter the domestic life and work for the welfare of his wife, children, relatives, and society. This *ashram* is the only one permitting sexual gratification on ethical principles. It demands that one should earn money, perform religious rituals, protect his family members, and give charity. It must be noted that throughout the play Karnad positions the male and female characters on an equal pedestal. While Yayati asks Chitrlekha to follow her *dharma* as a wife, Chitrlekha too reminds Yayati of his duties. Pooru is blamed for his mindless self-sacrifice, while Devyani is reminded of her *rajdharm*a or duty towards the subjects. Pooru violates the principles of *Grihastha ashrama* and takes irresponsible decisions, ignoring the will and well-being of his wife. The play shows Karnad's reinforcement of tradition through Devyani and Chitrlekha's rebellion. The play does not advocate the modern sensibility where family, marriage and relationships are shallow and meaningless.

Karnad shows Chitrlekha in the light of the traditional sensibility, demanding her familial rights and believing that life would be meaningless without the ideals of married life. So Karnad creates Chitrlekha and then depicts her death in the play to punish Pooru and Yayati for forgetting their *Dharma*.

Chitrlekha hails the traditional Indian value system and sensibility. She resolves to be an ideal wife and support Pooru in the noble act of sacrifice. The ideal of *Pitro Devo Bhava* (*father is like God*) rises before her and she bids Swarnalata to go leaving, "a couple of lights burning." for she wants "to dazzle her eyes with his glory" (Karnad 56; act 4). She welcomes Pooru and wishes to perform *aarti*. Her ideals are then shattered. Chitrlekha realises that Pooru has violated the *dharma* of a *grihastha*. Without once thinking of his responsibility towards her, he has traded not only his youth but also her dreams and so she reacts and refuses to submit. Ancient Indian traditions call for whole-hearted commitment from both the partners and the misdemeanour of one binds the other to destruction, so Chitrlekha revolts. Through Chitrlekha's refusal to accept Pooru's follies, Karnad gives a message that values and traditions are intrinsic to Indian life and cannot be bartered away. Pooru is a great son but a failed husband. An oppressed wife would have accepted a life with an old dying man, but not so for Chitrlekha. She demands the sanctity and traditional dignity of a wife.

According to Indian traditions, it is the obligation of the father to protect the girl till her marriage, the husband to protect his wife after marriage, and the son to protect his mother during old age. This implies that a woman must be protected because of her vulnerability, and be treasured and guarded like a jewel as she is the pride and power (*shakti*) of society. Karnad asserts these traditional values in his plays. Women in ancient India had the freedom to choose their spouse, so when Devyani expresses her desire to marry Yayati, Shukracharya despite being a rigid follower of social customs, relents for the sake of his beloved daughter and approves of the match. Social rules are relaxed for the love of a daughter. There is no suppression of female desire here.

Traditions have not suffocated women's freedom to love. In this context, Karnad's *Yayati* is similar to the original story in *Mahabharat* because it shows that thousands of years ago daughters were loved and pampered by their parents and not considered a burden as most modern interpretations of the Indian



traditions would like the world to believe. Devyani's tender love is not suppressed, in stark contrast to the honour killings and racial wars raged furiously in the contemporary world to destroy those who wander out of their caste for love. In contemporary India where female souls are hounded and sacrificed in the womb, the myth of Yayati and his marriage to Devyani, a daughter loved and treasured, is of enormous significance.

Most modern literature portrays India as a caste-ridden, exploitative society. *Yayati*, in contrast shows a high caste Brahmin relenting for the sake of his daughter. Sharmishtha is a *rakshasi* woman, but she is educated like the men. Chitrlekha is trained in martial arts. Women in the original myth as well as Karnad's *Yayati* are representatives of the enlightened traditions of the past. Karnad wants his women to throw away the yoke of evils in contemporary society, and regain their past glory. Feminism in India thus has a different connotation and significance as compared to the west which has no culture or tradition rooted in equality of all sexes to boast of.

Devyani agrees that it is her *Karma* to please Yayati. The *Grihastha ashrama* calls for the satisfaction of *Kama* or desires and conjugal desire is one of them. She tells Sharmishtha, "And why not? That's what I am here for. To be lusted for by His Majesty" (Karnad 11; act 1). Devyani's faithfulness to her husband is evident. In the past, kings had several wives due to political and diplomatic reasons and to some extent to satiate their lust, but the practice was not popularised or promoted by the masses in general. The concept of the ideal Rama's faithfulness to Sita influenced mass ideology. And even when kings practised polygamy, they were responsible for the welfare of all their queens.

King Yayati's treatment of Devyani is also to be noted. He talks to her affectionately and says that he married for love. Their blissful life is disturbed only by the presence of Sharmishtha. Yayati is amazed as to how Devyani got exposed to the uncouth forces inside the safe confines of the palace. Karnad illustrates that in an intimate relationship of marriage, an outsider creates havoc. Yayati realises this and wishes to expel Sharmishtha from the palace. It is only later that he succumbs to her charms, laying bare his human weakness. It needs strength of character and determination to adhere to values. Devyani abandons the palace, Yayati is cursed, Pooru loses his youth, and Chitrlekha her life. Karnad does not lay the blame on his women. Sharmishtha, a slave and a woman becomes Yayati's moral guide at this hour. It is Yayati who is made to shoulder the responsibility of his doings.

Karnad shows that marriage in India is associated with piety, unlike many western cultures where the marital relationships have collapsed and are on the verge of disintegration. Indian philosophy believes in the peaceful resolution of conflicts in relationships and cementing the bonds, rather than modern sensibility which implores one to break the 'fetters' of relationships and seek individual freedom. Modern individual thinks of instant gratification at any cost. In Indian philosophy the individual is not above society and he must keep welfare of others before the 'self'. This is the basic difference between the western and oriental philosophy.

A society's cultural progress is measured by the growth and development of its own sensibility, not by comparing it with other cultures. No two countries have the same culture, so what is correct for one might not be apt for the other. Modernity means a growth 'within' a culture and westernization means a major transformation in Indian culture to infuse elements of an altogether foreign culture. Karnad's Chitrlekha looks for refuge in her own tradition. The moment she asks Yayati to satisfy her sexual desires, she experiences guilt and remorse. She does not want lose track of her values and step beyond the sacred vows of marriage.

Ancient Indian texts like the *Manusmriti* mention that a house in which women are insulted and shed tears, is destroyed. The proverbial saying from the *Manusmriti*, "*yatr naryasto pojyantay, ramantay tatr devta [3/56] (where women are provided place of honour, gods are pleased and reside there in that household)*" (qtd. in Patwari), abounds in Indian wisdom. Yayati is a cause of immense grief to the women in his house and so he has to lead a deplorable life. Karnad thus makes Yayati's happiness very transient.

Karnad advocates the ancient Indian philosophy of non- violence and compassion. Devyani asks Sharmishtha not to hurt Swarnalata or Yayati. She becomes protective towards Pooru and says, “Don't you dare touch them” (Karnad 10; act 1). She reasons with Sharmishtha that in hurting others she is jeopardizing her own happiness. Karnad reinstates the power of the Indian philosophy resting on the pillars of love and compassion and endorses humanitarianism as the greatest virtue.

Sharmishtha an important character in the play is educated, wealthy and beautiful. Vedic society advocated women's education and allowed them to perform the *Upanayan* ceremony. Indian females studied the Vedas, religious scriptures, and practised martial arts. They were considered the transmitters of culture to children, hence their education was important. It is only in later ages with the advent of the Muslim rule, that women began to be confined to their homes for protection. Karnad's women possess a sharp intellect, sensibility, and prowess to bring about a transformation in the highly accomplished King Yayati. Sharmishtha is shown to be extremely bold and vicious. She is energetic and powerful, like *Shakti*, the supreme power. She is beautiful and loving like a goddess but also venomous and revengeful like a demon. She is shrewd enough to decipher, that Yayati married Devyani for a reason. She loves Devyani, showers gifts on her and flaunts their friendship. By fulfilling her father's vows at the cost of her freedom, Sharmishtha endorses the ancient Indian tradition which considered the breaking an oath as a cowardly and shameful act.

Indians idolise Lord Rama as an ideal man, who honoured the word of mouth and became the '*maryada purushottam*'. Rama's life and journey is one of perfect adherence to *dharma* despite the harsh tests of time. The traditional Indian philosophy stands in stark contrast to the modern sensibility in which satisfaction of the self at all cost is a priority. The women portrayed by Karnad show his traditional sensibility. They are responsible and dignified bearers of ethics and morality.

Pooru's mother is a *rakshasa*, but Pooru holds her in great esteem. The ideal of parent worship exists nowhere other than Indian culture. Karnad's glorious women are not the replicas of the “new woman” influenced by western feminism but are reminiscent of the dynamism of traditional Indian womanhood. Karnad's *Yayati* reminds of the high position and reverence of women in ancient Indian tradition. *Yayati* provides an opportunity to the world, to get glimpses of the rich reservoir of Indian culture. Karnad emphasises on the need of contemporary Indian society to look within and not without for emancipation. *Yayati* shows the disintegration caused when there is a crisis of values in society. Devyani, Swarnalata, Sharmishtha, and Chitrlekha suffer because of lack of values in the institution of marriage. Karnad comments on the modern society through *Yayati*. In contemporary society, there is a rise in the consciousness of rights, and decline in the consciousness of duties. Lack of values on the intellectual level, has made man imitative of the west, rather than creative. The intellectual hollowness of king Yayati, is mirrored in the modern age where values are determined by television, internet, politicians, and film stars. The new generation is taught to strive for monetary success. Virtues of character, honesty, and humility are no longer desired.

Karnad's women are not subjugated and oppressed. They remind the world that Indian sensibility and culture is rooted in the principles of equality and equanimity, and do not support oppression. Hinduism considers the soul to be neither male nor female. There is no place for violence against women in the country advocating non- violence. Karnad promotes India's cultural heritage, philosophical beliefs, religious thinking, political understanding, social values, ethics and customs among the people of the West. By his creative dramatization he shows to the western world, the plurality in Indian culture and the solidarity in the man- woman relationship, which is conspicuous by its absence in the western world.

Karnad uses myths to show the spiritual evolution of man. For him, history is a positive concept to analyse life and society. He believes that the significance of myth never dies. In an age of globalization and modernisation, he observes people's craze for materialism and their crude imitation of western civilization. As a responsible and conscious dramatist he upholds myths, legends and folktales in his plays. He reflects

upon the pride of women, his women bask in glory despite hardships and constraints. He shows how the modernist thinking based on selfish, materialistic motives, mislead man and make him a culprit in society. He establishes self- constraint and self-discipline as timeless values.

The deplorable condition of women today, the sexual atrocities and acts of violence against them, go against the tenets of ancient Indian philosophy. They represent the modern man's lust, greed, and hunger for pleasure. Karnad shows the crisis in domestic and marital sphere through his characters and advocates the perusal of *dharma*, and the four *Purusharthas*.

By the use of the myth of Yayati, Karnad imaginatively revives the ancient dramatic tradition and celebrates all that is human and humane. His views can be estimated from the *Sutradhar's* narrative, "But we must trust the narrative we have chosen for ourselves. Invent bits if necessary, but go on. We must relive, not a saga embedded in books, but a tale orally handed down by our grandmothers in lamplit corners" (Karnad 6).

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## A CRITICAL EXPLORATION OF VIJAY TENDULKAR'S *KAMALA*

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### **Abstract:**

*God creates man and woman with equal power and with the gift to foster, organize and rationalize the beliefs specific to his own gender. But the society gives the power of making policies to the men where he proves him advanced and tries to vanquish women's identity and power by repressing her position not better than a dog in the master's house. The women characters in the plays of Vijay Tendulkar suffer a lot as the victims of hegemonic power structures. The female body is the desire of the male sexual fantasy and desire. Tendulkar successfully brings this status to limelight. His play Kamala brings out the realistic picture of Indian women and the chauvinistic spirit of men who believe in liberty of themselves and hence try to elude and suppress the voice of women in the society either physically or emotionally.*

**Keywords:** *Marriage, hypocrisy, Chauvinism, Exploitation.*

This article offers an account of the plight and predicament of women in traditional Indian households. The dramatist pictures how women in spite of all their ability and skill, are unable to battle against all the oppressive measure unleashed on them. One important cultural institution that cripples the independent thinking and functioning of women, according to Tendulkar is Marriage. Marriage- a sacrificial aspect where the daughter is given away forever leads to the annihilation of femininity emotionally and sometimes physically. Like a corpse which can never hold on to its life, a daughter given in marriage too cannot make a return from the wedded life. On marriage, Bhattacharya utters,

The sacrificial aspect, which explicates the significance of the giving of the daughter forever, indicates the pain involved in this shift of the female body from one position of familiarity to an opposite one ... This religious and cultural procedure of entry into the institution of marriage is deterministic for the object here, i.e. the woman because she cannot claim for the right to expression; nor can she show her choice and preferences in this (more or less) forced transfer from one disciplinary domain to another. Her womanhood is highly conditioned by the requirements of this phase of entry into womanhood, which is actually a part of the larger discursive construct of her feminine subjectivity (91).

The Hindu Marriage System devised by the ancient sages like Manu and Kautilya refers to the sacrifice of girl/daughter to the groom's place. The role of women conformed to the maxim by Manu; the great law giver was that *a woman does not deserve freedom* and that her life should throughout be one of the dependence on man. Another similar command laid down by Manu was that a woman should be subservient in all stages of her life- "in childhood to the father, in youth to the husband, and his elder kins and to the son when widowed. Hence "the Vedic age ... established the doctrines related to human code of conduct. They made men- 'The Mentor' of the entire human race, and women 'The Nurturer' ... Though in contemporary India women have been given many legal rights by the constitution the realization of these rights at social level is still a remote dream. Men in general are unable to overcome the attitudes of male superiority the centuries of indoctrination have generated in their psyche" (Thakur 36).

Wedded life represents how women are repressed under the onslaught of reactionary idea of the

fundamentally orthodox society. And this statement can be seen alive in the works of the great dramatist Vijay Tendulkar, who by critics was named as the *Arthur Miller* of India's theatre. Born in 1928, Tendulkar wrote his first story when he was six years old and wrote, directed and acted in his play when he was eleven. Celebrated as the Playwright of the Millennium, Tendulkar's plays have been perceived by critics as timeless and being ahead of their times because of his accurate and sensitive portrayal of the social issues of the time.

Shakti, a Hindu concept that represents divine feminine power, is a widespread and commonly accepted image in Indian society. And Shakti is believed to have equal power as that of Shiva, the divine masculine power. The incredible traditionally cultured society which believes in the existence of Shakti and Shiva treats women as an inferior sex. Tendulkar's play *Kamala* clearly demonstrates how matrimony adds to the depreciation of women as human being and deprives them of most of human rights, relative to life, liberty, equality and dignity of the individual. His play *Kamala* is an emulation that exhibits selfishness and hypocrisy of the modern young generation, and brings out the oppressive nature of contemporary society. Speaking on his plays, Tendulkar has stated,

I have written about my own experiences and about what I have seen in others around me. I have been true to all this and have not cheated my generation. I did not attempt to simplify matters and issues for the audience when presenting my plays, though that would have been the easier option... My plays... contain my perception of society and its values and I cannot write what I do not perceive (Tendulkar 66).

Tendulkar's *Kamala* (1982) is an inspiration by a real life incident reported in *The Indian Express* by Ashwin Sarin, who actually bought a girl from a rural flesh market and presented her at the press conference. Through this play, Tendulkar represents the acceptance of social values, customs, tradition and conventions and its impact on the Indian women. Though the title of the play is named after the girl brought from the flesh market, the protagonist of the play is Sarita, the wife of a journalist Jaisingh Jadhav. Sarita is well educated and hails from a village called Phalten. They live in a small bungalow in a fashionable locality around New Delhi in the neighbourhood of Neeti Bagh. Sarita is seen extremely sensitive to the needs of her husband. Taking out the notes of the phone calls and carrying out the instructions laid, she portrays the embodiment of women who are used as menial servants or stepping stones to their male counterparts. On seeing Sarita's dedication, kakasaheb (Sarita's uncle) comments, "You may be educated Sarita, but you are still a girl from the old Mohite *wada*!" (5) Though educated, Sarita's behaviours indicate her ignorance and lack of knowledge. Although Sarita is shocked when she is told about the way he bought Kamala, Jaisingh is delighted about his accomplishment to have bought kamala to expose the crime committed against women.

**Jaisingh:** I bought her in the Luhardaga bazaar, in Bihar.

**Sarita:** Huh? Bought her?

**Jaisingh:** Yes. For two hundred and fifty rupees. Even a bullock costs more than that. They sell human beings at this bazaar... Human beings. They have an open auction for women of all sorts of ages. People come from long distances to make their bids.

**Sarita:** They auction- women? (14)

Jaisingh goes on speaking of the ways in which auctioneers handle the women, checking them physically to find if they are sexually appealing. Sarita recoils with shock and expresses her disgust. She feels uncomfortable about the case at hand and insists on Jaisingh to give up his plans. But he shows his determination to make the media sensation with the evidence. He tells Sarita not to be sentimental about Kamala. For Jaisingh, Kamala is just a tool in his hands for his media success. But for Sarita, Kamala is a woman like her with flesh and blood and with feelings and emotions. Jaisingh plans to expose the revulsion of selling and buying of women in the flesh market and the condition of tribal women as gendered subaltern. He keeps Kamala at his residence without allowing her to take bath or change clothes in order to

present her before the press conference for the highest drama of his investigative journalism.

**Sarita:** She is asking me to lend her one of my saris.

**Jaisingh:** [Angrily], Who? Kamala? Don't do anything of the sort. Don't give her anything . I tell you, Don't give her a thing without asking me.

**Sarita:** But I am asking you.

**Jaisingh:** That's exactly what I am telling you. She will come to the Press Conference in the same clothes she's is wearing now.

**Sarita:** She's a woman, after all. And her sari is torn.

**Jaisingh:** [His voice raising]. I know, I know! You don't have to tell me, understand? I have a very good idea of all that. I want her to look just as she is at the Press Conference. It's very important (21-22).

Whereas Sarita feels that her husband has taken a step to relegate women's honour, Jaisingh proves to be a selfish and irrational fascist who makes Kamala instrumental to unwrap the authentic picture of the police and politicians. Tendulkar projects Jaisingh's determination to liberate women slaves and become a champion of the cause and his aspiration for an ambitious news item at the cost of an innocent woman's reputation.

While Sarita has a great concern for Jaisingh, he treats her as a personal property and a lovely bonded labourer. He feels, as a husband, it is his right to exploit her both physically and emotionally. At one such instance, when Jaisingh calls Sarita upstairs to the bedroom, she shrugs away making excuses. He keeps insisting, exercising his power over her as her husband. When she is not interested in yielding to him, he shouts in rage, "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've been hungry for six days. Is it a crime to ask for it? Answer me?"(32) Sarita realizes that she was used merely as an object of sexual satisfaction, of social companionship and of domestic comfort. Kamala's entry in the household reveals Sarita the Selfish hypocrisy of her husband and the significance of her own existence in Jaisingh's life. She says,

*I was asleep.... Kamala woke me up with a shock. Kamala showed me everything. I saw that the man I thought my partner was the master of a slave. I have no rights in this house. Slaves don't have rights. Dance to their master's whim. 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, lie on the bed- she (she is twisted in pain) (46).*

The question asked by an uneducated innocent woman, Kamala, "How much did he buy you for", triggers her ignorance lit flame of light. Sarita understands her ignorance that she means nothing to Jaisingh and that he treats her as an inferior being and that she is more or less in the same position of Kamala. Kamala is a woman purchased from the flesh market as an object that can procure for him a promotion in his job and reputation in his professional life and Sarita is a woman brought from the market of marriage who provides him with domestic comfort and sexual pleasure in conjugal life. She discusses it with Kakasaheb trying to get solace to her wounded heart. But to her surprise, Kakasaheb adds insult to her injury by shooting the following statement:

*That's why he is a man. And that's why there's womanhood in the world. I too was just like this. Don't go by what I seem to be today. I gave your aunt a lot of trouble. As it was my right. I didn't care what she felt all. I just marched straight ahead looking in front of me. I was confident she would follow, even if she was limping, and she did follow (47).*

Through the statement of Kakashaeb, Tendulkar has tried to expose the essential artificiality of the society. He has also unveiled the patriarchal set up of marriage which means not only regulating sexual and reproductive behaviour but also it denotes the upholding of male dominance. Ever since the practice of

marriage was introduced in Hinduism, men have been manifested with infallible patriarchal authority making themselves superior and it is clearly stated that manhood remains stronger due to the weakness of womanhood as in patriarchal culture power is equated with masculinity and weakness with femininity. Women are supposed to bear male oppression silently and meekly as the institution of marriage does not permit unhindered growth at any stage of their lives.

On realizing that she holds no value in her husband's busy and materialistic lifestyle, she takes a rebirth. And finally a new Sarita emerges. She junks her acquiescent attitudes. In fury and humiliation she cries out, "*Why can't men limp behind? Why aren't women ever the masters? Why can't a woman at least live her life the same way as a man? Why must only a man have the right to be a man? Does he have one extra sense? A woman can do everything a man can*" (47).

Women are exploited, oppressed and humiliated. They try to revolt against the outdated conventional moral values. For centuries they have been silent- the symbol of oppression, a characteristic of subaltern condition, while speech signifies self-expression and liberation. Women in India are expected to be the mythic models particularly from *the Ramayana* as Sita- the silent sufferer.

As a wife, Sarita understands that she has been cornered by her husband as an inferior sex and she never had any identity in that house which she was thinking hers. She says, "I saw that man I thought my partner was the master of a slave. I have no rights at all in this house. Because I'm a slave. Slaves don't have rights....they must only slave away. Dance to the master's whim. Laugh when he says laugh, cry when he says cry." (46). Sarita has been humiliated, subjugated and cornered just because she was offered in marriage to the hands of Jaisingh and being a wife she has to perform all that which is ordered to her.

Jaisingh is an epitome of chauvinism intrinsic in the modern male who believes him to be a liberal minded. He wants Sarita to be an angel at home who can quench his thirsts and to be a doll who can dance to the music of his keys. Recalling all the injustice done to her, Sarita with a determined tone says,

I'll go on feeling it. But at present I'm going to lock all that up in a corner of my mind and forget about it. But a day will come, Kakasaheb, 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'll pay whatever price I have to pay for it (52).

With the statement of Sarita, Tendulkar goes with the feminists in voicing women's concern, their sensibility and their subjugation as well as their protest. Sarita becomes aware of the fact that her dignity or position in the house is not far away from Kamala's who is not even treated as a human being. It is not necessary to be a meticulous reader to observe the behaviour diversity in the character of Sarita at the end of the play. The opening up of the play depicts a docile housewife, progressively transforming into the central consciousness of feminine ideology. At the end, she is seen reacting to the injustices furnished to the female counterparts in the institution of marriage.

The cry of Sarita is the cry of every Indian woman who has been offered in the institution of nuptials. They in some point of life are made to realize their position and identity. But their culture and tradition makes them stand behind the screen waiting for *the day to come*. They are sacrificed as a living gift by their parents and they sacrifice their own *self* by following the conventional rules. It's the providence of every Indian woman because she is supposed to follow the norms of wedded life in a traditional male dominated middle class society which is reluctant to any social change. It's an implausible fact that as far the conventional customs of marriages are active in this society, the selfish, hypocritical, and brutally ambitious male dominated society shall survive and shall be in progress as Tendulkar affirms to the society through the character Kakasaheb,

"It may be unpleasant, but it's true. If the world is to go on, marriage must go on. And it will only go on like this."

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VIJAY TENDUALKAR'S *GHASHIRAM KOTWAL*: AS A REVENGE TRAGEDY

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**Abstract:**

*Attempt has been made to study the play "Ghashiram Kotwal" as a revenge tragedy. After the two humiliations which Ghashiram has to undergo in the city of Poona, he chose to take revenge for these humiliations. In the tussle of revenge and power game from a victim, Ghashiram became a victimizer. He laid a trap, and in the end he finds himself trapped. Because of this impulse of revenge Ghashiram lost everything, his self-respect, his daughter, his position as Kotwal. And finally he lost his life and met a tragic end. The choice which Ghashiram made turns out to be a very tragic choice.*

**Key Words:** *Revenge, impulse, humiliation, situation, choice, trope, fortune, tragic.*

Generally revenge tragedy refers to the act of doing something harmful in a retaliation of a perceived done to a person or a group. Its action is typically centered upon a leading character's attempt to avenge the murder of loved one, or an act of, humiliation Often this involves the use of complex intrigues, counter-intrigues or disguises and usually some exploration of the morality of revenge. The famous revenge tragedies are: Shakespear's *Hamlet*, Marlow's *The Jew of Malta*, John Webster's *The Duchess of Malfi*, and Cyrill Tourneur's *The Revenger's Tragedy*.

This is basic knowledge and kind of common-sense which Ghashiram lacks. Ghashiram is a central character in the play *Ghashiram Kotwal*, which was written by India's most influential playwright Vijay Tendulkar in the year 1973. In this play Ghashiram encounters this revengeful situation, he becomes the prey of the situation and takes the wrong decision of taking revenge in very brutal manner. Ghashiram Savaldas was a brahmin belongs to a place called Kanauj. Ghashiram came to the city of Poona in search of better fortune. He came to the city along with his wife and young daughter. The arrival of Ghashiram to the city of Poona, with his wife and daughter, is comparable with the entry of Michael Henchard of Thomas Hardy's novel *The Mayor of Casterbridge*. Wherein we see in the very beginning of the first chapter of the novel, the central character Michael Henchard arrives accompanied by his wife Susan and their daughter Elizabeth Jane to the city of Casterbridge in search of a good fortune Both Michael Henchard and Ghashiram gets the tragic end However in the city of Poona Ghashiram was exposed to terrible situations and challenging environment. At first Ghashiram is seen at Gulabi's place, a local dancer, whose dance is popular and everyone likes it so as Nana Phadnavis the Peshwa's chief minister. Ghashiram use to dance with Gulabi, help Gulabi perform her domestic duties. At Gulabi's place Nana Phadnavis was impressed by Ghashiram's helpful gesture and he rewarded Ghashiram with a necklace but Gulabi demands necklace back and Ghashiram refusal to give Gulab provides tension in the text. It is the point where Gulabi got enraged and calls for two-three men, these men beat Ghashiram very badly and thrown him outside. This is the first instance was Ghashiram faced utter humiliation.

The second instance in which of Ghashiram experiences humiliation was when he was accused of being thief. There was a royal ceremony in which all the brahmins of the city of Poona were honored with the royal gifts. Ghashiram as being a brahman was also participated in this ceremony. But as Ghashiram was an outsider the local Brahmins made a trap and charged innocent Ghashiram with theft. The guards came and without any proof of Ghashiram being a thief, they beat him badly. What is more shocking for

Ghashiram is that after beating him, they banished him from the city of Poona. It is these two instances of humiliations which inflamed in Ghashiram the spirit of revenge. Ghashiram falls as prey to the situation and takes the vow:

**Ghashiram:** But I'll come back. I'll come to Poona. I'll show my strength. It will cost you! Your good days are gone! I am a Kanauj Brahman, but I've become a Shudra, a criminal, a useless animal. There is no one to stop me now, to mock me, to make me bend, to cheat me. Now I am a devil. You've made me an animal; I'll be a devil inside. I'll come back like a boar and I'll stay as a devil. I'll make pigs of all of you. I'll make this Poona a kingdom of pigs. Then I'll be Ghashiram again, the son of Savaldas once more" (Samik Bandyopadyay, 376).

The impulse and desire to take revenge was so strong that, that Ghashiram becomes the slave of his passion. In this aggressive passion his is ready do anything, he is ready to go to the very low level. He was completely blind folded by his passion, and it became a kind of matter of self-respect for him to take revenge. Ghashiram bent on in taking revenge to the point that he decided to use his daughter Lalit Gouri to obtain power. After coming to know Nanasahib's weakness that he was a womanizer, Ghashiram made a plan to catch hold Nana, Ghashiram offers his daughter to Nana in exchange of the Kotwali of the city of Poona.

**Ghashiram:** It will not do, Majesty. This is too much. The waters have come up to my chin. Better that we stop before the water rises over my head. Otherwise I will be humiliated all over Poona. What will people say about me? About you, Majesty? Your Majesty goes around in a palanquin. Ghashiram walks on the streets among the people. That won't do. I cannot do anymore. Now that's all I was carried away by my love of your Majesty. If the Peshwa hears about this my hundred years will be over. Whatever has happened has happened flowed into the Ganga. My daughter will not come again to your Highness house. Now I will get her married. Now I will search a bridegroom Nana: But-a few more days after that, we ourselves will see that she is married to one of our men (GK-382).

To this Gashiram did not agree, as his eyes are all set on getting the kotwal position of the city of Poona. Grashiram goes on to stretch Nana as much as possible, and at point Ghashriram even reminds Nanapadavis, there is who Peshwa, who will be watching Nanas activities, as a result if at all Nana wishes to get Lalit Gouri without Ghashiram's permission then Nana might have to face the consequences, as Ghashiram will be taking this matter to Peshwa. At this point Nana is exhausted and he asks that Ghashiram takes only what he needs to do to get Gouri. Now come to know that Ghashiram was not bothered, actually he his least bothered about his daughter Gouri or society, all he wanted was to get 'Katwali' of the city of Poona Ghashiram says: "sir, there is a way people will not talk my daughter will not be humiliated openly in Poona if you make a dear arrangement. All right Sir, to shut people's mouths, makes me the Kotwal of Poona" (GK-383).

Ghashiram thought he was successful in trapping Nana in his trap, but actually Ghashiram has trapped himself. The cunning Nana has his own plan, first to enjoy Ghashiram's young daughter Gouri, and the second was to finish off his enemies by using Ghashiram and silencing the voices which rise against him. With initial hick-ups Nana finally agrees to make Ghashiram the Kotwal of the city of Poona and give Ghashiram the order copy of it. But in making Ghashiram the Kotwal of the city of Poona the wicked Nana Phadnavis has his own evil design says Nana:

Go, Ghashya old bastard. We made you. We made you Kotwal Raise hell if you wish. But you don't know the ways of this Nana. This time, there are two bullets in this gun. With the first one we'll fell your luscious daughter. But with the second we will make the city of Poona dance. Ghashya, child, you're a foreigner. I have put on Poona's back. Why? As a counter check to all those conspirators.

You will not be able to join them; they will never trust you even if you do. Because you are a stranger, you are an outsider. We just raised a dog at our door to the position of the Kotwali!. We are your sole support. Oh, you're a bastard, Gashya your manner will be more arrogant than that of the Chitpavan Brahmans. You will manage the deference nicely, what what you, II create a court-and half! No worry about happen is that our misdeeds will be credited to your account. We do it; our Kotwal pays for it. (He claps his hands) The opportunity comes in the shape of Ghashiram. And that luscious. Peach is at hand to be devoured by Nana Excellent! Yes, Gashya, be Kotawal. This Nana blesses you" (Samik Bandyopadyay 384-385).

Nana's traps which he laid to catch hold both Lalit Gouri daughter of Ghashiram and Ghashiram himself. The intention behind Nana making Ghashiram the Kotwal of the city of Poona was actually a well hatched plan that is to shoot two birds with one bullet. First by making Ghashiram the Kotwal of the city of Poona he will get Ghashiram's daughter Lalit Gouri and secondly through Ghashiram he will be getting rid of his all the enemies. This enables him suppress the voices which are raised against him. Main treachery of Nana rests in the fact that he is not involved directly in any matter but rather he will be using Ghashirm's shoulder to wipe-out his adversaries. It is all along win-win situation for Nana because all the trouble and criticism will be credited into Ghashiram's account.

Ghashriram who was blinded in his quest he was unable to see through this Nana's treachery. For Gharshiram motives are driven only by power matters and nothing else. He was determined to become kotwal of the city of Poona as a result he hardly differentiates between what was good and what was bad for him. By this Ghashiram was on his way of is self-destruction. Nana knew the fact that Gharshiram was an outsider and that the local people of Poona would never going to accept Ghashiram as their master even if Ghashiram is ready accept these people as his own. Eventually in the passion of getting his revenge Ghashiram unknowingly becomes the puppet of Nana's hands.

After getting the Kotwali of the city of Poona, Ghashiram has become a blood-thirsty monster. Ghashiram was so blind by his desire for revenge that he could hardly differentiate between right and wrong.

**Suradhar:** Ghashiram Kotwal started making the round of Poona at night, after the eleven o' clock cannon started ruling in person.

Accosted anyone he me in the streets. Whipped people. Arrested people Demanded peoples permits Imprisoned people. Sued people (Samik-387)

**Sutradhar:** "Days go by night go by

**Others:** His style has changed for the worse.

**Sutradhar:** The way a wounded Tiger becomes addicted to blood.

So the Kotwal has come to love the smell.

**Other:** The Kotwal has acquired a Penchant for human blood.

**Sutradhar :** Satisfaction he will never find, but nothing else delights his mind.

**Others:** Nothing else delights the mind.

**Sutradhar:** The Kotwal for the slightest reason beats and kills in any season.

**Sutradhar:** The mouths of Poona people were dry with fear (Samik 407).

He used to give major punishments even for the smallest offences; people were beaten, humiliated and thrown into jails. As pointed out in the quotation of David Daiches, Ghashiram Savaldas had become the Kotwal (chief of police) Ghashiram and now the victim has become the victimizer, it is nothing but an re-enactment of his past experiences.. Ghashiram continued his cruelty, as earlier he had been accused of theft, and banished from the city of Poona. Now similarly Ghashiram had captured a group of foreign brahmans, accused them with a false charge of stealing fruits from the garden. The Brahmans were locked



in suffocating jail rooms, in which twenty-two prisoner's had died due to suffocation.

After this event people of the city of Poona became furious, Peshwa sent a message to Nana Phadanavis, and the order of Ghashiram's death was issued. The angry and furious mob stoned Ghashiram to death. Due to his desire for revenge Ghashiram became the utter loser, he has lost his self-respect, by providing his young daughter to Nana, what is more saddening is that he found his daughter Gouri dead, she has died while giving birth to Nana's child. Ghashiram had lost his most precious thing Daughter, he lost his position of Kotwal of the city of Poona, and he finally lost his life.

**Nana:** Ladies and gentlemen. Citizens of Poona. A threat to the great city of Poona has been ended today. (The crowd Cheers) A disease has been controlled. The demon Gashya Kotwal, who plagued all of us, has met his death. Everything has happened according to the wishes of the gods. The mercy of the gods is with us always. (He nudges the corps of Ghashiram with his walking stick) Let the corpse of sinful Ghashya rot. Let the wolves and dogs have it. Let the worms have it. Whoever attempts to take away this corpse will be punished. Whoever mourns for him will be hanged. All living relatives of Ghashya Savaldas will be found bound and expelled from the city. We have ordered that from this day forward not a word not a stone relating to the sinner shall survive. We have commanded that there be festivities for three days to mark this happy occasion (GK-415-416).

The above dialogue by Nana after the death sums it up about Ghashiram's tragic end. The hippocratic Nana has taken full advantage of Ghashiram's death by projecting Ghashiram as a threat and an enemy of people of the city of Poona and Nana portrayed himself as protector and savior of Poona. Here Nana as cunning politician creates a devilish image of Ghashiram and by announcing major punishments to those who comes forward for Ghashiram's burial. Nana further wants to exploit this situation. On the other hand it is more tragic situation for close ones of Ghashiram. Because they won't be allowed to offer their condolences. Ghashiram's tragedy continuous even after his death in that he was denied proper burial.

So in his search for revenge and power Ghashiram lost everything he had. He was blind in his ambition that he destroyed others including himself, he was caught in the midst of his own trap. So the ambition of revenge took toll, he was so much involved in revenge game that unknowingly he destroyed himself. As Bacon says "This is certain, that a man that studieth revenge keeps his own wounds green, which otherwise would heal and do well" (Bacon's Essays 10). So the Ghashiram's choice of taking revenge turns out to be a wrong and tragic choice. If Ghashiram had decided not to take any revenge, and tried his fortune somewhere else, the results would have been safe and different. And he could have got success and a better life.

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## REPRESENTATION OF HUMILIATION AND SELF-ASSERTION OF THE DALITS IN URMILA PAWAR'S *THE WEAVE OF MY LIFE: A DALIT WOMAN'S MEMOIRS*

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### **Abstract:**

*While dealing with the three generations of the narrator's family - the narrator herself, her mother and her grandmother - Urmila Pawar's life-story *The Weave of My Life: A Dalit Woman's Memoirs* also depicts the predicament of the entire Mahar community of Maharashtra. The most important concern of the book is the sad plight of the Dalit women who are doubly marginalised both as Dalit and as female. Although many Dalit women actively participated in the anti-caste movements, their contributions are never acknowledged. One meaning of the titular word "Aaydan" is weapon. The book provides the space for the representation of the exploitations of Dalit women and acts as a weapon to raise a voice of protest against such injustices through making the Dalit women aware of their exploitations and subjugation in every field of life, empowering them with a sense of their self-respect, self-confidence and solidarity among them, and thus helping to grow in them a sense of their distinct identity as Dalit women based on their unique subject position.*

**Keywords:** Caste, gender, subaltern, untouchability, mainstream feminism, brahminical ideology, hegemony, dalit feminism, resistance, identity formation.

### **Introduction**

Urmila Pawar is one of the very few Dalit women who took to writing on the issues related to the Dalit females. Born in the Konkan region of Maharashtra in a Mahar family, she was the first woman from the Konkan region to have obtained a Master of Arts degree. She did her M.A. in Marathi literature while working in the State Government Public Works Department. She was a social activist working throughout her life in the interest of the Dalits in general and the Dalit women in particular. She is popular as a short story writer. Her stories mainly seek to expose the strategic exploitations of Dalit women by both their families, communities and the upper caste people. Her short story "Kavach", after being included in the curriculum of a university, created much furore because of its frank and bold exposure of the sexual exploitation of Dalit women by the upper caste people. Her book *Mauritius: A Journey* deals with the condition of the people taken away from India to work as sugarcane labourers-whether or not caste based discriminations of the Indian society is still maintained among them. Her book *We Also Made History: Women in the Ambedkarite Movement*, co-authored by Meenakshi Moon, is a kind of re-writing of history from the grass roots, focusing on the significant contributions of the women in the movement which has so far been ignored and forgotten. However, she is most widely acclaimed for her autobiography entitled *Aaydan* (2003). The book was translated into English as *The Weave of My Life: A Dalit Woman's Memoirs* by Maya Pandit in 2008. She was awarded Laxmibai Tilak Award for *Aaydan*, considered to be the best published autobiography, by the Maharashtra Sahitya Parishad.

*The Weave of My Life* depicts the condition of the Mahars, a Dalit community, exploited by the upper castes. The book deals with the three generations of the narrator's family (the narrator herself, her mother and her grandmother) their lives of humiliation and oppression. It maps the arduous journey of the narrator from a small town to a big metropolitan city to become one of its most eminent writers and

intellectuals. While dealing with the narrator's family, it also gives a realistic representation of the entire community, their harsh existence and endless struggle for survival in the face of various types of opposition from the upper castes. Since the focus of her book is the Dalit people of her community, Pawar clearly states in her Preface to the book what she means by the word *Dalit*: "Dalit means people who have been oppressed by a repressive social system, and challenge the oppression from a scientific, rational and humanitarian perspective" (Pawar xii). So, two things about the Dalits come out of this definition: first, they are oppressed, and second, they also fight against their oppressors. Quite in keeping with this definition of the word *Dalit*, *The Weave of My Life* also represents not only the suffering and pathetic condition of the Dalits but also how they resist and protest against their exploiters and assert their own identity.

However, the most important aspect of *The Weave of My Life* is the representation of the multidimensional exploitations and hapless suffering of the Dalit women who were doubly marginalised both as Dalits and as women. They were exploited both inside the house and outside. Although many of them had played active role in the caste movements, their contributions were never acknowledged. They were always pushed to the margin in their own families and communities. The Leftist movement, the traditional Feminist studies which is Brahminical Feminism, and the caste movements had ignored the condition and position of Dalit women. But both Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar and Mahatma Phule had placed a considerable emphasis on the gender issues within the caste issues. Phule's Sarvajanik Satyadharma propagated the idea of a non-hierarchical relation between the males and the females, also stressing on the role of education of the women. Ambedkar also highlighted the intrinsic link between caste and gender. As Maya Pandit in her Introduction to Pawar's memoirs said:

He argued that castes could not maintain their 'purity' unless rigid controls were obtained over women's sexuality, thus the link between endogamous marriages and women's subordinate status was clearly formulated in his theory of the caste system. He had traced the origin of many horrifying customs such as sati, the upper caste widow's inferior status and restrictions on her remarriage, the institution of child marriage and argued that women were the gateway to caste (Pawar xxiii).

And yet the traditional feminism remained oblivious of this crucial link between caste and gender. They mainly dealt with the problems of the upper and upper middle class women who had no experience of the caste based discriminations. In other words, the mainstream feminism was parochial in its approach to the gender issues. Maya Pandit very precisely brings out the limitations of the mainstream feminism in her following observation:

The awareness of Dalit women's issues was submerged under the logic of universal sisterhood propagated by the feminist movement. It was believed that caste identities could be overcome by the larger identities of universal sisterhood. But the feminists did not have a theoretical apparatus to deal with the issues of caste. Their use of gender as a category of analysis was devoid of caste concerns and therefore it failed to account for the harsh realities of millions of Dalits and especially Dalit women, and sometimes were even devoid of class concerns (Pawar xxiv).

As a reaction to the traditional feminism's Brahminical alliance there emerged what is called Dalit feminism in the early nineties. It posed serious challenge to the mainstream feminism, pointing to its complicity with the Brahminical ideology which is hegemonic to the core. It tried to re-trace the forgotten link between caste and gender, so strongly articulated by Ambedkar and Phule. Their central focus was on the double marginalisation of the Dalit females, how they were the 'others' within the 'others'. According to Baby Kamble, "If the Mahar community is the 'other' for the Brahmins, Mahar women become the 'other' for the Mahar men" (Kamble xv). In the words of Sharmila Rege, "In the early nineties, dalit feminist articulations, especially on the issue of quotas within quotas, challenged the conceptions of 'genderless

caste' and 'casteless gender'" (Rege 3). Regarding the integration of the gender issues with caste and class issues under the impact of the reservation policy for the women, Mary John said:

The revival of reservations for women in the 1990s after Mandal, Ayodhya and globalisation offers us the chance to conceive of alternate modernities. This is nothing less than an opportunity to link rather than oppose women's rights to the rights based on caste, class or minority status in the broader context of a common democratic struggle (John 3829).

Regarding the issue of representation, the subject position of the person who represents is very crucial because his/her way of perceiving reality, which precedes the act of representation, depends on the perceiver's position. Going by this line of argument, Dalit women often dismiss the representation of the Dalit women by the non-Dalit women on the ground of its lesser amount of authenticity. They resent about not only the misrepresentation of their reality but also their frequent absence in the works of the non-Dalit writers and activists. Gopal Guru in his article "Dalit Women Talk Differently" explains this point:

Thus beneath the call for women's solidarity the identity of the dalit woman as 'dalit' gets whitewashed and allows a 'non-dalit' woman to speak on her behalf. It is against this background that dalit women have of late protested against their 'guest appearances' in a text or a speech of a non-dalit woman and instead organized on their own terms. They consider the feminist theory developed by non-dalit women as unauthentic since it does not capture their reality (Guru 82-83).

The title of the book is quite significant. It has a layered meaning. Literally, the word 'Aaydan' refers to the things which are made from bamboo. 'Awata' is a synonymous word. Various types of things to be used daily like baskets, containers and so on were generally made using bamboo as their material before the prevalence of plastic bags. Although, as the narrator informs the readers in her prefatorial notes to the text, the job of weaving baskets from bamboo was traditionally assigned to the nomadic tribes like the Burud, the Mahars earned by this job in the Konkan region. The narrator gives the example of her mother who run their family by earning through her ceaseless act of weaving. Sitting under a tree in the courtyard, her mother would go on weaving till late at night. She wove different kinds of cane things like big baskets, small baskets with closed tops, baskets for locking in hens, small baskets for collecting flowers, cradles, etc. The word 'Aaydan' also means 'utensil' and 'weapon'. The act of weaving is the weapon or means of survival of so many poor Dalit women. On a metaphorical plane, the narrator relates 'weaving' and 'writing'. She forges a connection between her mother's act of weaving from bamboo and her act of writing. She says, "My mother used to weave *Aaydans*. I find that her act of weaving and my act of writing are organically linked. The weave is similar. It is the weave of pain, suffering and agony that links us" (Pawar x). From another point of view it can be said that both of them took refuge in the act of weaving and writing as a 'weapon' or means to escape their agonies of losing their respective child. So the narrator writes:

I was estranged from her. But now the agony of the loss of a child brought us together once again. She had drowned her grief in endlessly weaving aaydans. I could see her hands constantly flying over the weave. For me writing was the only solace. Who knows what I was writing, whether it was of any worth. But that was the only way in which I could keep the agony at bay (Pawar 304).

### **Representation of Humiliation**

Like other Dalit autobiographies, in *The Weave of My Life* the issue of untouchability occupies an important place. Pawar specifically focuses on the ludicrous and the violent in the practice of untouchability. The upper-caste people considered it defiling to get touched by the Mahars. So, the priest who was called to come to the Maharwada to perform worship and the rituals of marriage would climb a tree at the fringe of the Mahar locality from where he would perform his task. The priest was so much conscious to avoid any kind of contact from the lower caste people that he would not even directly accept



his payment. He would at first sprinkle some holy water on the coins to remove the pollution. He also would not himself carry other things like rice, coconuts, and so on, offered to him. His servant would do that task. Such antics of the priest regarding the maintenance of untouchability adds some ludicrous elements to the practice of the inhuman caste system. It is not only the priests but also the teachers at the school who practised untouchability. They taught the Mahar children and checked their slates from a distance. They were also conscious not to touch the Dalit students even at the time of punishing them. Rather they would throw stones at those students to hit them as punishment for their mistakes. Such a cruel behaviour of the teachers exemplifies the violent in the practice of untouchability. All these had really an adverse impact of the Dalit students. They used to lose interest in learning and play truant.

The Mahars were also humiliated through certain ritualistic exploitations and tortures on them as scapegoat. For example, although the entire laborious task of carrying the trees and making them stand in front of the Shambhu temple was performed by the Mahars on the day of Holy, they were not only excluded from the celebration but also cursed by the upper castes who would pray to divert all the disasters they feared to face in their lives to the Mahars. Again on another occasion the narrator was utterly shocked to discover how in the name of an age-old sacrificial ritual for the well-being of the village a flagrant violation of human dignity took place: "An upper caste man would inflict a big wound on a Mahar man's back and his wife had to cover the wound with some cloth and go on walking around, howling!" (Pawar 86). It was such injustices and violation of human dignity sanctioned within Hinduism that led the subaltern people to religious conversion to Buddhism.

The condition of the rural Dalit women was really too pathetic. They had to manage all the domestic chores and at the same time went to work outside with their menfolk. Whereas the men could rest after returning home, the women had to begin a fresh course of work after returning home. The women did not have the luxury of repose that the men did have. Even after doing such heavy works the women had no voice in the home, nor outside too. Urmila Pawar's description of the lives of excessive labour and extreme suffering of the Dalit women bears much similarity with that in Bama's *Karukku* and *Sangati* because what Pawar represented in her autobiography regarding the condition of the Dalit women is not an isolated and exceptional case but a true picture of the situation of the Dalit women throughout India. The instances of wife beating as documented by Urmila Pawar are also to be found in Bama's autobiography. For example, Pawar's description on the issue of wife beating and the indifference of the people around is reminiscent of the brutal physical tortures inflicted by a man named Uudan on his wife in Bama's *Karukku*: "...everyday he'd drag his wife by the hair to the community hall and beat her up as if she were an animal, with his belt" (Bama, *Karukku* 61). Again in *Sangati* Bama elaborately talks about the exploitations of the Dalit women in every field of life:

The position of women is both pitiful and humiliating, really. In the fields they have to escape from upper-caste men's molestations. At church they must lick the priest's shoes and be his slaves while he threatens them with tales of God, Heaven, and Hell. Even when they go to their own homes, before they have had a chance to cook some kanji or lie down and rest a little, they have to submit themselves to their husbands' torment (Bama, *Sangati* 35).

The patriarchal Dalit society used different yardstick to judge a similar case for men and women. A man could have as many extramarital affairs as he liked. There was nobody to question him or no law to punish him. But if a woman was just suspected and not even proved to have such affair, she would be beaten black and blue by her husband and in-laws and publicly humiliated and punished before the village jury. Even the women themselves, being fed with the patriarchal ideology, would take active role to inflict brutal torment on the victim. The narrator recalls one incident relating to a widow who was found to be pregnant. Although everybody knew the man who was responsible for this, nobody raised a finger at him. The widow was held solely responsible and hence the entire punishment was put on her:

The village ordered her to abort the baby. She did not listen to them. So she was judged



before nine villages and punished in keeping with their verdict. She was made to stand leaning forward, and women kicked her from behind till the child was aborted. The villagers felt this was a valiant act of bravery. They felt proud that they had protected the villages' honour! (Pawar 156)

The case exemplifies how patriarchy works through women as women appropriate male role, imitating men's cruel ways to women.

### **Representation of Self-Assertion**

Besides depicting the abject humiliations of the Dalits, *The Weave of My Life* also documents the sparks of resistance and moments of self-assertion among the Dalits in general and the Dalit females in particular against their otherisation and exploitations. One remarkable instance of Dalit assertion takes place as early as the time of one of the narrator's ancestors Hari who, as a protest against the practice of untouchability, usurped the post of a Brahmin priest through his command of Sanskrit and decided to conduct all the rituals by themselves. This was, as the narrator thinks, the result of the influence of Mahatma Jotiba Phule's Satyashodhak movement in 1873 because Phule had an immense contribution in delivering the Dalits from the clutches of the Brahmin priests by simplifying the rituals to the point of getting performed unaided by a Brahmin priest. Another case of articulation of the self-respect on behalf of the subaltern took place through the narrator's father's strong protest against the humiliating practice of collecting joothan or the leftover foods from the upper caste households--an act reminiscent of the similar kind of protest of Omprakash Valmiki's father against the shameful custom of accepting 'salaam': "My son will not go salaaming" (Valmiki 33). Such display of boldness, self-respect and self-assertion was the result of the influence of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar who brought a significant transformation in the situation of the Dalits by encouraging them to get converted to Buddhism and promoting education as the crucial means of uplift for the subaltern people. The text also shows the literary and political activities of the narrator whose entire life was devoted to the betterment of her community in general and more specifically the women of her community. She was an activist with her own organization called Maitrini whose sole aim was to find out the root causes of the suffering of the Dalits and the Dalit women, removing those causes, solving problems, helping the subaltern people raise in rebellion against their oppressors and construct their distinct identity.

One of the significant aspects of the text is the narrator's protest in various ways against gender biases in the society. In her personal life also she had to fight against the male chauvinism of her husband who wanted to see her in the traditional role of a woman always attending upon her husband and children inside the four walls of the household. However, the narrator did not submit to his narrow mentality. She strongly protested and became quite outspoken in proving her indispensable role in the family, the way she simultaneously managed her family, her job and her studies and especially how she was particularly careful about not letting her public affairs make her neglect her private life. She also did not hesitate to launch a counterattack on her husband by diverting to him the very same charges that he put against herself: "Instead of going to the bar, why don't you come home early and pay some attention to their studies? That would be far better. Besides, whatever I study, I do it in my spare time! Why should you object to it?" (Pawar 241).

One of her most significant projects was to write a book on the role of women in the Ambedkarite movement. Such a work was unprecedented. There were ample writings on Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar and his movement in the interest of the Dalits. But whatever was written on such issues, the focus everywhere was invariably on the participation of men in the movement. Although Ambedkar's biography had clearly mentioned the significant role played by many Dalit women to make the Ambedkarite movement more effective and successful, the later writers remained totally oblivious of this particular aspect of the movement. With the help of Mr. and Mrs. Meenakshi Moon, the narrator began to hunt many libraries and search many archives. Since the archival materials were scanty, she mainly depended on interviews she

took of those women who took part in the Ambedkarite movement. The interviews revealed how such women had suffered and sacrificed personal happiness to participate in the movement. Urmila Pawar's book *We Also Made History: Women in the Ambedkarite Movement*, co-authored with Meenakshi Moon, attempts to bring in the limelight this unacknowledged and forgotten history of the Dalit women. The authors in their prefatorial note to the book clearly state their purpose of writing such a book:

The purpose of doing all this was to try and form a picture of the neglected, underrated woman activist of the Ambedkar movement: her capability, the history she had made in the most adverse circumstances, the change that took place in her because of that history, the way she was shaped and influenced, her longing for education and her deep feeling for the importance of education, her ethical integrity, her courage, and her development as an individual. We wanted to bring her contribution to public view (Pawar and Moon 41).

Subversion is often used as a tool of identity formation. Just as the Dalit writers often seek to construct their distinct identity by their deconstructive approach to certain Hindu myths like that of Dronacharya and Ekalavya, many of them also attempt to form their identity in positive terms by subverting the accepted connotations of certain cultural symbols of the Dalits. To give a concrete example, pig is generally associated with dirt and filth and the Dalits' keeping of pigs in the houses makes them utterly filthy and hence untouchable in the eyes of the upper caste people. But certain Dalit writers subtly subvert the negative connotation of the pig by attributing to it a new connotation in positive terms and thus redefining their own identity also in positive and assertive terms. According to Sarah Beth, "Functioning as a counter-symbol, the image of the pig is re-interpreted in Dalit autobiographical narratives from an object of filth and uncultured practices to a symbol of prosperity, celebration and most importantly, a separate and unique cultural tradition of the Dalit community" (Beth 547). Urmila Pawar in her autobiography also gives a new interpretation to the symbolism of pig to bring in the limelight what Sara Beth calls, as already cited, "a separate and unique cultural tradition of the Dalit community." She reinterprets the pig in devotional terms, giving it a mythological dimension and transforming what is traditionally considered to be profane to something sacred. In their community the pig was considered to be a deity and so its presence in a household increased the social respectability of that family. That a symbol traditionally associated with filth assumes a holy and auspicious connotation is unequivocally brought out in the following lines from the text:

Those who had the pig as their family deity were respected tremendously. The story went that Lord Shankar had once taken the form of the pig to save somebody from our caste. So it was an unwritten rule that pigs could never be killed. Some people would not even utter the word. God knows why. But it was something similar to the Muslims never doing so (Pawar 57-58).

Thus exploiting the subversive potential of certain cultural symbols of the Dalits, the Dalit writers seek to give a positive and self-assertive dimension to their own identity in stark contrast to the negative dimension of their identity based on a negative connotation of the Dalit cultural symbols.

### **Conclusion**

Like Bama's *Sangati: Events* which, as the title indicates, strings together a series of events of suffering, struggle and resistance in the daily lives of the women of the Paraiya community of Tamilnadu, Urmila Pawar's *The Weave of My Life* is also constituted of a series of events. The book is a kind of Aaydan, as its title indicates, made by the weaving of several events in the day-to-day lives of the Dalit women of the Mahar community of Maharashtra. One meaning of Aaydan is weapon. The book is not merely a personal life-story. But, more importantly, it provides a space for the representation of the daily sufferings and exploitations of the Dalit women by both their own men and the society at large and acts as a weapon, an instrument, to raise a voice of protest against such injustices through making the Dalit women aware of their exploitations and subordination in every field of life, empowering them with a sense of their self-

respect, self-confidence and solidarity among them, and thus helping to grow in them a sense of their distinct identity as Dalit women based on their unique subject position.

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07

## MAPPING DIASPORA AT THE CROSSROADS: READING MOHSIN HAMID'S *EXIT WEST*

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### **Abstract:**

*The emerging dimensions of diaspora in the contemporary global and cultural scenario have found a new space with respect to mobility of people to different places and nations. Juan Flores points out the present scenario of the trans-nation(s) and calls it “new diaspora”. This new transnational sensibility on the one hand addresses migration as a more globalised experience but on the other hand technological advancements are also creating a kind of challenge for diaspora. Our conventional understanding of diaspora has been challenged. Transnationalism as a new promising face of diaspora allows a frequent mobility and offers a virtual arrangement to gratify diasporic emotions which has its own pitfalls. Theoretically it conceptualizes a new appearance of identity in a multicultural society but this also seems like a cosmopolitan fallacy in Milan Kundera's words. This multi-cultural frame is a single sided face of society. While discussing globalization and blending it with local, one may find this picture incomplete. Be it inter or intra national migration, these spaces can be identified with only some big and metropolitan cities or developed Western countries. Also, it raises a question that though technology has become a helping hand for survival in a different land for those who can afford it but, does it really address the refugee issues or nomad migration in the rest of the world?*

**Key Words:** *Diaspora, Transnationalism, globalization, cosmopolitan.*

The emerging dimensions of diaspora known as “Transnationalism” in the contemporary global and cultural scenario have found a new space with respect to the mobility of people to different places and nations. Juan Flores specifies the present scenario of the trans-nation(s) and calls it “new diaspora”. But as the world experiences a big number of displaced people on record and debates rage around that who is worthy enough to open doors for, challenges are also observed with new possibilities. This paper attempts to have an understanding of the 'new transnational space and sensibility' while exploring Mohsin Hamid's novel *Exit West*. The novel features human migration, transformations, nativism, and immigrant threats and envisions the world as a transnational space with porous borders.

Diaspora as an old notion is constituted out of migration experiences. It centers upon 'Home'/ 'Homeland', the belonging and exile where the sense of loss is continued along with seeking plantations in a host land. A new realization that diasporas are not fixed state of social being but about processes which begin and develop over time lead us to a relatively new idea transnationalism that helps us to organize an understanding of nations, migration and identity in today's global world. Suman Gupta quotes Anthony Giddens's definition of globalization as “the intensification of worldwide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa”. Stanley J. Tambiah explains that this era of globalization concerns the diaspora studies with respect to economic migration and it pays attention to transnational movements for various reasons: in search of employment in the more prosperous industrializing countries as a guest worker or as immigrant or as a result of forced displacement of people. The term is exclusively applied to the post 1990s international migration, shows people located at multiple places and engaged in various activities. Transnational community encompasses frequent cross border mobility. Today, people have been flowing



between the different points of the migration and they maintain parallel lives in two or more nations-states. It claims to blur the line between home and exile with a frequent visit to home and host countries.

In the twentieth century, through air travel more people live transnational life and the technological component makes the transmission and circulation of the transnational experiences more immediate. More often than in the past modern has meant of transportation to move back and forth between places. But air travel might have cut short the time, not the distance. Home visits are numbered for an ordinary. Similarly, communication technologies have created a whole range of virtual emotions and a deep diasporic insight has only found a shelter with the available options. This indicates diaspora passing through a different phase and though it is not always easy to make a clear distinction between diaspora and transnationalism, a few shifts can be marked and questioned as well. Transnationalism as suggested is an attempt to move away from studying migration as a linear and assimilation process and transnational migration theories have often defined transnational studies as those which cross 'multiple national borders' (Ramji 2006; 646).

Migrant literature is literature by authors whose work does not really belong to a specific national literature or at least they have often been so treated although there are signs of a change in their approach. Migrant writers and bicultural writers speak from a place between cultures. They give a foreign voice to local material and historically they have made seminal contribution to both the formal inventive and the historical-descriptive aspect of literature. Contemporary transnationalism presents new circumstances among the new migrant groups and therefore definitely needs a new approach. The contemporary migrant writers share the experience of globalization as a process of evolving diaspora but are not without doubt. They see a flip side of the coin.

To this context, Mohsin Hamid's novel *Exit West*, shortlisted for the 2017 Man Booker Prize, can be observed for its themes of refugee crisis and a clear border society. Hamid is a British Pakistani author who associates himself with transnational literature and calls himself a 'multi-territorialized'. Hamid divides his time between Pakistan and abroad; lives between Lahore, New York, London, Italy and Greece which to him is carrying a sense of belonging to multi-territories.

The narrative is about a young couple, Saeed and Nadia, who live in an unnamed city undergoing civil war between the national government and militants and finally have to flee, using a system of fictitious doors, which lead to different locations around the globe. While they journey from one portal to another, from the Greek island of Mykonos, to London, to Marin, California, their love, like their homeland, is challenged by the ordeal of refugee hood and civil war. It's a novel that imagines a world where people can suddenly move beyond their borders but the novel does not hesitate to reveal another ground reality that borders too are seen as places of brutality and under threat. At one point Hamid expresses "when we migrate, we murder from our lives those we leave behind" (*Exit West*, 94) While passing through the doors where in the process of feeling variously relieved, frightened, outraged and threatened, they plunge more deeply into the questions of identity and nationhood. "In this group [on the island]," Hamid says, "everyone was foreigner, and so, in a sense, no one was" (*EW*, 100) preparing us for an ideal of integration that his characters find variously attractive and difficult to achieve. When they leave the island by passing through another door to Germany, and then another that leads them to London, they enter a city that is rapidly "filling up with [the] tents and rough shelters" of other refugees, where every form of homogeneity is perceived to be under threat. A major part of Hamid's novel shows how profoundly social damage will injure private lives by hampering the ability to construct any sort of life outside their sphere of influence. As Saeed and Nadia try to develop their own true selves, external pressures underline their different attitudes to sex, to worship, to how they view their homeland.

Often transnational literature is concerned with evading an implicit border of belonging. And very often it concerns the question: Does one have the right to be where one is or where one wishes to be? But a similar question is that whether an idea of a nation without borders can be executed? The doors in this



novel, serve an imagined space without borders, but the contemporary world directly confronts the refugee problems. While these doors lead a safe haven for immigrants, they are also nightmare for natives. In fact, these doors can open anywhere are considered, “a major global crisis”. This makes the novel timely. Especially for the West after the US Presidential election, who seems to have discovered the treachery of borders and thinking of closing doors for 'others'? The title of the novel exhibits this ambiguity of time that whether Exit to West or Exit from West? Peter Morey states that “conditions for alienation and active Islamophobic discrimination after 9/11, linked to global economic inequality and exploitation”. The novel notices the challenges faced in term of negotiating the place.

*Exit West* at once strongly evokes contemporary condition of being a refugee and their life during wartime. As Hamid catalogues, “regions pulling away from regions and cities pulling away from hinterlands, and it seemed that as everyone was coming together everyone was also moving apart. Without borders nations appeared to be becoming somewhat illusory and people were questioning what role they had to play... the nation was like a person with multiple personalities...whose skin appeared to be dissolving as they swam in a soup full of other people whose skin were likewise dissolving” (*EW*, 155).

Saeed and Nadia's journey portrays a constant fear of eviction given that militants are always inching closer, using the same doors that the refugees are taking, and the law enforcement forces in the West, which generally support the nativists, are coming to clear migrant ghettos. The ideas of nativism and purity threaten the existence of immigrants and Hamid's *Exit West* depicts refugee crisis and the rise of nativism. Hamid's own status as a cosmopolitan writer results into a particular sense of self-consciousness at work. With a constant influx of refugees, "Exit West's" London gets divided: dark London inhabited by refugees and light London inhabited by Brits. The locals are further divided: nativists "advocating wholesale slaughter" of refugees to "reclaim Britain for Britain" and "volunteers delivering food and medicine" to new arrivals. Saeed and Nadia heard it said that native extremists were forming their own groups with a support from the authorities. All that brought to make a final decision for Saeed and Nadia: whether to stay or to go. In the wake of such circumstances theorists have to give a fresh look to the elasticity of societies and their self-imagining as transcending national boundaries in global frameworks. This question of treating migrants as 'other' has been addressed by Lion P. who analyses “the post 9/11 fiction by Rushdie, Kunzru, Monika Ali and Hamid acknowledges existence of other people, culture societies and create alternatives to Western narcissism and American imperialism that have appeared to dominate post 9/11 mainstream discourse”. In light of this argument the present text also thinks upon the power relations between terrorism and counterterrorism which results in to anti-immigration movement, ethnic cleansing and global capitalism.

Although, the novel is an encouragement to the world to put aside its fears of migrants and to open its arms to the right of unhindered movement of peoples, one cannot overlook irony of migration. The flow of migration is from low to high. Means, all migration is westward or from developing to developed countries. The post-colonial nations are adopting ideologies or social models from the western world despite resolving their own basic problems and that is why the international migration is rapidly increasing towards the west. The natives of the host countries are lacking a mutual harmony. Such emerging realities reveal the plight of imagining transnational spaces. Crossing over the national boundaries in last two centuries contributed to the creation of large number of people “out of place” but it is still in need of more human interaction and making transnational social fields. Victor Roudometof states that people from different ethnic groups and languages construct a larger transnational social structure and it has become a routine practice with the help of technological access but then we have some instances like Rohingya issues (mass migration) or Baloch diaspora which make us think again. It is said that transnational networks are even developed among people who have not necessarily stepped out their respective nation borders but they are exposed to other cultures through media, tourists, immigrants or commercial cultural establishments in their locality like McDonalds, Subway, but again these are urban locations.

Transnational cosmopolitanism has a troubled relationship. Milan Kundera does not approve these terms as a universal phenomenon. He finds them class and region oriented and calls it a 'cosmopolitan fallacy'. Illegal migration especially in case of refugees is a challenge for Transnationalism. Cosmopolitanism in its current form is not a very viable picture for postcolonial nations and it captures a few selected urban spaces in developing countries; so the very idea itself seems a fancy. Thus, the theory of transnational spaces is ideal to imagine a shared-common-social field for all but as soon as it happens to reality, there are equal number of arguments exist on an individual's identity in the context of minorities discourses or tribal issues or marginality discussions. In order to secure an individual 'self', identity, it always knocks doors of ethnicity. It has further created certain challenges to conceptualize the term when observed at the flip of the coin. Diaspora can be re-imagined in terms of home and identity with the coming advancement of communicative technology, but it has shaken our conventional feeling of nostalgia and belongingness. A kind of superficiality of diasporic sensibility has been emerged as a result of this new virtual world. There is one question on the return diaspora too. Whether the migrants really want to return from their prosperous host lands to the homeland? Probably no. and there 'homing desire' seems mere a leisurely expression to construct a diasporic identity. Avtar Brah also points out it as 'a site for diaspora identity politics'.

Though, Hamid has an optimistic approach to migrants revealing that "...everyone migrates, even if we stay in the same houses our whole lives" (209) and the novel arrives at the maxim, "We are all migrants through time." It is a constant reminder that everything is transitional or on the move and the world has yet to step through doors and embrace differences.

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## JOURNEY OF THE BLACKS IN JAZZ

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### **Abstract:**

*The journey of the Afro - Americans from the first day of slavery to the time when were declared free, the black writers have recorded in all the literary forms. It is clear by now that history of black servitude has received a great impact on the present state of affairs as far as the African - Americans are concerned. The journey of slavery of the black ancestors has made the fates of the present Afro-Americans suffer the consequences. All the characters in Jazz have got these imprints in one form or the other.*

**Key Words:** *Slavery, Jazz Music, Harlem Renaissance.*

### **Introduction**

The title and the content of the paper is a metaphor which represents the course of events as a journey from the beginning to the end with various and varied events that affect the characters. The theme of the paper is to strengthen the identity of the African-Americans and to heal the past wounds of their ancestors and forefathers. Morrison aimed at eradicating the racial and colour disparity. The role of jazz in the life of the black people was that of a remedy for the lack of identification of the black talent and calibre. In the post-war American society, jazz music had an influential effect in the evolvement of the rights of the blacks in America. Its development brought revolution which confirmed the firm stance of the Afro-Americans. The black Americans did not abide by the decorum which is a prerequisite of the American society.

Although rebellion against the segregation of black people existed as early as the 1930's, it was not until after WW2 that black equality movements began to surface all around America. Ultimately, WW2 proved two things. The first one being black and white men had to work together to achieve greater success. The second one being black soldiers were as efficient as their white comrades. Afro-Americans abroad or at home began to use the "Double V" sign throughout the war. The first "V" indicating victory against the enemy abroad and the second one meaning victory against the enemy at home: racism.

The most common theme that unites most of Morrison's novels is the effects of slavery on African-Americans' with the focus on African American point of view. In an interview in 2003 on National Public Radio, Morrison said she wants to write from a "strong historical and cultural base in describing what impacts people, especially, maybe exclusively, African Americans."

*Jazz* is a composition that expresses chromatic experiences of the musician. The same is the case with the characters of *Jazz*. Take for instance Alice Manfred, aunt of Dorcas, who looks at the world as being risky and the reason is that what know what they do; they are vicious creatures. Even then, her protégé does not reveal of her love affair with Joe. Every character has to say something in the journey of life. The events which he comes across in his life teach him lessons and making him feel repented. For instance, Joe Trace's experiences are that bring him out safe from the state of depression. He patches up the broken relationship with Violet. One of the morals *Jazz* teaches us is that good people may be bad at times. One cannot believe one's inner drive that sends one astray. Morrison seems to convey that repentance is the only way out to rectify our misdeeds. Morrison semantically links the past slavery of the black to the frustration and dejection of the present. The common element that Morrison takes to weave the strands of his novels is that of slavery of the black people and its journey until their emancipation.

### ***Jazz music and Journey of the Black People***

Morrison's *Jazz* breaks the stereotype depiction of the black men and women. Her male characters are more or less, weak and fickle minded while the female roles are portrayed as better than their male counterpart. They are self-conscious and are able to comprehend the need of the hour but they are doubly exploited by their own men and also by the white masters. At this juncture, it is fit to mention that her women are either hyper-sexual or soft-natured rational beings. In the story of *Jazz*, the two roles of Violet and Dorcas are opposite poles.

*Jazz* gives the idea of the fact that life is an unceasing improvisation on the unexpected, uncalled-for and uninvited events and anecdotes. The composition is complex but with a systematic format and form. *Jazz* is a journey from the beginning of slavery to its abolition. The term Jazz may refer to America which is an amalgamation of various and varied things and people with different races, colours and classes. It is an intricate and eccentric blend of the same and the contrast features and traits. America is life Jazz Music which has multifarious colours and sentiments in its composition. Journey of the Africans from the arrival of the first group of slaves in America to the time when they got freedom has witnessed innumerable ups and downs, in their struggle for survival in America. In the words of Carmen Gillespie:

The United States is many things, but is often conceptualized as a coming together of opposites, of the synthesis of urban and rural, black and white, rich and poor, male and female and young and old. All of these polarities combine in a unique formulation that creates the sound, the look, and the character of the country known as the United States in other words, *Jazz*. In *Jazz*, Toni Morrison examines this definition in America by creating characters that can provide access to the experience of what it means to live in a space that is defined by the idea of opposition.

In the light of the above definition of America, the journey of the blacks has its own significance and contribution to the history of America. Morrison delineates the above characteristics in her novel *Jazz*. The novel proceeds in a slow and gradual manner as if its acceleration is recorded like a musical composition. The reader of the novel *Jazz* becomes like the needle on a record player, gently caressing the surface of the words in order to discern the meaning of the text as it moves slowly towards the center, all the while revealing more and more pieces, notes of the entire score of the novel.

During the stay of the black people with the whites, they faced unbearable and humiliating happenings and events. These painful and pugnacious elements in the course of the life of the African-Americans have taught them unforgettable and inexplicable lessons. The past of their parents and grandparents has left indelible imprints on the black minds. After all, they could resolve the crises and were able to overcome the threats. Joe and Violet are the best characters that proved the black potential in *Jazz*.

In *Jazz*, Violet Trace failed to adjust herself to the environment in Harlem and they moved to the South. She shifted to another place which is urbanized. Her journey can be conveniently classified into three stages:

1. Journey to Harlem in search of Individual Identity. This extent until the death of Dorcas who was the beloved of her husband, Joe Trace.
2. From the time when the aunt of Dorcas named Alice met Violet until Violet was relieved of the pangs of her fate because of the illicit entry of Dorcas.
3. When a friend of Dorcas called Felice came on the scene to set everything right until Violet was empowered.

The above three situations mean that transformation of a personality is possible if it is desired and intended. Morrison states the reality. Hell's twins, slavery and silence, came later. Still you were like no other. Not because you suffered more or longer, but because of what you knew and did before, during, and following that suffering. No one knew your weight until you left them to carry their own. But you knew. You said,



“Excuse me, am I in the way?” knowing all the while that you were the way. You had this canny ability to shape an untenable reality, mold it, sing it, and reduce it to its manageable, transforming essence, which is a knowing so deep it's like a secret. In your silence, enforced or chosen, lay not only eloquence but discourse so devastating that “civilization” could not risk engaging in it lest it lose the ground it stomped.

### ***Harlem Renaissance(1917-35) and Jazz***

At this juncture, it is apt to know the salient and succinct features of Harlem Renaissance to comprehend all the aspects that affected the lives of the people and literature, in the context and background of Toni Morrison's novel *Jazz* because the shadow of Harlem Renaissance has been found in *Jazz*. *Jazz* shadows the historical elements of Harlem Renaissance. It represents the Negro Movement. Migration of the Afro-Americans is the chief cause of the Movement. It so happened that African-Americans went in search of jobs so that they could shun slavery and live in a peaceful and independent atmosphere. They moved from the rural to the urban areas. Soon after the First World War, they had shifted their stay to the cities like New York and Paris.

Another nomenclature of this movement is '*Negro Renaissance*'. In fact, it was a timely gesture that intended to propagate and showcase the black potential in the cultural, social and artistic areas. Harlem is the district that belonged to the city of New York, which was previously a residential town of the white people. It was also called the Black city because it fascinated the African-American intellectuals and talented people. During those days, Afro-American literary stalwarts had formed literary associations and clubs in Baltimore, Philadelphia, Washington and Los Angeles. Thus Harlem was the centre of attraction for the black community. It became the residence of unique and exceptionally talented Negroes. No kind of hegemony was found among them. Consequently, there was profusion in the production of literary pieces in all genres. Their efforts towards obtaining black cultural and individual identity were fruitful.

Morrison has borrowed the above historical realities to weave her plot. The setting of the story of *Jazz* and the illustrations she has produced through the events and incidents of the novel. Even the term *Jazz* has been metaphorically utilized. It becomes easier to analyze the topic after studying the salient and encapsulated features of the story. Joe Trace and Violet Trace, a fifty-year old black woman, lanky with unstable emotions, made a happy couple. They were in Harlem. She was a hairdresser who even went to the homes of her customers for service. Joe Trace, a fifty-year aged waiter and salesman of cosmetics a part-time stint, Violet's husband, falls in love with a seventeen-year old girl, Dorcas. Joe and Violet belonged to a middle class family.

The love affair was secretly carried on when he visits Alice Manfred, Dorcas' aunt, with the intention of disposing of the cosmetics. Malvonne Edwards, a neighbour of Alice Manfred, who lived upstairs, accommodated the two lovers by providing them with a spare room. However, Violet and Alice Manfred were not aware of the illicit relation. Malvonne used to clean the office of the white people. Every time Joe met Dorcas brought elegant gifts and presents for her to please her. As the time passed by Dorcas grew tired and one fine day, she expressed her sickness against him. The so-called love of Dorcas was only a matter of fascination and the intoxication of which abated soon. She diverted her mind towards youngsters to hook them with her charismatic and alluring acts. After all, she won the praises of a handsome young boy named Action.

The party arranged on the occasion of the New Year's Day, while she was dancing with Acton, Joe's arrival at the party spoiled the entertainment. He shot Dorcas in the shoulder and the bleeding was fatal. Her death on the spot revealed the affair and it spread like wildfire. At the funeral of Dorcas, Violet slits the face of Dorcas using a knife.

### **Conclusion**

Moving to Harlem with Joe Trace, the trauma Violet experienced shows the side effects of the journey. They represent the other black migrants who journeyed in order to find better life. Another reality is that post-bellum effects as far as the Afro-Americans are concerned; the economic instability compelled



them to take up crimes like suicide. In *Jazz*, Rose Dear who is Violet's mother and True Belle's daughter was unable to withstand the bitter realities of life and the wretched economic condition, committed suicide. Her husband had abandoned her, abusing the money earmarked for the family made them incur debts. Thus his wife and children, having been ruined, were driven out as the result of destitution. With the view to get redemption, she threw herself into the well.

This is also a kind of journey suggested by Morrison in *Jazz*- A journey from well-being to the state of destruction. However, this downward journey is a lesson for the black men to make them aware of the aftermath. The consequences of these wrong-doings send the family down like a house of cards. In the case of Joe and Violet, their migration was a need of the hour. *Jazz* is a lighthouse for the Afro-Americans which directs on to the right path. In fact, migration may seem to be flawless but it may be destructive in reality and vice versa. To some Afro-Americans, the migration might be an incorrect step but to those black migrants who go in search of a job, it is like a trial. The after-effects of the journey to Harlem, Violet became calm and less talkative. She was influenced by the ambience found around her. This was the trait of the urban life. The transformation in the life of Violet and Joe is a symbol of constructive development in their personality. Thus she could transform her identity in the urban area.

Morrison upholds the truth that men are born feeble. In the case of his love affair, he was the initiator whereas the female character like Violet has been sketched in a manner that exaggerated her personality. Every character in the novel is traumatically affected. They are intrinsically feel frightened of their forthcoming life in the midst of the white authorities. The journey of their life has taught them to reconstruct, redesign and to refashion their lifestyle afresh. Morrison herself says at one juncture: Entering the mechanized, disciplined world of the northern city, Violet must refashion her private self as a means of entering the public domain of urban life.

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## A THEMATIC ANALYSIS OF ROHINTON MISTRY'S *FAMILY MATTERS*

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### **Abstract:**

*Contribution of Parsi writers to English Literature is immense and considerable. Rohinton Mistry is one such a great novelist who was born in Bombay and settled in Canada in his twenties. Living in Canada, he tries to portray the Parsi cultural space in India in his writings. Mistry is deeply anxious about the marginalized Parsi existence which is sternly endangered under the blow of globalization and modernity and the sharp decline in population made him startled. The increasing communal dissonance has intensified the community consciousness more than ever before. This cultural anxiety is best picturised in Mistry's novels. 'Family Matters' is the third and the most recent novel published in 2002 in the line of finding the ethno-religious minority personality. In this novel Mistry delineates the cultural turmoil and middle class family matters of a Parsi family living in Bombay in the midst of the dilemma tattered years of post Babri Masjid demolition period in nineteen nineties. 'Family Matters' tries to cross the boundary of nation, ethnicity and times and has achieved universality by taking up the thematic problems such as geriatrics and caring, familial bondage and human relationship, cosmopolitan city life, secularism, corruption and communalism, suffering and death, immigration, alienation and sense of belongingness etc. This article focuses the thematic analysis of the novel Family Matters and tries to find out Mistry's craftsmanship in achieving his aim.*

**Keywords:** Parsi, Marginalized, Anxiety, Theme, Family, Cultural crisis, Alienation.

Rohinton Mistry's recent and last novel *Family Matters* was published in the year 2002. Like *A Fine Balance* (1995) this novel *Family Matters* is also highly appreciated and welcomed in the literary field at home and abroad. *A Fine Balance* has already brought many laurels to Mistry by winning several major international literary awards. After the grand success of his second novel *A Fine Balance* with its indispensable realism amid the critical historical phase of Indian Emergency in the 70s, this *Family Matters* has once again proved him to be great realistic storyteller sodden in the Parsi environment. In the same line of *Such a Long Journey*, where Mistry chiefly limits his narrative in the Parsi world order, again confines himself completely to the domestic turmoil and family problems of a Parsi family. This genuine compassionate narrative tells us the story of four generations of a middle class Parsi family in Bombay. This saga is a factual illustration of the insensitive realities and self-centred nature of the characters who articulate their individual eccentricity in relation to family, community and society at large. The storyline pictures the troublesome years of Mumbai after the demolition of Babri Masjid in the nineties. During this time Hindu-Muslim riots spread in Mumbai far away from Ayodhya where the actual incident took place.

It is very obvious from the novels of Mistry that he is very much obsessed with Bombay. Mistry has described the city of Bombay, now renamed as Mumbai, as a central character in the novel *Family Matters* like his earlier two novels. He 'recreates ... close attention to the details of homesick exile' (Jha 155). Mistry describes Mumbai as follows:

That's how people have lived in Bombay. That's why Bombay has survived floods, disease,

plague, water shortage, bursting drains and sewers, all the population pressures. In her heart there is room for everyone who wants to make a home here (*FM* 152).

The narrative richly delineates the city with its multi-ethnic modernity as a theme. The scene of action is carved out from the large city, a small section in terms of place and community where the whole action takes place. It focuses on the depressing and gloomy aspects of the city life. But 'Mistry's fictions reverberate well beyond their local settings and politics to gain universality (Vinodkumar 105). Mistry introduces the character Mr Kapur who is the real personification of the city. Again Mistry's fondness for the old city comes live through the voice of Mr. Kapur:

Bombay endures because it gives and it receives. Within this....woven the special texture of its social fabric, the spirit of tolerance, acceptance, generosity (*FM* 152).

As far as his narrative is concerned like his previous novels only a little degree of the cosmopolitan city finds expression in the novel. Peter Moray precisely observes: '*Family Matters* can be difficult, and Mistry doesn't shy away from showing them, in all their disturbing roughness, the real truths about them' (7). Mistry mentions about the 'city's electric trains (*FM* 160), the railway stations: Marine Lines (*FM* 138), the cricket stadiums: Wankhade and Brabourne (*FM* 213), the road network: Hughes Road (*FM* 45), Dhobi Talao Junction (*FM* 153), the Metro Cinema (*FM* 153), Asiatic Society Library (*FM* 154), and the Sonapur crematorium (*FM* 153) (Sebastian 165). In *Family Matters* too like his earlier novel, Rohinton Mistry further paints the ominous picture of Mumbai with its insecure roads, dug up footpaths, the colossal traffic (*FM* 35), the dearth of suitable accommodation in the city, people lives in the gutters and eats and sleeps close to ditches and drains (*FM* 169), multi member families live in one small room in the slums which are unsuitable even for animals (*FM* 159) and the exercise of power that landlords exerts over their tenants and their 'determined neglect had reduced it to the state of most buildings in Bombay, with crumbling plaster, perforated water tanks, and broken drain pipes' (*FM* 98). Bombay is also characterized as 'an uncivilized jungle' (*FM* 45) where there is eve teasing (*FM* 45) and gambling.

In fact, the novel is Mistry's lamentation of the degradation of moral and ethical values in different spheres of multi-cultural societal life with its rising materialism, corruption and cheap politics. 'Mistry enters the congested yet sanctified space of the Parsi family to discover the changes transported within the Parsi family formation through its negotiation of modernity, namely conflict to tradition playing within the family domain and the cynical acceptance of modern ideologies that becomes disruptive of the family tradition' (Wadhawan 98). Mistry raises his voice against universal issues in his novels; here also *Family Matters* crosses the boundary of nation, ethnicity and times by taking up the thematic issues such as geriatrics, family bondage, human relationships, death and theme of belongingness. Nilufer Bharucha has commented as follows:

Mistry has transcended both the self and the others. The self being the persona of the writer and also his Parsi self; the being the wider world. Here all three have come together in an epiphanic moment that speaks across the national, ethnic and gender boundaries, with a voice that cannot be denied (209).

The story revolves around the life of the protagonist Nariman Vakeel who is former Professor of English struck with Parkinson's disease and haunted by the memories of his glorious past. Being a widower and a decaying patriarch, he lives in a large flat named Chateau Felicity with a small but conflicting family consisting of his two step children, Coomy and Jal. Nariman's sickness has increased by his broken ankle which forced him to depend upon his step children Coomy and Jal for the daily necessities. Coomy's roughness reaches its height when she planned a design to send Nariman under the care of Roxana, her sister and Nariman's own daughter and the intricacies of the narrative opens from this point. Roxana leads a quiet and comfortable life in a small flat of Pleasant Villa with her husband Yezad and her two children Murad and Jehangir. The arrival of a new member in a small and already overflowing house proves

excruciating both from emotional and financial point of view. Nariman's stay with Chenoy's 'for the next few months changes the lives of everyone, they struggle, they grow, they learn and they endure' (Dodiya 87). In spite of this, Roxana's altruistic commitment and an urge to be a devoted daughter prompts her to accept the responsibility of Nariman without any hesitation. But Yezad is rather angry with the trouble given to them by Coomy and Jal for pushing them in severe economic unsteadiness. The inclusion of Nariman has become an additional and unnecessary burden on Yezad's household. Immersed by the ever rising financial troubles he is tempted with an idea of theft involving Vikram Kapur, his eccentric employer at Bombay Sporting Goods Emporium. After the sudden and untimely death of Mr Kapur, Mrs Kapur announces her idea of winding up the shop. She was generous enough to give Yezad a month's salary as a compensation in advance ignoring his fourteen years sincere service. With this all his hopes of betterment of monetary circumstances shattered and Yezad is plunged into a tumultuous of contemplation about the future that eventually makes him a Parsi fanatic who seeks out consolation in the holy texts and praying at the fire temple. Mistry through this conversion of a confident, unyielding and cheerful man into a religious extremist, tries to prove the inevitability of religiosity in this so called modernised world. Jal has given them a way out from the depressing future by suggesting reunion in Chateau Felicity and sell the small flat for ensuring a livelihood. *Family Matters* with its narrative scheme prove 'the whole world can be made to inhabit one small place and that the family can become the nexus of the collective and the universal' (Bhautoo-Dewnarain 38).

With the familial crisis of one middle class Parsi family, Mistry communicates everything from the predicament of Indian Parsis as a marginalized community to the wider concerns of corruption and communalism. This novel shows Shiv Sena as a Hindu fundamentalist force fully involved in rioting, looting and burning the poor and the innocent people. Hussain, a peon is a tragic victim of the Babri Masjid riot who lost His wife and children in riot. In Hussain's own remarks:

The police were behaving like gangsters. In Muslim Mohallas, they were shooting their guns at innocent people. Houses were burning, neighbours came out to throw water. And the police? Firing bullets like target practice. These guardians of the law were murdering everybody! And my poor wife and children... I couldn't even recognize them (*FM* 148).

The fundamental elements unleashed terror on the people. The novelist laments over the ruthless and oppressive measures taken by these religious fanatics. They are responsible for ruining the multicultural, multilingual and harmonious coexistence of the country. It speaks about how a religious minority like Parsis gets crushed under the sense of insecurity. Yezad also sums up the attitude of the Shiv Sena as: 'South Indians are anti-Bombay, Valentine's Day is anti-Hindustani, Film stars born before 1947 in the Pakistani Part of Punjab are traitors to the country' (*FM* 32). Mistry seems to put a negative propaganda and the politics of cultural terrorism through the description of this communalism. Coomy in the course of the novel also points out the peril hanging about home and abroad. Here she point out the incident of burning down of an old Parsi couple by Hindu extremist mobs. Bombay burnt for months after the demolition of the mosque in Ayodhya. 'How often does a mosque in Ayodhya turn people into savages in Bombay? Once in a blue moon' (*FM* 5) Jal, in the course of the novel, emphasises the Minority Parsi community's predicament as he says:

Just last week in Firozsha Baag an old lady was beaten and robbed inside her own flat. Poor thing is barely clinging to life at Parsi General (*FM* 5).

This narrative takes the prevalent corruption in India as a theme: 'Corruption is in the air we breathe. *Family Matters* also spreads Indian secularism. Chenoy family represents Parsis, Mr Kapur is a Hindu, Hussain is the representation of Muslim, Lucy Braganza is a Christian and there are references of Jains in the novel. The character of Mr Kapur embodies Indian secularism. He promotes secular and accommodative ideology as his religion (*FM* 361). Again Mistry has elaborately shown the theme of



today's child turning to be tomorrow's father. Jahangir is the child and the father figure is the patriarchal grandfather Nariman Vakeel. The image of the family life comes through them in the forefront. "Mistry has used the metaphor of the 'jigsaw puzzle' through which the boy tries to solve the quarrels and power politics that stake his family" (Dodiya 83).

Another theme of the novel is that of immigration. Parsis immigrate to foreign countries for the financial well-being. Narendra Kumar writes:

The Parsees Prefer the West since it offers unlimited scope for growth and prosperity. Dislocation is part of the Parsee psyche. Exiled twelve hundred years ago, they came to India. Now they are migrating to west in search of greener pasture. Thus there is 'double migration' in case of Parsees (14).

Some autobiographical elements of Rohinton Mistry are traced through Yezad's dream of emigrating to Canada, "Mistry also experiences 'alienation' like all emigrants. Through the character of Yezad, Mistry expresses his wish to come back to India." (Dodiya 84) Mistry shows the difference of emigration in case of Nariman and Yezad in his narrative. Nariman's emigration is: 'An enormous mistake. The biggest any man can in their life. The loss of home leaves a hole that never fills' (*FM* 240). But for Yezad, Mistry's version is:

He wanted clean cities, clean air, plenty of water, trains with seats for everyone, where people stood in line at bus stops and said please, after you, thank you. Not just the land of milk and honey, also the land of deodorant and toiletry (*FM* 131).

Through the character of Nariman who is the embodiment of Parsi community the theme of suffering, a sense of belongingness and the crisis of alienation have been treated. 'The subjects of mobility versus immobility, decay and mortality are explored through Nariman's way of life' (Vinodkumar 108). He suffers from senile diseases like Parkinsonism, osteoporosis and hypertension. His broken ankle adds more tragedy to his already existing diseases. 'Family Matters provides an intimate and compelling depiction of matters to families in the universal situation of parents' need for home care' (Vinodkumar 101). He does not find peace in Chateau Felicity or in the Pleasant Villa. Mistry with his subtle touch tells Nariman's younger days filled with mental agony when he could not marry a non-Parsi lady, Lucy Braganza as it was denied by his parents. He was forced to lead a dejected life by marrying a Parsi widow Yasmin but was unable to forget his unfulfilled love for Lucy in his old age. 'His memory of the past destroys his will power and brings him back to his love for Lucy' (Dodiya 86).

The novel is elaborately discussing on the slow but steady decline of the Parsi culture in turn the whole race. Mistry is longing to preserve his tradition and race amidst the fast changing multi-cultural society. The novel focuses on the Parsi community and the Zoroastrian faith. Thus the novel ends with a note of promulgation of the Parsi religion. It is not merely a Parsi family that Mistry is ultimately interested in but the family of man' (Genetsch 187). Mistry's writings would certainly be a perpetual source of inspiration for the Parsis who wish to preserve the identity of Parsi in future. 'The microscopic Parsi community of *Family Matters* is a miniature India and macro humanity rendered artistically into a finely woven tale of universal import by the novelist' (Myles 123). Thus, Rohinton Mistry with all his vast experience has depicted a story which talks about a Parsi family and its matters in *Family Matters*.

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## WHEN TRAUMA WRITES: A READING OF TERESE MARIE MAILHOT'S *HEART BERRIES*

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**Abstract:**

*The Native Indian situation has always attracted the attention of theorists and literary aspirants, especially with the emergence of immense indigenous literature. All the available works narrate the unique life of the Indians, thereby, marking them as the marginalized. Their traumas are often misunderstood as visions or hallucinations and are more often regarded as the act of phantoms by their culture. The reason and result of their traumas are never understood and solutions are never put forth. They live and die with them. Terese Marie Mailhot's Memoir stands apart from other works from indigenous writers not only in its style and language but also by being a narrative that explores the intergenerational trauma, the collective trauma that eclipses the life of Indians by mirroring her own life, tormented by various behavioral disorders. Mailhot, a victim of intergenerational trauma, has experienced severe emotional breakdown and this led to the birth of her Memoir, Heart Berries. This paper tries to explore how Heart Berries represent the intergenerational trauma and how Mailhot becomes the representative of a community that lives in obscurity. It is also an attempt to identify how the varied structure, style and language of the narrative make the work unique and contribute to the better understanding of the collective trauma and how therapy and writing could complement each other and give birth to unique art forms. These explorations would prove how Mailhot's work would open up new vistas in trauma studies.*

**Keywords:** *Collective trauma, intergenerational trauma, Heart Berries, trauma studies.*

That's when my nightmares came. A spinning wheel, a white porcelain tooth, a snarling mouth, and lightning haunted me. My mother told me they were visions (Mailhot 4).

Visions, possessions, hallucinations, ghosts and spirits often accommodated various narratives and thereby triggered discussions and psychological definitions in the historical as well as contemporary literary circles. Pondering deep into these concepts the psychoanalytical way opens up new arenas which take us away from exorcisms and healing procedures; which usually appear as solutions to ghosts and spirits and leave us questioning their existence. Recalling the Freudian concepts in this area, which further contributed to studies on such supernatural elements, questions their very existence but contributes to the emergence of new theories in the area of trauma studies. The research on human trauma can often be linked to Freudian understandings of metapsychology as it helps us in understanding the post-traumatic stress disorder and intergenerational trauma and thereby helps us widen the scope to understanding the conditions of those who belong to the First Nations. The present paper is not an attempt to understand the truth of spirits or ghosts but is an investigation into the latent trauma which often contributes to post traumatic stress disorder and other stress disorders that First Nation inhabitants experience but are often misunderstood as possessions. The paper looks at how such trauma that transmits over generations contributes to the construction of art in a varied form, basing the research on Terese Marie Mailhot's *Heart Berries*.

Exploring the trauma in *Heart Berries* is a huge challenge as Mailhot, in this Memoir tries to define her Indian identity through the narration of her traumatic experiences and thus distinguishes herself from

her predecessors who “seemed to do the work of looking at being Indigenous so we could look through it” (Mailhot 126). Thus Mailhot's Memoir stands apart from other indigenous writers in its theme and content. It is a coming of age writing which deeply explores the tiniest grains of traumatic experiences that has been transmitted to her over generations and then recollects them from the depth of her memories in bits and pieces, giving life to a new form of art. *Heart Berries* is unique in its experiments with the language and structure uncovering herself to “feel freer” (Mailhot 126).

Mailhot was brought up on the Seabird Island Indian Reservation in British Columbia and her earliest memories belong to the time she spent with her grandmother. Her grandmother is a representative of the atrocious residential school system of Canada, where children of Indian origin were separated from their families and were often physically and sexually abused or even killed by the nuns who ran such schools. She writes, “...residential school where parasites and nuns and priests contaminated generations of our people. Indians froze trying to run away, and many starved. Nuns and priests ran out of places to put bones, so they built us into the walls of new boarding schools” (7). If not for residential schools, children were sent to foster care, where they either survived or ran away to find a better life. Mailhot's life was also invaded by poverty, abuse and addiction. Her days were filled with poverty though she lived in a house that overlooked forty acres of corn and this contributed to her eating disorder in later years. She lived with her mother, who was a social worker, an alcoholic and a healer, but a person who was often made cynical by an abusive and alcoholic husband. Mailhot was taken into foster care when she was 17 years old to escape the hunger and abuse but was soon let out as she crossed the age. To find a safe home she got married at 19 and soon divorced after mothering two children. The first, whom she gave birth at the age of 20, was sent under her husband's custody while she was pregnant with her second child. Mailhot's relation with Casey, a writer cum her teacher, was troublesome but she could never overcome her affection for him and he is often presented as beloved and often a tormentor. All these phantoms from her past and present resulted in her traumas and behavioral disorders. She was diagnosed with Post-traumatic stress disorder, bipolar disorder and eating disorder and ended her up at a Mental Health centre from where she started writing *Heart Berries* as a part of the treatment.

In the article “Notes on Phantom: A Complement to Freud's Metapsychology”, Nicholas Abraham writes,

It is a fact that “phantom”, whatever its form, is nothing but an invention of the living. Yes, an invention in the sense that the phantom is meant to objectify, even if under the guise of individual or collective hallucinations, the gap that the concealment of some part of a loved one's life produced in us. The phantom is therefore, also a meta-psychological fact. Consequently, what haunts are not the dead, but the gaps left in us by the secret of others.

Thus the hallucinations or visions that Mailhot experiences are not ghostly presences for which healing is a prerequisite but are phantoms of her past and of many generations before her. The Indian identity and sufferings lie deep in her conscious which often revisits her as hallucinations and visions. In the words of Cathy Caruth, the author of *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History*, “The historical power of trauma is not just that the experience is repeated after its forgetting, but that it is only in and through its inherent forgetting that it is first experienced at all” (Caruth 19). Freud in *Beyond Pleasure Principle* talks of traumatic experiences acquiring latency, where it remains in the unconscious for long but reappears in various forms, in disguise or otherwise, in certain instances either knowingly or unknowingly. The trauma is a story that waits in order to “tell us a reality or truth that is otherwise unavailable” (Caruth 4). The truth that is revealed quite late refers not just to what is known but points out to what remains hidden in our expressions and language.

Though the traumatic past of her predecessors remain in the subconscious of Mailhot, it is the life of her mother that gets reflected through her. *Heart Berries* could be treated as an elegy dedicated to her mother, who is frequently referred to in the narrative. Mailhot has “fond and bitter” (30) memories of her

mother; which guide Mailhot forward in life and this obscure bond, to the therapists is a tool to Mailhot's betterment. The marital relation of her parents, where the alcoholic and abusive father created cynical behavior in her mother, lies deep in the corners of her unconscious. Her father never loved them; rather abused them and created brutal memories. These experiences never assured a peaceful childhood to Mailhot. All these memories remain repressed and later began to show up in her behavior and thoughts, thus producing a repetition of repressed memories in her life. Mailhot's relation with Casey is a perfect example of the revival of the repressed past. Even though she reconciles with Casey, the memories of a repressed traumatic past haunts her like a Phantom, degrading her mind but establishing a way to identify herself with her mother. The revival of her repressed childhood becomes evident when she kills lady bugs. She writes,

I killed a lady bug when we were walking, and you looked at me like I was wild...I don't think you know how poor I used to be that the house was infested with lady bugs for so long. My brother and I went mad when they wouldn't stop biting. We tried to swat them with brooms and towels. We tried to corner them. Their death smelled like a puddle and wouldn't leave our home. My mother didn't come when the bugs overtook the living room (88).

Though Mailhot recollects the collective traumas, she can never identify herself with another individual, thus enhancing the traumatic experience and failing to find solace. She tries to be the representative of a community whom David Treuer mentions as the ones who are chained to their own deaths, "not really alive and active and engaged." While accomplishing this task she never loses sight of the personal and never fails to assert her choices and thoughts thereby achieving a political touch to the personal.

The question of being a native Indian pervades although the narrative and often acts as a subverted recognition buried deep in the subconscious but often re-appears bringing back traumatic emotions associated with it. The Indian condition torments her every hour she meets a white man, often her husband Casey, bringing back to her a plethora of emotions carried forth across generations; an intergenerational trauma. Mailhot mentions right at the beginning of the narrative that she is often silenced, like many Indians, by the charity of white men. She often mentions her relation with Casey as problematic as he is white and always fails to identify with her traumas and struggles. She writes, "I feel like a squaw. The type white people imagine: a feral thing with greasy hair and nimble fingers wanting... You have made me feel sick of myself" (88). She feels "Indian sick". It is indeed the truth when she speaks out that "the past is my fault" (63). She asserts that no white man, representative being Casey, doesn't understand what hunger is, for, like every Indian she has experienced it although her childhood. It becomes quite evident that Casey represents the white community when she reasserts that he never knows how she (an Indian woman) feels. Mailhot owns, like every Indian woman, the hunger, the trauma and abuse, subdued in her subconscious and torments her often through reappearances. Her memories are linked to her predecessors, her, mother and her father and this is why the therapist found her conversation with her mother and father a solution to her traumatic upheavals.

The persistent death drive is another major aspect that Mailhot examines throughout the narrative. The masochism that arises from shame and fear is persistent in the life of the narrator. Mailhot talks of instances where she feels like pressing the knife against her hand but fails to do so out of fear. She overcomes the suicidal instincts when she comes across "life instincts" (in Freudian terms). This opposing condition is a result of her inability to create a space for her. Being an Indian woman, she is prevented from "inhabiting a dominant space" (Mailhot 129) and thus she fails to identify a space for herself, which she is trying to achieve through this narrative. The ethnicity, culture, history and the narratives that she inherited from her ancestors help her to come out of the shame and repression, the reasons for the death drive or masochism inherent in her. She tries to revisit, recollect and relive the repressed memories through *Heart Berries*.

Though Terese Marie Mailhot tries to weave out a narrative from the depths of her memory, it is not

something that she owns. It is the collective memory of generations, an intergenerational trauma that transfers on to Mailhot and struggling to attain a voice and recognition. The narrative exposes not just the hunger and struggles of native Indians but also the death drives that they combated. Indian women were always objects of abuse and voyeurism, incurring neglect and never understood by their true being. According to Mailhot, they lead an obscure existence as

Nobody wants to know why Indian women leave or where they go. Our bodies walk across the highway from the dances of our youth into missing narratives without strobe lights or sweet drinks in our small purses, or the talk of leaving. The truth of our leaving or coming into the world is never told (Mailhot 101).

Thus they lead a silent life, silently fighting their traumas and then achieve an irreverent silent death without being recognized or remembered leaving ghosts of their memories in the unconscious of their fellow beings. It is this silence that Mailhot subverts by achieving education.

Mailhot considers her education as a renaissance as it is the revival of an unrecognized community rather than a matter of personal merit. Here again what is personal becomes the political. She is to be considered as a champion as she fought all the behavioral disorders that her community contributed and secured M.F.A in fiction from the Institute of American Indian Arts. *Heart Berries*, a result of Mailhot's struggle with her past, is not just a Memoir that talks on intergenerational trauma and personal emotions. The title "Heart Berries" has much significance as it is the name of a healer whom Mailhot's mother called to treat her phantom but it doesn't limit its scope by being a narrative that talks on "Indian sick" and healers. Rather, it achieves a greater significance by historicizing and representing the shame, pain and perspective of generations of Native Indians, who inhabited the land without being recognised or remembered by the dominant community. Their pain and trauma were treated as a phantom that requires a healer and thus the term "Indian sick". But Mailhot explains to us how important those disregarded traumatic pasts were as it is the history of art unique and untouched.

The birth of *Heart Berries* is under unique circumstances, when Mailhot's therapists asked her to write out her memories in a notebook. Later those journal entries filled up into a narrative that represents a community. The therapeutic initiative brings forth an art which explores human emotions to its core and becomes a history unique in language and content. Mailhot was under medication when she put down her memories and thus the text is a bundle of emotions scattered around in bits and pieces and the reader is assigned with the task to collect those leaves and put them together. One would be reminded of Kubla Khan and its creator S T Coleridge at this juncture. This is not merely a coincidence but these parallelisms help us prove that great works of art happen when your disorders are treated. Writing and therapy compliments each other and Mailhot herself solicits this when she says

Writing is hard therapy. You write, and then read it, revise your work to be cleaner, sharper, better...the way being healed is never real unless every moment of every day you remind yourself of your progress and remind yourself not to go back, or hurt someone, or do the wrong thing it's not healing unless you keep moving you're never done (132).

*Heart Berries* prove that it is no more a shame to have a disorder and that the very fear and trauma in life can bring forth brilliant literature unique in style and language. We might have come across many women autobiographies or Memoirs but Mailhot's work stands apart as it is the story of a community, who lives and dies in obscurity. The lack of representation itself gives the style of narrative a wilderness that has to be considered in detail as it gives a fresh style to Native Indian narratives.

While considering the style, it is important to dwell deep into the truthfulness of the narrative as Mailhot herself calls the work, an art of fiction as she has mingled imagination with truth. This questions the credibility of *Heart Berries* as a memoir but it is important to note that any work created is a fiction as it speaks and validates only a single perspective. No one questions the reliability of a single perspective and if we move in that direction we can call every work of art a farce. But, in the case of *Heart Berries* it is quite



illogical to think of its truth as Mailhot states that every Native Indian she came across pointed out the work as their story. Thus this Memoir is not Mailhot's but of a community that demanded voice amidst violence, abuse, behavioral disorders and death drives. The initiative doesn't demark them as marginalized, rather, brings them to the forefront; one with the so called "dominant" community. It is the multiple voices that make the narrative non-linear. Here we find the rebirth of a community through a renaissance in writing. Their visions and hallucinations are no more the phantoms that degrade them through misrepresentation, but they are they are lifelines in moulding their unique identity.

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## 11

**HENRY JAMES'S MAJOR NOVELS: A STUDY**

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Henry James's most famous biographer Leon Edel observes,

To read the essays and reviews as well as the books, devoted to James since the beginning of this century, in the attempt to discover the contemporary view of the man and his work is to encounter some large and crudely built sphinx, over whom has been flung a prodigious coat of motley. James has been likened to Goethe, to Shakespeare and Racine and to Marivaux (Edel 1).

Henry James is a famous American novelist, critic and thinker. The brother of William James, the famous American psychologist and philosopher, Henry James was born in New York in 1843. He was educated by tutors until the age of 12 and then at schools in Boulogne, Paris, Geneva, Bonn and - when the family returned to America - at Newport, Rhode Island. He entered Harvard Law School in 1862 for a brief spell and, with the encouragement of Charles Eliot Norton and William Dean Howells, both friends later, he began to concentrate on writing.

James published many journalistic and travel sketches. After spending 1875 in Paris he settled in England in 1876, making London his base for over 20 years. He became a British citizen in 1916, before a year he died. James's remarkably wide range of acquaintance in the literary world include Joseph Conrad, Stephen Crane, H. G. Wells, George Gissing and Edith Wharton, a particularly close friend during the last years of his life. Deeply influenced by Continental literature of the Russian Turgenev, the French Daudet, Flaubert, the Goncourts and Zola in Paris, the Polish Conrad, the Swedish Swedenborg, James took the American experience of Europe as the theme of his first important works: *Roderick Hudson* (1876), *The American* (1877), *The Europeans* (1878), *Daisy Miller* (1879), and, his masterpiece of this period, *The Portrait of A Lady* (1881). *Washington Square* (1880) and *The Bostonians* (1886) use an American setting and *The Princess Casamassima* (1886) studies the political underworld of London, and *The Aspern Papers* (1888) returns to his 'international theme'. In addition to short stories that include *The Madonna of the Future and Other Tales* (1879) and *The Siege of London* (1883), he has published essays *Partial Portraits* (1888) and travel writings *Portraits of Places* (1883), *A Little Tour in France* (1884), and the three significant critical studies: *Of French Poets and Novelists* (1878), *Hawthorne* (1879) and *The Art of Novel* (1884). But James's plays were not a success. His later novels include *The Spoils of Poynton* (1897), *What Maisie Knew* (1897), *The Awkward Age* (1899) and *The Sacred Fount* (1901) - abandon his 'international theme.' *The Wings of the Dove* (1902), *The Ambassadors* (1903) and *The Golden Bowl* (1904) and *The Turn of the Screw* (1898) are the last novels..

James's biographer Leon Edel divides James's creative life into three periods. The first one covers the works like *The American*, *Daisy Miller* and *The Portrait of a Lady*. The second one covers the masterpieces *The Bostonians* and *The Princess Casamassima*. The third period covers such great works as *The Wings of the Dove*, *The Ambassadors* and *The Golden Bowl*. It is in his essay "The Art of Fiction" (1884) that James most succinctly expressed his critical principles as well as a justification of his novelistic endeavor.

The following is a critical study of James's three important novels *The American*, *Daisy Miller* and *Washington Square*.

**The American (1877):** *The American* (1877) was published in *The Atlantic Monthly* between June 1876 and May 1877, and as a book in 1877. Christopher Newman, a bachelor who has become wealthy through shrewd business dealings in America, travels to Paris, France to find a beautiful wife. He is *an intelligent and idealistic self-made millionaire industrialist*. Though an accomplished businessman, he is naive about European ways. This is the author's attitude too. Mrs Tristram, an expatriate American, serves as a sort of guide and confidante to him, much as Maria Gostrey serves Lambert Strether in *The Ambassadors*.

Newman becomes engaged to Claire de Cintre, a widow and the daughter of an aristocratic French family, the Bellegardes. But the Bellegardes decide they cannot sacrifice the family pride, even to Newman's wealth, and they cancel the engagement. Meanwhile Newman has introduced Valentin Bellegarde, Claire's brother and his own friend and ally, to Noemie Nioche, a young woman who copies great paintings for a living. Because of his involvement with Noemie, Valentin fights and dies in a duel. Just before dying, however, he provides Newman with the means of compelling the Bellegarde family to allow him to marry Claire: he sends Newman to Mrs Bread, the Dowager Marquise's maid, who reveals that the Marquise had caused her husband's death by withholding his medicine. In the end, however, Newman decides not to use this information for blackmailing, and the novel closes with Claire's becoming a Carmelite nun more out of depression.

Harry Moore thinks though this theme was a familiar one to the French, James made it fascinating by giving it a touch of novelty.

The stage, in 1890, beckoned James first in the person of the actor Edward Compton, whose wife was the American actress Virginia Bateman and whose son was to become the writer Sir Compton Mackenzie. Edward Compton wrote to James suggesting that he dramatize *The American*, and he paid an advance of £250 on it in 1890. The play was opened at Liverpool in 1871. The play had a happy ending as the brother is not killed and as Newman marries the heroine at the end. The whole thing was like a comedy of manners. Edward Compton played the role of Christopher Newman, and Elizabeth Robins that of Claire de Cintre. However, the London audience found it un-dramatic.

**Daisy Miller(1879):** This is a short novel by Henry James, published in 1879. The heroine Daisy Miller is touring Europe with her mother and brother. The expatriate American community interprets her innocence and lack of concern for social convention as immodesty, and she is ostracized. One of its members, Frederick Winterbourne, is charmed by her innocence, however. In Rome Daisy takes up with Glovanelli, a young Italian. Winterbourne meets them one evening viewing the Coliseum by moonlight, and berates Daisy for her lack of social decorum. He warns her of fever. James's friend Edith Wharton has written a short story "Roman Fever." Shocked and hurt by his reaction, she returns at once to her hotel, where she contracts malaria and dies within a week.

Henry James made a play based on *Daisy Miller* for a New York theater but it was turned down telling that it was too literary.

**Washington Square (1880):** *Washington Square* (1880) is a short novel published serially in *The Cornhill Magazine* in 1880 and in book form in 1881. The motherless daughter of a wealthy New York physician, Catherine Sloper is unappreciated and ignored by her father, and leads a lonely and bleak existence until she is courted by Morris Townsend. She accepts his proposal of marriage, but her doctor-father refuses to give his consent when he discovers Townsend to be penniless. Exasperated by Catherine's obstinate attachment Dr Sloper takes her away to Europe for a year. This does not change her mind, but Morris, faced with the prospect of Catherine having to forfeit her inheritance if she marries him, breaks off the engagement. Seventeen years later, after the death of her father has made Catherine a rich woman, Morris returns and proposes again. Good or ill she rejects him absolutely and settles down to the life of a

spinster in the family house in Washington Square. The theme of the novel is a traditional one.

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## RACIAL OPPRESSION IN THE THIRD LIFE OF GRANGE COPELAND

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### **Abstract:**

*The main motif of The Third life of Grange Copeland is hegemony of the black men on the powerless black women. The crux of the oppression is that the men who suppress their women are also not so powerful. They rule over the women folk intending to exploit her helplessness. The Third life of Grange Copeland speaks of the sharecropping family which was broken under the gloomy pressure of poverty and racial distinction; these two evils distorted their regular life. The sense of fruitless life had brought failure in the life of Grange Copeland. The whole novel is infested with such ill and evil incidents and happenings which were the result of the plight of the black characters.*

**Key Words:** Racial disparity, slave narratives, oppression.

### **Introduction**

African writers in America have left their own literary style and content. As a matter of fact, the nuance of Afro-American literature is that its beginning is that of the writings of the black fugitive slaves. They are rightly called '*Slave Narratives*'. Those writings were the autobiographies of the slaves which literally told the painful and melancholic sufferings, trials and tribulations, exploitation, atrocities, racial disparity and sexual violence that made them downtrodden. Being a black writer, Alice Walker, who shows her concerned for the black community in America. Her thesaurus of experiences in all walks of life brimmed with bitter and better incidents, events, instances and experiences enable her to express herself to the fullest extent. Her thematic subjects may be quite different in the sense that she aims at what is conducive to her people. Terms like feminism, exploitation and oppression of the African-Americans, suppression and repression of the black community in America, sexism and sexuality as far as the white and the black races are concerned, racial disparity, humiliating behaviour with the Afro-Americans, gender distinction, patriarchal hegemony, black feminism and '*womanism*'. She writes for the emancipation and empowerment of the black women in America. Walker's writings either prose or poetry, show the struggle for existence and self-identity in the context of white society. She expects equality in every field of life.

*The Third life of Grange Copeland* is her debut novel which was published in 1970. The novel encompasses the 1960s--period from the Great Depression to the Civil Rights Movement. The setting of the novel is at Georgia with the rural background. Alice Walker's characters convey a complex plot. There are three main characters in the story: Grange, the protagonist, wife of Grange, Margaret, Brownfield, the son of Grange and Margaret. The storyline moves through these three core characters. The other roles are: Star, a boy baby of Grange and Margaret, Mem is the wife of Brownfield, daughter of a preacher who lived in the North; sister of Josie, Ruth is the granddaughter of Grange, daughter of Brownfield and Mem. A role intentionally created by Alice Walker is of Josie who was the owner of the inn called 'Dew Drop'. The eccentricity of Josie is that she fell in love with both the father and the son. Alice Walker means to say that certain people especially, women were of the odd lust to the extent of erotic insanity. She loved Grange and moved towards Brownfield but her love with Grange ended with her marriage with his son, Brownfield.

Grange was a destitute sharecropper who lived at Baker County, Georgia. His earnings all used to



go to the owner of the field on which he worked; it was an indirect way of oppression. His money was debited in the form of the rent of the house in which he dwelled. Eventually, life was unbearable for him and he turned pessimist. One feeble turn in life leads astray. He fled from Georgia to avert the torture of lenders regarding repayment of the debts. The loan was with a landowner who belonged to the white race. He planned to change the course of his life by moving away from the present place. He had to forfeit the fascination with the family. Brownfield also trod on the path of his father. He reached a place where Josie used to run an inn called the Dew Drop which is otherwise called Dewey Inn.

The Dew Drop was, as a matter of fact, a brothel run by Josie. Brownfield made up his mind to settle himself with her and willingly shared bed with her. Illicit relationships followed one after the other. He began his lecherous life by becoming a debaucher, after having slept with Lorene, Josie's daughter and Mem, Josie's niece. At length, Brownfield was fascinated to Mem whom he married in the presence of Josie. His stars did not match hers; they were not on good terms for some time. Unable to control himself, he began beating her black and blue and consequently, he murdered her in cold blood.

His life was stagnant; he was put behind the bars for seven years. When he felt that he could not go anywhere except to Baker County, Georgia, which was his home that was shattered by unwelcoming situations and abrupt twists in his life. The gist and thematic message of the novel *The Third Life of Grange Copeland* can be presented in the form of a statement; the story of the protagonist, Grange who sharecrops for a white owner suppressed and exploited by him; his making a decision of running away from debts and exploitation, he, further experiences failure in the North too. This defeat of his plans compels him to come back to Georgia as a refined man with sanity and repentance.

### **Racial Oppression**

Grange represents the whole black community. It spans to about three decades. The entire novel embodies the life of shareholders in Afro-American context. Racial oppression makes him bankrupt and poverty presses him to kowtow to the humiliating and soul-squeezing circumstances. Grange and Margaret, his wife, indulge in restless work in order to make the intensity of the inimical and dilemmatic condition in their life. Grange sacrificed his responsibilities like a good husband and father because he had succumbed to the pressure of the racial oppression. He had no time to think about his love towards his wife and affection in the case of his children. The black Americans were not given opportunity to grow in any way.

The Afro-Americans were hegemonized by the white masters who did not wish to provide power or prestige. The black slaves were asked to rebel against the white race which is supposed to be superior. The white masters were so hard-hearted that they did not allow the black slaves even to breathe properly and to have a word with the members of their families. The research article entitled *Racialism, Violence and Cruelty in Alice Walker's Works* throws light on the oppression of the white in the context of their racial supremacy and superiority:

Alice Walker, the feminist deals with the oppression of black women and men. Her quest is a new identify for black women, a selfawareness which will make them self-dependent socially, emotionally and spiritually. Racial oppression, general violence, history and ancestry, Civil Rights Movement all these form the sum and substance of her work. It was Alice walker who coined the term '*Womanism*' a form of black feminism that affricates and prefers women's culture, women's flexibility and women's strength. '*Womanism*' according to Alice Walker is not narrowly exclusive; it is committed to survival and wholeness of entire people, male and female. In all aspects Alice walker is the brightest star in a galaxy of black American women writers.

Through her writings, Alice Walker seeks recognition of black women in the American society. She expects every Afro-American to be self-aware. She should be independent and self-sufficient in all

matters. Her oeuvre teems with multifarious topics like racial oppression and violence, black history and the black slaves, men and women, who suffered as slaves, revolution in the field of Civil Rights and all issues that are related to the Africans settled in America.

The novels of Alice Walker, in general, disclose the behaviour of the white people towards the African-Americans. The white masters did not have empathy towards the blacks and such devastating attitude of the whites had ruined the psychosomatic balancer of the Afro-Americans. It is now the right moment to know the roots of the enmity that arose between the white and the black races. Even before slavery, there was racial distinction but it was when the Americans brought slaves from Africa, there evolved a strong sentiment of animosity between them. The institution of slavery was the root cause of the oppression and exploitation of the African slaves in America.

Her first-hand experience of the nature of the white society in America made her rebel against the racist community of the Americans. The family of Copeland referred to in *The Third Life of Grange Copeland*. The social setup of this small township in America had totally oppressed ambience of degradation and humiliation because of racial disparity. In spite of segregation on the basis of racism, the black people in Copeland had unity among themselves and they remained united and connected in order to face the challenges, risk and suppression. Racial humiliation and devastating attitude of the whites affected the entire family. Eventually, there were quarrels and fights among the members of the same family. The outcome of the profound study of Alice Walker's novels focuses on the racial issues of African-Americans and superiority complex of the whites. The black community in America assumed certain strategies to defend themselves. They tried in vain to transform their black personality into a compatible embodiment of favourable traits. The black women also employed defensive devices towards escaping the gratification of the lust of the white masters.

After the advent of slavery in America, sexual exploitation and molestation were in vogue. It was easily feasible for the Americans to entice the black women towards sexuality for they were in need of some earning and convenience without being tortured. American racism was the worst in the world, which gave birth to many other maladies and evils. To brief the motif of the novel, Alice Walker has concentrated on the inter-racial enmity and detestation. Sexual exploitation of the women slaves was common in those days. The white slave traders abused them and they made use of the familial disharmony of the black servants. The whites knew the mental setup and economic level of the slaves. The conjugal life of the black women was also not harmonious; their husbands had gone astray and many a time they were working on the farms and plantations and they were drunkards too. Some had kept-women. Their men had several personal issues. White people knew well how to persuade and entice the black women to quench their lusty thirst.

*The Third Life of Grange Copeland* presents the colonial period with reference to the critical aspects relating to the black people. As a matter of fact, the novel deconstructs the black identity. Alice Walker interrogates the white race the destructive behaviour and humiliating position given to the African-Americans. She questions the demoralizing impact of their ruinous hegemony, oppressive power and so-called racial superiority. Her novel poses a question to the white race about the cause of Grange Copeland's unethical and immoral lifestyle; she seems to ask the rival race: 'Who is responsible for the plight of the protagonist?' At the end of the novel she herself seems to answer the question that the racist stratification of the white society is to be blamed. The racist ideology has driven the Afro-Americans insane and immoral. Their humiliating behaviour and exploiting motive of the whites with the black slaves made them scapegoat.

### **Conclusion**

Before concluding the paper, it is essential to gather the general gist and motif of the novel *The Third Life of Grange Copeland*. Alice Walker has tried to disclose the position of the African-American people. She has dealt with many issues of her community in America issues like racial, national, and gender

identities. These problems have different and complicated threads woven together intricately that they have become a chaotic jumble. Magnanimity and multiplicity of their trials and tribulations had put them in the dangerous zone. It had become nearly impossible to bring all the stray threads into the form of a strand. Struggle of the black people, both men and women, faced twofold troublesome at the hands of the white race and the other is disharmony at home. The challenging circumstances in their lives and the plight that oppressed like their white masters had pressed them to move towards indefinite directions. Grange returns with new avenues and aspirations. The cathartic end of the story gives a lesson to the whole of the black community that oppression should be opposed and protested in all circumstances. Going with the wind or sailing with the waves does not fetch any welfare. Struggle for existence claiming rightful justice on humanitarian grounds is the birthright of man, may he be of any colour or race, irrespective of gender.

At last, the protagonist learns and makes up his mind to lead a true and justified life, may he be entangled in any circumstances. Transformation, late in life, enabled nobody to grow favourably and optimistically. In the end of *The Third Life of Grange Copeland* Alice Walker seems to say that the process of existentialism disconnects all the members of one's family, dehumanizing the social values. Grange feels a liberated soul only after passing through countless tests in his life.

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3. 2012/426228VOL.-IV, ISSUE-I, January-2015 Asian Resonance 241 E: ISSN No. 2349-9443 The Legacy of Hate and Violence in Alice Walker's *The Third Life of Grange Copeland*, P 242

## THE CONFLICTS IN GITHA HARIHARAN'S *IN TIMES OF SIEGE*

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### **Abstract:**

*Githa Hariharan's fourth novel entitled 'In Times of Siege' (2003) is a controversial novel. In this novel, she raised her voice in opposition to rising fundamentalism and extremism. Fundamentalism severely plagues and perturbs the Indian society. She mourns the failure of material idea which is really dangerous for any progressive society. Alok Rai's pertinent observation is quite an honor to the secreted good point of the novel. He observes that "the novel is not only quite as contemporary as today's newspaper, but tomorrow's as well. That is what makes it a novel." (Web) The novel deals with the significance of history and its genuine understanding in contemporary times. It advocates the absorption of progressive and open-minded views for the appraisal of historical figures and their involvement to the country. The present research paper attempts to study Githa Hariharan's *In Times of Siege*.*

**Key Words:** *Fundamentalism, Extremism, material idea.*

The novel *In Times of Siege* opens with its protagonist, Prof. Shiv Murthy who is a fifty-two-year old professor of medieval history at Kasturba Gandhi Central University, New Delhi. This is a distant learning university, where Shiv as a replacement for taking classes, "co-ordinates resources for his educational clients" (4). He has come to Jamuna Girls' Hostel of Kamala Nehru University, New Delhi to take his babyhood's friend, Sumati's offspring, Meena who gets her leg splintered while getting off a bus. Now, she has a giant spread wrapped around her leg and with this weighty spread she is incapable to walk properly that is why Shiv, the local custodian of Meena, has come to take her to his residence. Meena is a scholar of sociology, who is pursuing her study on the stories of women affected by the anti-Sikh riots after Indira Gandhi's assassination in 1984.

Shiv Murthy has a wife named Rekha and a daughter named Tara as his family. Both have gone to settle, in the USA. Tara has got a profitable computer job in the USA. Rekha helps her offspring in settlement. It is Shiv who takes care of Meena and manages her bed in a petite room down the stairs with a bottle of water and a glass on a stool. Shiv instructs his housemaid Kamala to take care of Meena properly. Meena pleads him not to inform her parents about the fracture she got in her leg in order to salt away her parents from needless botheration. She suggests Shiv Murthy to take leave for some days from his university so that she can get an accompanying person for removing her loneliness, arising out of being unaccompanied in house. Prof. Shiv Murthy goes to his university where he is to attend a faculty meeting with his colleagues.

Dr. Menon is responsible for the course Modern India. Dr. Menon is "a thin taciturn man with a heap of curls on his head and a lush beard. All this hair and clothes he wears-always a couple of size too big for him-are part of his camouflage system" (18). Dr. Menon lives in his own world all the time, wholly cut off the planet outside. Amita Sen is Prof. Shiv Murthy's only female colleague. She is suffering loneliness and ennui, arising out of her disastrous married life. But Shiv and Amita gets pleasure from a good friendship with each other.

At the meeting, Dr. Arya is complaining in opposition to Dr. Menon to the Head of the Department, for incorrectly editing a lesson, part of one of the modules of Modern India. While inquired by the Head of



Department, Dr. Menon explains them that he has excised only those parts of the text those are unpleasant about a minority community. Dr. Sharma is also quite confident that the problem will be solved shortly. Prof. Shiv Murthy has applied for the leaves at his department. After that, he has brought some course module for scripting at his house in his leisure time. While coming back from the university, he purchases a pair of crutches and ice-cream for Meena. He informs Meena about his leaves. He is now a permanently dedicated care taker of Meena. He washes her hair, does shopping for her, and brings ice cream and comics for her. When he is not studying, he watches TV with Meena, drinks rum and plays indoor sports with Meena. When Kamala, falls ill, he himself prepares breakfast and lunch for Meena.

Professor Shiv Murthy has visited the site of Hampi ruins of Vijayanagar earlier. He wants to write a lesson on the rise and fall of Vijaynagar Empire. One day while watching TV with Meena, he is clued-up by a telephone call of a journalist from a daily paper *CURRENT* that he has written a bit contentious about the life of a great south Indian poet Basava. And his lesson has wound the sentiments of the people; there is great annoyance in the midst of masses for not treating Basava respectfully. At first, Shiv Murthy thinks how an ordinary lesson on a poet Basava can hurt the sentiments of people. Prof. Shiv treats this as a rumour and does not take it seriously.

But quickly after this, Shiv is informed by the Head of the Department, Dr. Sharma on telephone that “your lesson on Basavanna's movement for social reform has been leaked somehow to the press”. And “Apparently there is a certain lack of clarity in the lesson-anyway, the lesson has hurt the sentiments of a Hindu watchdog group. You know our policy is to steer clear of controversy” (53). The Dean and the Head of the Department have received annoyed and abusive letters for this lesson.

A crowd named Itihasa Surkasha Manch starts protesting in opposition to the lesson that has created a vast argument in the midst of masses. Dr. Sharma comments about this:

It seems that you have implied that Basavanna's city, Kalyana was, not a model Hindu kingdom. It seems you have not exaggerated the problem of caste and written in a very biased way about the Brahmins and temple priests. And also you have not made it clear enough that Basava was much more than ordinary human being. There are people who consider him divine . . . There is a rumour that you have gone on leave because the lesson has got you into trouble. . . . Well, Shiv, we will have to act swiftly to stop this growing into a controversy. A full apology or retraction from you will be the best we can decide what to call it so that it is not embarrassing for the department for you of course. And we may have to send instructions to our entire study centre to discontinue use of the booklet that contains this module. May be we will have to decide to reprint without the lesson. (53-54)

After listening to the Head of the Department's comment Prof. Shiv Murthy realized the intensity of the circumstances. He tells Meena that he has written a lesson on Basava or Basavanna, a south Indian social reformer and saint poet. Shiv Murthy has made Basava's unbiased and neutral assessment, as a statesman, saint and theorist, based on his own acquaintance and surveillance of history and culture. But a certain division of society feels insulted by the lesson. Because Shiv has not made “the heroes heroic enough” (55). Concerning the lesson Prof. Shiv Murthy comments: “It seems I have not sung enough of a paean to the glory Hindu kingdoms; and that I make too much of caste divisions among Hindus. . . . The protection of history! Whoever heard of history having to be protected?” (55).

Meena suggests Shiv Murthy that he should not lay down his arms to the stress given by the fundamentalists, in its place he should sketch out a plan of action to struggle against “fundoos”(fundamentalist). In the next crack of dawn, Shiv goes to meet the Dean at his office, where the Head of the Department is previously presenting his anxiety over the controversial lesson with the Dean. Shiv Murthy was asked about the controversial writing by the Dean. Prof. Shiv explains about his lesson to the Dean and tells that whatever he has written that is based on historical evidences and not on the basis of long-cherished mythology and folklores. He has added proofs to the end of his lesson to sustaining his



views. Anybody who is having some qualms and objections, concerning his description of Basava's story, can go in the course of this profs and end notes.

The Head gives a vexed look to Shiv. The Head of the Department says to Shiv Murthy that after interpreting his lesson cautiously, he has made a record of some phrases and sentences that are causing confusion and misunderstanding to his lesson. He lists these objections as:

One: Backward-looking. Two: Contradictory account of Basava's life, conflicting narratives. Three: Birth legends fabricated. Four: Called a bigoted revolutionary by temple priests. Also called, a dangerous man, a threat to structure, stability and religion. Five: The comfort of faith was not enough for Basava. Six: There were rumours that Basava used money from the royal treasury to look after his followers. Seven: The lines of social division in the great city of Kalyana were sharply drawn. Caste was a dominating factor. Eight: There was tension between brahmanical religious orthodoxy and the popular religious reformers and saint-poet. Nine: Basava met and could have been influenced the 'mad men from Persia', the dancing, drinking Sufis. Ten: Bijjala, the king of Kalyana, was pressured by realize leaders to commit atrocities on low-caste devotees. Basava told the king a series of tales in which devotees especially untouchable devotees were shown to be superior to realized. (68)

Subsequently listening to these rough demands of the Manch, the Dean gets annoyed and considers the demands of the Manch as a disgraceful effort to insult history. But the Head of the Department, Dr. Sharma whose strategy has been to "steer clear of controversy" doesn't want "to get into debates and controversies-however fascinating, however historically permissible-if the student don't need these or appreciate them." (70). After listening to all these deliberations asserts, professor Shiv Murthy bravely says: "The lesson does not distort history by any stretch of the imagination. And I will not apologize or explain myself to a group outside the university, a group of people we do not recognize as historians" (70). At his house, Meena welcomes Shiv Murthy with newspaper clippings and a postcard sent to him unanimously. There is an editorial in printed in a newspaper *The Current* that reads:

**Who will teach the teacher?**

**Protest against prof's distortion of history**

The Itihas Surakash Manch, an independent social and cultural organization, issued a statement on Wednesday in the capital calling for 'an end to tampering with our precious and glorious Indian history'. The statement, signed by one of the organization leaders, Mr. Anant Tripathi, said, 'We will not allow history to be polluted like this. Fifty years after independence, we cannot have Indian historians brainwashed by foreign theories and methods depriving us of our pride in Hindu temples and priests. How are these historians different from the Muslims who invaded our land? Every schoolchild knows the story of Mohammeds, from Ghazni to Ghori. Muslim tried to destroy Hindu pride and civilization. In the same way, these modern invaders pretending to be historians are attacking our system of traditions and our way of life that have stood the test of time. But this time we will not allow ourselves to be conquered and subjected.

The Manch also quoted several historians, including retired Professor Shri A. A. Atre, to support their claim that 'Basava was not against realized as such'. All he wanted, like any saint, was that everyone should live in order and harmony. The venerable professor told reporters in Pune, 'To say that the saint Basava may have died "in broken, disillusioned exile" is as much a mischievous distortion of history as to say that he may have learnt anything from the Muslim Sufis of Persia. Sad to say, there seem to be scholars with vested interests who think the treasures of our past can be taken away from us.'

The KGU historian, Professor Shiv Murthy, has gone on leave since the protest began. He refused

to confirm whether the university had asked him to go on leave or whether he will resign from the department. He also claimed to be unaware of the furore caused by his text. On the question of the historian's responsibility to society, his response was a terse 'No comment.' Professor A. A. Atre has condemned this reaction as 'sheer arrogance'. (75-77)

Meena Sketches out a plan with Shiv Murthy as to how they will struggle with these spiritual fanatics. Meena asks for the help of her friends Amar, Jyoti and Manzar. Amar is a societal campaigner and a dedicated member of numerous citizens' groups. They all carry this subject to the notice of different 'group of citizens' and they try to fight against radicalism and fundamentalism by obtaining hold up from a variety of sections of society such as political leaders, academicians, social workers and lawyers. By impeding in the knowledge of media this disagreement gets more powerful and extensive.

Professor Shiv Murthy's life partner Rekha also suggests him not to take the risk of his life in opposition to these fundamentalists. Rekha is concerned about Shiv as she watches news on TV channels. A TV channel, *Newsight*, arranges Professor Shiv Murthy's interview at his residence where, on being asked about his deformation of chronological facts, he clarifies: "The important thing to remember . . . is that history like the human mind is a very complex body with many strands. Ours is rich, pluralistic history. Of course all these threads must be repeatedly re-examined" (97).

Professor Shiv Murthy gets motivation for scripting a lesson on Basava from his father who has been a freedom fighter all his life. The recollection of his dead father guides him from time to time whenever he needs his supervision on multifaceted problems of life. And it is his father who motivates him for realized the real nature of Basava, filtering truth from fiction. On an occurrence his father told: "Shiv . . . if you want to get hold of something and learn all about it, know it, it does not matter whether that something is in past or present all that matters is that you are free- thinking that you have moral courage" (40). Thus, his father becomes a most important light to Shiv, who feels his imperceptible attendance whenever he is in necessity.

A staff meeting is convened at the department, where Dr. Arya speaks in favour of the Manch, "The Manch represents public sentiments. History and everything else should respect this. For years leftist and pseudo-secular historians have been filling committees with their agents. Now their monopoly is over and they are making hue and cry" (126). At the meeting Professor Shiv Murthy has been clued-up that his lesson has been sent for a skilled commission for an unbiased assessment. In the meeting, Dr. Arya loses his temper with Professor Shiv Murthy and starts struggling with Professor Shiv Murthy and he holds Shiv by his collar and Dr. Menon tries to end their fight. Itihas Suraksha Manch's leader, Anant Tripathi wages a war against Shiv Murthy by observing:

Texts which over emphasize caste divisions and project the Hindu religion and Hindu culture in a poor light should not be allowed. Such conspiracies to tarnish the image of the Indian past should be met with courage. People feel free to revile Hinduism with impunity, but they do not dare criticize Islam because then the swords would be out (99-100).

Meena suggests Shiv to get the help of his social group, and she thinks that they should stand by him at the occasion of disaster. She tells Shiv Murthy about the policy of the protectors, where they "convince people that they are under attack, then offer them protection" (99). Meanwhile, Dr. Menon informs Professor Shiv Murthy that his room, at the department, has been ransacked by some hooligans, the bench, chair and bookshelves have been broken down. His nameplate has been thrown on the ground in a mound of litter. Professor Shiv Murthy is being searched for by fundamentalists and extremists for felonious their sentiments. In the middle of such strong protest, Shiv feels very sad.

Amar, Meena's friend, realized a protest assembly, where the followers of Professor Shiv Murthy, all along with his colleagues, Dr. Amit and Dr. Menon and a bus full of students from Meena's KNU, all have gathered, distributing flyers and pamphlets in opposition to fundamentalism. There are people holding placards, uproaring slogans such as "Stop TALIBANIZATION OF INDIA", "HISTORY

DESTROYED!”, “WHOSE AFRAID OF THE MANCH?” (145).

All over the place there is an ambiance of protest, fuming speeches, and meetings, rallies, out crying of slogans by the followers of the Manch on one side, and on the other the followers of Professor Shiv Murthy such as, organizations like, Secular Women Against Patriarchy (SWAP), Forum Against Hindu Terrorism (FAHT), Peoples Association of Secular Scientists (PASS), unite hands with each other to support Professor Shiv Murthy. The daily routine of Professor Shiv Murthy and Meena, has become too frantic. They have started chasing their own tails and putting their views on history and its interpretations. Narrating their chaotic life, Githa Hariharan writes:

Shiv is losing count of interviews, meetings, telephone calls. Meena has forgotten about her itchy knee. She sits in her bed, phone in hand, a general on the battlefield direction operations. The occasional awkward silence that would sit between them in the early days is now filled; they have more than enough to talk about, all safe subjects (117).

Prof. Shiv and Meena in cooperation understand that they are the part of an army, making development against these fundamentalist forces. Some more incidents of this type have been enumerated by Amar. Incidents like Campaigns in opposition to Christians, the assassination of Australian messenger Graham Staines and his two children, the assault on artiste M. F. Hussain for painting Hindu goddesses in the naked form, blackening of faces of teachers in Goa for setting “politically incorrect exams” and the recollection of a number on the freedom struggle, the commotion of shooting of a big screen on the plight of Hindu widows in Benaras, all are noticed by Amar and Meena. This incident gives milieu to their individual story, where the identical situation has been created around them by these traditional fundamentalists. These examples show how freedom of expression has been covered up by these extremists.

Like Basava, Professor Shiv Murthy also favours reality, truthfulness and reliability. Professor Shiv Murthy thinks that a cast like Meena is also wrapped around him. Because of this he is not capable to progress properly. Dr. Menon also informs Professor Shiv Murthy about a comparable disagreement, where a play in printed in 1986, arranged as a text, formed stress in culture and it was removed from the university syllabus. Here once again the extremist forces and accuses the play of portraying Basava as a normal creature “as a coward; implying that he committed suicide; casting aspersions on the 'chastity' of some women; and letting some characters use obscene language” (109-110). Due to the government regulation the play was removed from the university syllabus. Open-minded views have been a matter of disagreement, where there is repression of fact and authenticity. The vice-chancellor of the KGU, appears on the television in an interrogative session, he says that he is going to shape a group to look into the matter of destruction and hooliganism on the university campus. He is bound to offer a campus without violence and unfriendliness.

People from all walks of life come to unite both forums fundamentalism as well as liberalism. Itihas Surakasha Manch has its own followers and Professor Shiv Murthy also has an army of liberals. Shiv's offspring Tara from the USA, tells him that she is receiving communication from her companions in Delhi and some Indians in the USA. She says to Shiv that “It's sort of weird and embarrassing to explain why you have written something against our temples and priests all that. It's only after coming to the US that many of us have learnt to appreciate Indian tradition” (112). Tara, devoid of realizing the fact, thinks that her father has written something in opposition to Indian culture. Indian culture is a quintessence of religious studies and rich legendary, so scripting or inquiring in opposition to these mythological ideas is not suitable. These are the ways of life, which have been respected by natives from generation to generation and anything in opposition to customs and traditions of a meticulous group of people is not tolerable to the social order. While Meena thinks that these viewpoints should be analyzed and discussed before the society and new honest things should be brought into the notice of community.

Professor Shi Murthy's wife Rekha suggests him not to go in opposition to the grain. She reminds Shiv Murthy that he should not stop thinking about that he is “dealing with hoodlums who have pulled down mosques and churches that have stood for so many years. They've engineered riots, for god's sake what's a little violence to them? Any they are so powerful now” (155).

Everywhere it is in the air that Prof. Shiv has distorted sacred image of Basava. Because of these protests, he thinks that for writing a lesson of history, he should be careful about not hurting the sentiments of public, neglecting authentic historical evidences. Anything that is written against the public sentiments, even if it is true or is proved by the scientific study cannot be expressed honestly. At his home, Shiv is provided with a security guard by the university, who lives in Prof. Shiv's compound and keeps an eye on visitors of Prof. Shiv. There is an article about Dr. Murthy that reads:

About thirty young men claiming to be students look the university authorities by surprise when they stormed into the History Department on Thursday afternoon. The incident has been 'explained' by the Itihas Suraksha Manch as 'a spontaneous protest by students against the distortion of heroic historical figures and the anti-Hindu bias' of a lesson on medieval history written by the professor in question. (169)

In spite of powerful protests, Professor Shiv Murthy never knuckles under to fundamentalists' demand. He is obstinate to not to modify his views. As the time passes, tornado of protest diminishes by degrees. As “The papers, the TV, the university, the Manch, Amar's band of saviours-all seem to have forgotten the notorious professor, along with the glories of Kalyana's temples and the truth about Basava's life and death. Both supporters and opponents have either been stunned into silence or sated by the most recent acts of violence” (181). Meena's spread now has been detached. Her leg is healed now. She is prepared to be taught to walk again. Amar comes to Meena to get her back to her hostel. The remembrance of Shiv's dead father disappears completely from Shiv Murthy's mind. And at last, in the end of the novel, Githa Hariharan writes:

Even Shiv, despite a long record of lost opportunities has found his way to the brink; from where he can if he dares, make the necessary leap off the precipice. He has used his father's memory like a walking stick en route to this first time risk-taking venture. It is Meena who put this stick in his hand again, coaxed his limping legs in the direction he knew better than she must be taken. Now the stick is superfluous that is what Meena and her unlikely allies in contingency, his father, Basava, and the thought-policing touts of Itihas Suraksha Manch have forced Shiv to see. Once he throws away all safe crutches he can truly in the present. Be free to be curious, to speculate; to debate, dissent. Reaffirm the value of the only heirloom he needs from the past, the right to know a thing in all the ways possible. (194)

The novel ends with the disappearance of Meena, who having dispensed with crutches, leans as an alternative on Shiv Murthy's father's old walking stick, as she makes her way to the car and waiting to get her back to her old life. Commenting on the theme of the novel, Sarita Prabhakar comments that “In the novel, there are other real-life stories taken from contemporary life which run parallel to the main narrative and further emphasise the insidious role of the communal forces” (69).

The first noticeable conflict rising in the novel is between fundamentalism and liberalism. It forms the thematic texture of this novel. Fundamentalism projects a faith in old, inflexible and traditional conventions of religious conviction whereas liberalism supports impartial, unbiased and freethinking. Fundamentalism, in this novel, is represented by Itihas Suraksha Manch, led by its extremist head, Anant Tripathi, while freethinking is represented by Professor Shiv Murthy.

Professor Shiv Murthy's lesson on Basava, a south Indian saint poet, has landed him in problem. His lesson has formed a tornado in the social order because of its extremely contentious representation of Basava's life. Basava, in the culture of south of India, has been considered as a saint and an enormous social



reformer whose social reforms have brought equality and fraternity in society. The entire life of Basava had been a matter of enormous admiration to the people and his actions had been a foundation of motivation to forthcoming generations. Basava had genuinely shown his concern for the untouchables and subjugated. He tried to take away prejudice and caste system of elevating the rank of these low-caste sections through his reforming poems, Vachanas. About the controversies relating to Basava's life, A. K. Ramanujan tells:

The biography of Basavanna has many contradictory sources: controversial edicts, deifying accounts by Virsaiva followers, poetic life-histories, pejorative accounts by his Jaina opponents mentioned in the vacans of contemporary and later saints. Basavanna was a political activist and social reformer, minister to a king in a troubled century; it is not surprising that he should have been praised as a prophet by followers and condemned as zealot and conspirator by his enemies, of whom he had many. (43)

Professor Shiv Murthy has analyzed Basava's life systematically on the basis of his own historical studies and archaeological surveys. So as an alternative on being misled by different traditional, verbal narratives widespread about Basava's life, he puts forward a factual and genuine portrayal of Basava's life, opposite to the widespread viewpoint about Basava. But this story of Basava's life has not been acknowledged by some fundamentalist groups, as these groups feel that Professor Shiv Murthy has written a bit of ill-repute that has belittled the God-like representation of Basava. Itihas Surakasha Manch, on behalf of fundamentalists and bigots, begins protest irately in opposition to Professor Shiv Murthy and demands a written admission of guilt all along with the submission of his re-written lesson to the Manch for its appropriate assessment.

But at the same time there are people, within and outer of his educational world who not only support Professor Shiv Murthy but also start an operation for impartial and neutral thinking about the past and its interpretations. These people support secularism and liberalism while standing by Professor Shiv Murthy. In one of her interrogative sessions with *theDeccan Herald*, Githa Hariharan figures out her inspiration of writing this novel:

As a writer, and more importantly as a citizen who has high stakes in the society I live in, I have been very much part of various movements. Over the last several years, along with a lot of several other writers, artists, filmmakers, I have felt very strongly that we are travelling in a direction that is deeply regressive, and both as a citizen and a writer I have felt that I must take this head on, and that was the general background that was going on in my head more specifically, in 1999, after my last novel *When Dreams Travel* came out, as I was mulling over all these things, I broke my knee and was laid up in bed for weeks together. It was a good time to actually think about how I would construct this novel, how I would take up an issue that I was not only interested in but also living through. And so I began writing. I was midway through my novel, when to my shock I found that eminent historians Sarkar and Paniker had their volume on the freedom struggle recalled. In fact I had to stop writing for a few weeks because it was almost as if the media coverage and the kind of historians' fear was both similar yet different from my fictional situation. (Web)

In this way an open disagreement flanked by fundamentalism and liberalism surfaces in the novel and where liberalism and neutral thinking is exposed greater to extremism and prejudice. Professor Shiv Murthy, has been a defender of liberalism and secularism while facing a powerful disapproval of the community and the Manch, refusing to admit defeat to the demands of Itihas Suraksha Manch. He has written a lesson that has been based on his deep and technical analysis of chronological details, so bending down to the bigots is not feasible for him.

Chronological writing demands impartiality while analyzing the chronological characters or



actions happened in the past. The analysis of a chronological character should be done on the basis of historical proofs and archaeological surveys. Maintaining facts aloof from fiction has been a necessary required for chronological analysis. Romila Thapar says, "Historians are responsible for the interpretations because they are the ones who are interpreting it. The evidence does not speak by itself. The historian has to make the evidence speak and so what one's listening to is the historian making the evidence speak" (58). In the analysis of any chronological figure impartiality plays a very important role as a historian needs honest analysis of the concerned one or happening.

Impartiality stands for rational analysis of the chronological figure irrespective of their fixed splendid involvement to history. Biased analysis which is totally based on a person's own prejudiced view about the events and characters creates puzzlement because in that case reality can be interpreted in a different way leading to fake interpretation of chronological events. Biased analysis cannot replicate the fact and reality of the chronological facts.

There is an inherent disagreement between the parable and actuality that openly surfaces in the novel. Myths are the stories which usually do not have any written minutes in human civilizations and transferred verbally from generation to generation. Defining the legends, M. H. Abrams says:

. . . A myth is one story in a mythology- a system of hereditary stories which were once believed to be true by a particular cultural group and which served to explain (in terms of the intentions and actions of supernatural beings) why the world is as it is and things happen as they do and to establish the rationale for social customs and observances and the sanctions for the rules by which men conduct their lives.

Professor Shiv Murthy, in the novel, has tried to sort out actuality from the old age conventional legends which produce a disagreement between falsehood and actuality. While analyzing the character of Basava Professor Shiv Murthy takes alternative to truthfulness and certainty that figure the base of his portrayal of Basava. He searches the truth about Basava's life on the basis of chronological proofs. His report of Basava is based on true chronological proofs. His Basava is unbiased not biased; his Basava is true not mythological. He does not believe Basava as an icon of religious studies but believes him as a genuine figure in history. He examines the nature of Basava in the perspective of his age in which Basava lived a life of a fighter, as a statesman and as a financial minister of Kalyana. His surveillance is based upon genuine and dependable sources of the past and his own archaeological surveys of Humpi ruins of Vijaynagar. He concentrates on Basava's involvement to his state and people rather than his religious or celestial life which has been traced in history with different fabricated stories. What type of a connection Basava used to take pleasure in with his fellow courtiers or what had been his demeanor while trading with state affairs, all these are analyzed by Professor Shiv Murthy and his portrayal of Basava is considered as sacred in the social order and public feels that he has not treated Basava with suitable respect.

In tradition, Basava has been considered as heavenly and religious not as a normal human being or as a statesman. It was understood that Basava used to get pleasure from heavenly powers with which he could do miracles for the community. It was understood that lord Shiva had sent his bull on earth as Basava. He had sent his bull because of the dreadful conditions of the ethical values of the social order where fidelity to divinity started declining, making people's life unhappy. So being the part of the lord Shiva, Basava used to have powers to execute wonders and miracles which he used in order to put aside people from twinge and diseases. He candidly disgusted in opposition to the caste classification of his society. Thus permanent conflict between mythological and true portrayal of Basava gives augment to a disagreement between fable and actuality also. While remarking upon the disagreement in the novel, Sarita Prabhakar tells:

As a historian and professor, Shiv had made an attempt to disentangle the reality from the

myth. What he has emphasized was that Basava was not “a cardboard saint singing syrupy sweet devotional songs, only concerned with hereafter” (140). He was a social reformer and a thinker who examined everything that was traditionally 'sanctioned'. He questions the idea of 'the Hindu' world as being a homogenous whole and protested against all kinds of discriminations. He gathered around him a number of social revolutionaries known as veershaivas warriors of Shiva and the movement came to be known as virsaiva movement. Together with them, he attempted to experiment with a community that 'sought to excluded no one', a community in which 'cross currents could co-exist', in which 'rapids and the most placid of waters were fellow realized' (107). The movement wrought a social upheaval and the city of Kalyana was ultimately burnt. But Basava and his companions left a legacy, a legacy Shiv is now heir to it but in very different way he would have liked to believe that it is Basava who links the year 1168 and 2000 but he is realized to see that “it is not the dissident leader who is the critical link but the same hate mongers, the same manches that have sprouted in two times, centuries apart”(66).

Therefore, brushing out-of-the-way all traditions from actuality Professor Shiv Murthy dares the social order, on behalf of the factual portrait of a poet and social reformer Basava's life.

A disagreement flanked by the past and modernity also comes to the front, when the modern description of Basava's life does not exist up to the prospect of people and legendary description of Basava's life which has been extremely accepted amongst public is permissible to be known in public. The past is the study of actions and community of history. Scripting about events of the past, people requires a deep methodical, logical study of chronological proofs and archaeological sources. The reading of Professor Shiv Murthy on Basava, in modern times, is based on his firm research effort and investigation of chronological proofs. Professor Shiv Murthy analyses Basava impartially, keeping widespread legends and tales of Basava at bay. Modern description of Basava's life which is told by Professor Shiv Murthy, is not acknowledged by the people. Barely legendary and conventional description, which has been widespread, is permissible to be known to all. This creates a disagreement between the past and modernity. History, which is the study of the past, demands an objective approach in scripting about the proceedings of the past. But a disagreement emerges when a biased interpretation of the past by historians inter mingles mythology and fictions in chronological writings. In modern times, chronological figures and proceedings are being analyzed impartially on the basis of historical and archeological substantiations. Modernity has brought a modification in chronological interpretations, by promoting impartiality and neutrality to chronological scripting. So due to modernity, the past once again is being evaluated in the beam of genuineness and authenticity of chronological testimonies.

Modern assessment of Basava's life and his involvement to the society of Kalyana which has been done by Professor Shiv Murthy is not acknowledged by the Itihas Suraksha Manch and other fundamentalists crowd of the social order. Only a prejudiced and fabricated chronological description which has been up till now well-known to public for centuries is accepted by the social order. This disagreement between the past and modernity becomes more multifaceted when the past demands for impartiality and unbiased evaluation of chronological proceedings. In modern times due to the development of science and technologies the work of exploration of chronological proceedings has turn out to be more genuine. The genuineness of any chronological personality or occasion can be effortlessly dogged by applying technical methodologies and techniques that not only decide the reality but also marsh off the misconceptions or rumours about everything. Modernity brings progression in any research labor as due the fleeting of time, our acquaintance about the past gets wealthier and wealthier. The past on the other hand brings the rudiments of fictions also if it is not in printed impartially and neutrally. There can be many disingenuous interpretations of chronological proceedings that took place in the past. A contradictory circumstance between the past and modernity can never take place if the past has its roots in

impartial honest explanations of proceedings or personalities. Disagreement arises when the past loses its position of accurateness and straightforwardness.

Professor Shiv Murthy, being a thinker, also undergoes ruthless conflicts which he faces outwardly and inwardly. His inner disagreement springs up in the shape of his predicament that he faces as an academician and historian. His inner disagreement can be realized when he faces defenselessness as a presumed professor of history. In the eyes of the public, he is considered as a educated professor of a prominent university, but he, in spite of being an learned professor, having power to convey his views on the past, is incapable to convey his views about Basava liberally because of the demands which has been put on him by the Itihas Suraksha Manch which also gets the support of the public whose approaches have been hurt by Professor Shiv Murthy. The ever increasing radicalism and fundamentalism have concealed his free voice; he is not agreed with any rights to verbalize on the past, for he thinks that his study and new conclusion need a certificate by the extremists since only those things can be allowed to the public which does not hurt anyone's thoughts and are not at all contentious in character. A generally acknowledged history of the life of Basava is not feasible till Professor Shiv Murthy writes something agreeable and interesting about Basava considerate for the sentiments of community which should not be injure Just because Shiv Murthy is a well-known professor, it does not mean that he should inscribe something contentious or unclear about the saint poet Basava. Professor Shiv Murthy must be concerned about the feelings of the people and he instead of creating conflicts or controversies should hold up conventional and legendary views which have been transferred from generation to generation incessantly and whose honesty cannot be challenged. His inner disagreement becomes more flagrant, when he starts getting abhorrent mails from various parts of the nation and also gets the pressure for his life for scripting a bit contentious about an extremely appreciated character. Even if he has not in print something contentious, he needs permission from the group of the hard core extremists who will analyze the in print work of from the different angles and once the in print effort gets its approval by the extremists, only then it can be approved to syllabus. Professor Shiv Murthy feels powerful demands of fundamentalists and this generates a multifaceted mental disagreement. Githa Hariharan, while projecting this inner disagreement of Professor Shiv Murthy states:

He is an academic; he argues not some rabble-activist. He is a professor after all, not a two inch newspaper column hero. Basava`s man is ready with his rejoinder. Why pretend you are s professor if you can't stand up to someone, telling you what to think? How to think?  
(64)

Professor Shiv Murthy's departed father inspires Professor Shiv Murthy to write down and examine honestly about the past with accurateness and honesty removing all doubts and confusions. Githa Hariharan very harshly remarks upon the reduction of space for free expression as a consequence of the divergence of the society along class and communal lines in the novel:

History, its layered terrain of past mastering into present, shrinks to the size of a module, a black-and-white booklet of lessons. Then that goes. There is only a lone orphaned atom left behind, a sullen, impoverished particle of knowledge. The world and its multitudinous mysteries are reduced to precarious survival on a crude seesaw; saint versus leader, saint versus man. Golden Age versus Dark Ages. Hindu versus Muslim, Hindu versus Christian, anti-Hindu, pro- Hindu. Secularist, soft Hindu, rabid Hindu. (150)

The beginning of disagreement takes position when reality which has been up till now concealed appears suddenly and begins confronting dishonesty which has been widespread for centuries in communal ambience. Professor Shiv Murthy, in spite hard disapproval by the hardcore Hindu extremists does not give up to the demands of the bigots. In addition, Githa Hariharan has depicted an outer

disagreement of Professor Shiv Murthy's life in terms of bodily battle between two dissimilar views representing fundamentalism and modernism. Dr. Arya, a colleague of Prof. Shiv, who supports traditional and mythical version of Basava's life, takes up a gauntlet in opposition to Professor Shiv Murthy and holds him by his neckline in a robust of anger. Professor Shiv Murthy's outer clash with Dr. Arya is a paradigm of a fight between fundamentalist forces and tolerance.

Distant from this, there has been an fundamental disagreement in Professor Shiv Murthy's dead father's life. His father had been a dedicated freedom fighter all his life. Throughout the freedom struggle, he passionately took part in the freedom movement and went to jail many times but after the freedom of India from the British empire, his country, for whom he fought unselfishly, did not live up to his prospect. His fellow countrymen had elapsed his priceless involvement to the freedom struggle. His unselfish dedication had no meaning for his fellow countrymen. This created a disagreement in Professor Shiv Murthy's father's life which he could not stand and at last, left his house in dissatisfaction, without telling his relations. Professor Shiv Murthy's mother tried to look for him but she could not locate her life partner anywhere. His father had been powerless to hit equilibrium between his own philosophy and quick shifting world. Professor Shiv Murthy's father had been a representation of devastated dreams and aspirations, who became sickened with the contemporary ways of life.

As a result, Githa Hariharan has skilfully wicker numerous types of conflicts into the thematic consistency of *In Times of Siege* which will exhibit endless in a country like India.

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14  
**THE HUMILIATION FOR WOMEN IN  
 INDIAN SOCIETY IN VIEW OF KAMALA DASS**

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**Abstract:**

*It has become normal in Indian society to have the harassment and humiliation against women. Since the women are considered to be the weaker sex in the society the domination of the men is much. Many writers show the inner world of their characters through their writings. Mostly the portrayal of man-woman relationship is influenced and conditioned by the social culture and tradition. Mostly women are culturally and emotionally dependent on men and disruption in relationship proves to be a loss and self. Anita Desai, Premchand, Kamala Markandaya, Kavita Daswani, Alain Danielou, Mahasweta Devi, Shashi Deshpande, Chitra Banerjee, Tony Morrison, Nikita Singh, Durjoy Datta, Manju Kapur, Clifford Odets, Arundhati Roy, Chetan Bhagat, Philip Roth, Margaret Atwood, Kushwant Singh, Jaishree Misra, Sahro Ahmed Koshin, Anita Nair, Alice Walker, Bama, Bapsi Sidhwa, Paule Marshal, Githa Hariharan, Terry Tempest Williams, Maya Angelou, Shoba De, Bharati Mukherjee, Anita Rau Badmini, Rama Mehta, Sudha Moorthi, Lorraine Hansberry, Radhika Jha, Thomas Hardy, Kiran Desai and above all Kamala Das bring out to the society what they experienced in their personal lives. They also fight for the issues related to woman gender discrimination, male domination, oppressive culture, domestic violence, sexual harassment, reproductive rights, property right, equal opportunities for career and business, liberation and empowerment of women. Since they have experienced the humiliation from the society, they are more aware that the future generation should not be affected by it.*

**Key Words:** *Humiliation, man-woman relationship, emotionally dependent, disruption.*

Every nation has its own culture and attitude. This culture differs from village to village, city to city and so on. It forms its own norms which are to be followed by the people of the particular area. It should lead the society to growth. It should mould the human beings in a positive way. Earlier whatever the rituals were followed, they basically tortured and humiliated the human beings in some or the other way. More than that, the women were suppressed by the men in the name of rituals. The rituals that act against the women are in various ways. They are;

The concept of marriage in itself has a kind of partiality. The rituals which are the part and parcel of the marriage are favourable only for male. Man and woman join hands together only in marriage promising that they don't part each other in any occasion and they share their joys and sorrows with each other. It should be the base of any marriage but the focus of marriage is on something else, not on unity. Anita Desai through all her novels portrays the culture of the society and its injustice to the women. The novel, *Cry the Peacock*, holds this view in a vivid manner.

How little he knew of my suffering or of how to comfort me... Telling me to go to sleep while he worked at His papers, he did not give another thought to me, to either The soft, willing body, or the lonely wanting mind that Waited near his bed (*Cry the Peacock* 95).

It is not the fate of women alone to suffer in the life. Both the man and woman are the sharers of suffering. In "God of Small Things", Arundhati Roy shows that the hold of patriarchy and power dynamics in the family and the society. It is through the dynamics of relations that we learn how the domination and subjugation work. Ammu, the tragic heroine of the novel, is the most conspicuous representative of the



fourth generation who died at a young age of thirty one which is described as “not old, not young” and “viable die-able age”. Her suffering started at a very young age. Her father Pappachi insisted that college education was unnecessary for a girl, so she had to leave Delhi after schooling (Insights 95). Here, the culture holds that the women are inferior to men. It is the culture made by men and should be followed forever.

The women suffered a lot earlier as the widows in the name of widow. Except some people, others became blind to the atrocities like this. In “The God of Small things”, we also find the dowry system as the cultural phenomenon. After Ammu stopped her schooling, she waited for marriage proposals but no proposal came her way because her father did not have enough money to raise a suitable dowry. She thought of escaping from her ill-tempered father and long suffering mother (Insight 95). Prostitution has become the world-culture. It is the unwritten law for the women especially of poverty to follow it. The stereotypic rules and rituals of the patriarchal society determine the status of women which can...(Insight 29).

The custom of checking virginity in a particular village is prevailing till now. After the marriage of the couple, on the first night the sexual intercourse takes place. In order to check the virginity, a white cloth is spread on the floor and the couple celebrates the first night ceremony. The elders of the village sit and chat outside the house. Next morning, the elders go to the particular room where the couple had their first night ceremony. If they find the blood of the bride on the white cloth, then she is considered to be virgin and if it is not so, she is considered to not to be virgin and is driven away to her house.

Kamala Das has rebelled against social conventions and bourgeois morality. She shuns hypocrisy and petty-mindedness. And her confessions are intense and lucid. Here is one such confession, in lyrical prose, about her unfulfilled longing for ideal love.

I was looking for an ideal lover I was looking for the one who went to Mathura and forgot to return to his Radha. Perhaps I was seeking the cruelty that lies in the depths of man's heart. Otherwise why did I not get my peace in the arms of my husband? Subconsciously I had hoped for the death of my ego. I was looking for an executioner whose axe would leave my head into two.

This idealistic approach is also a gift of her background, a sort of inheritance, or influence as some might like to call it. Her great grandmother's younger sister, who died some thirty-five years ago, had left behind a bunch of poems and they were all about Krishna. "To him she had been faithful. My chastity is my only gift to you, oh Krishna, she wrote in her last poem. Her writings disturbed me." Kamala Das also echoes the same refrain in her life and poetry. She is a woman "broken by life's trophies." Her life story should evoke more sympathy than hatred.

In more ways than one, it is an incomplete story with a somewhat abrupt ending. It is not a literary autobiography, though poems have been included as epigraphs. The names of people and personalities have been wisely excluded and the only names that occur in the book are those of relatives. And as such what emerges from the book is just one aspect of the story of a powerful personality. One wishes Kamala Das had also taken account of her own literary personality and her experiences of literary figures, complete with their whims and fallacies.

Nearly a year ago I returned to the Nalapat house, a middle-aged woman, broken by life's bitter trophies, and found among the old books some containing Ammalu's poems. I dusted the notebooks and carried them up to my room. Most of the poems were about KRISHNA. To Him she had been faithful. My chastity is my only gift to you, oh Krishna, she wrote in her last poem. Her writings disturbed me.

Another school-mate was plump Devaki, who once wrote me a love letter and handed it to me most furtively, hiding behind the school privy. “Don't read it now,” she said, “take it home and read it when you are alone. I have unloaded my mind, my heart and my soul.” I was mystified by the words. When I reached

home and my grandmother found the letter in my pocket, she did not allow me to read it beyond the opening sentence, "my dearest darling." My grandmother was very upset. She told me that I was not to associate with Devaki who had proved herself to be wicked, writing such letters to innocents like me.

There was a boy in the eighth standard which was adjacent to my class in the same dusty hall. He was considered an outlaw by the teachers who took a sadistic delight in punishing him every day. He was handsome and had a dimple on his right cheek which appeared only when he smiled. I could hardly take my eyes off his face. I was so infatuated with his charm. Once when he wrote some obscenity at recess on the blackboard, the class master slapped him hard. I could, from my class, see the red weals on his cheek. Govinda Kurup, the outlaw, merely smiled and muttered something to his benchmate, making him blush and hang down his head. Get out of the class, shouted the angry teacher, Govinda Kurup, leave the class immediately. The boy kilted up his dhoti and walked away whistling. At that moment I wanted to follow him and tell him that if he were wicked, I was fond of wickedness too...

American poet and activist Muriel Rukeyser once said "What would happen if one woman told the truth about her life? The world would split open". What Rukeyser recognized was a certain unspeakability of the feminine world, in comparison with a narrative that for centuries had been exclusively male. Reading the autobiography of Kamala Das, one of the foremost poets of the Indian subcontinent, one really has the feeling that with a simple act of sincerity the world would indeed split open, letting out demons and demons. When this book came out, in fact, the prudish Indian society was scandalized at the outspoken woman who could so freely talk about her extramarital affairs and her teenage lesbian crushes. The effect for the reader is now somehow softened by the dozens of women writers who have recently made sex and desire the subject of their books, even in squeamish India (Shobhaa De, whom I haven't read and whom I will not rush to read, not because I'm prudish, but for the same reason that I don't read Sophie Kinsella!).

Kamala Das looks very determined to revolt against the conventional society's definition of womanhood. Even she challenges the traditional sex roles ( Insight 122 123). Kamala was like all other girls in possession of all the qualities such as beauty, softness, shyness and etc. She, in her fifteen, was herself enthralled by a series of older women, unmarried aunts, teachers, women who were family friends. She talks of her friend who had the masculine grace:

"She kissed my lips then, and whispered, you are so sweet, so very sweet, I have never met anyone so sweet, my darling, my little darling.... It was the first kiss of its kind in my life. Perhaps my mother may have kissed me while I was an infant but after that no one, not even my grandmother, had bothered to kiss me. I was unnerved. I could hardly breathe. She kept stroking my hair and kissing my face and my throat all through that night while sleep came to me in snatches and with..."

It is not often that one comes across an autobiography which is so outspoken, so controversial, so positively honest, so lyrical in its narrative. Perhaps no other Indian woman writer has made more startling self-revelations than Kamala Das in *My Story*. There are critics who argue that much of it is a concoction of her richly fertile imagination. Even if it is so, it is just superb. But that it is mere concoction strikes one as strange if one has known Kamala Das personally. Moreover, one cannot think of any woman, more so an Indian woman, who would invite abuses, negative criticism and hatred and bring an aura of eroticism around her purely to create sensation-not even the strongest protagonist of women's liberation.

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## THE CONTRADICTIONAL FACES OF RUSHDIE'S WOMEN IN *MIDNIGHT'S CHILDREN*: THE CONTROLLERS OR THE CONTROLLED?

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**Abstract:**

*For protuberantly emphasizing on the intramural cosmos of female characters in his novels where women perform a conspicuous part in configuring the destined route of man, Salman Rushdie is globally eulogized. Women appear to be purposefully restrained from receiving the heart-rending connection, although she is correspondingly worthwhile in a male governing community and her devotion and endearment remains unprecedented. In Rushdie's novels, women agonize from a feeling of estrangement and are the sufferer of the despotic orthodox establishment. In spite of their commitment and probity, women are detached through dissatisfied adoration, exasperation, rootlessness, disenchantment and perfidy. Women's posture endures to be abhorrent and repugnant in the life of men. Women characters in *Midnight's Children* carry their womanly obligations homogeneous to that of a man. *Midnight's Children* suggests womanly practice of plenitude and profusion which the female recipient is ineligible to discern and bangs the conception of continuousness, factuality, individuality of the protagonist and concreteness. Feminists assert that novel echoes its own idiosyncrasy of overpowering women, which they abort to observe, being the acceptor of the narrative mode and too preoccupied in the prudent conventional anecdote. The article endeavours to examine the antagonistic stance of the female in Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* and their substantiality in the existence of the male characters with paramount prominence on the characters of Padma, Amina Sinai, Mary Periera, Parvati-the-witch and Brass Monkey.*

**Key-words:** *Rootlessness, female exasperation, restraint, male-domination, overpowering women.*

A voluble raconteur with his pious bequest of blabber, Salman Rushdie, the British Indian novelist solitarily recovers the English language to the convention of magic realism which protracted its wings from Cervantes through Sterne to Milan Kundera and Gabriel Marquez. Born in Bombay on 19th June 1947, the event accorded with the precisely substantial occasion in Indian history as approximately a hundred years of colonial dominion was about to be terminated. Having the masterpieces such as *Grimus*(1975), *Shame*(1983), *Satanic Verses*(1988), *Haroun and the Sea of Stories*(1990) to his credit, Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* (1981) propelled him to literary eminence. Characters are taken from diverse receptacle of Indian life in the *Midnight's Children* and the female characters are exceptionally cited at the degree of the raconteur, though a vast analogous space is allocated for the male characters. As the female characters execute an indispensable task in encasing the protagonist's individuality and incur their survival to the principal male character, the virile personas enjoy additional erudite independence. Ostensibly, the female being ambiguous are the sole entities that create the victor. The timbre is stowed for the female characters in *Midnight's Children* through the pronouncement of the narrator, Saleem Sinai in the chapter 'Love in Bombay': "Women have always been the ones to change my life: Mary Pereira, Evie Burns, Jamila Singer, Parvati-the-witch must answer for who I am; and the widow, who I'm keeping for the end: and after the end; Padma my Goddess of dung. Women have fixed me alright, but perhaps they were never central- perhaps the place should have filled, the hole in the centre of me which was my inheritance from my grandfather Aadam Aziz, was occupied for too long by my voices"(Rushdie 266).

It is a woman who steers the family to pecuniary solidity when Ahmed Sinai seeks refuge in the bottle of jinns and other intoxicants after being crumpled by inauspicious fortune and monetary catastrophe. She contests and triumphs a judicial skirmish for her dipsomaniac husband and acquires plenty by utilizing the currency in the race course. Female characters outrun their male correlates in accomplishment, admonishing potential, housework in the routine enterprise of the concrete macrocosm. After accomplishing to rescue Saleem from the opponent's grasp, Parvati obtains a son by another man since her man is unproductive. On the other hand, the Brass Monkey avenges Evelin for the erroneousness to her brother. Women are arrested in the atrocious blaze of scrupulously inferior force and a faculty that swaddles the sensibility, even though characters such as Amina, Pia Aunty, Mary, Parvati and Padma are ratified as mothers and vigorous facets of Maya. Mary Pereira perpetrates a grave misdeed by swapping the babies while Amina is a deceitful wife like Lila Sabarmati. Born as Mumtaz, Aadam and Naseem's second daughter, Amina Sinai weds Nadir Khan. Mumtaz is divorced and then marries Ahmed Sinai, once the family discovers that they never consummated their relationship. Ahmed later converts her name to Amina symbolizing her newfangled existence. Parvati is an agnostic who procreates her son from Shiva, Saleem's nemesis after luring and enthralling Saleem to marry her. Similar to Parvati, Vanita too reproduces an illegitimate child. Existent disposition and sentiment are repudiated to the women characters by bestowing nicknames like- Reverend Mother, Parvati the witch, Nussie the-duck, the Brass Monkey. The narrator remains the cynosure and rebuffs bashfulness to his recipients and thus installs his own rendition of chronicle and anecdotes. The female characters ensemble two contradictory enterprises and alleviate the author's venture of designing the evolution of the central character.

Stained in black and white, the blackness of the female characters wound Saleem to empower him to contest against all abominable instances in life, while the whiteness overtures to assist him to outlast. Amina being reckoned as the meticulous mother as well as the adulterous wife, Mary as affectionate ayah and a miscreant, Grandmother as a tender housekeeper as well as an despotic mother, Parvati as a doting and solicitous companion and a witch and Jamila as an enthusiastic singer as well as cynical to affectionate sensations distinctly details the juxtaposition of white and black colours. Euro-American feminism cannot be the specification for a person whose psyche is carved by Eastern as well as Western perspective as he wrote *Midnight's Children* in a postcolonial Indian backdrop. Rushdie's magnum opus depicts the female characters both as angel and devil unlike the Western literary texts which kingpin a single strand. Woman, who is venerated as an emblem of Shakti in the Hindu pantheon is often looked upon detrimentally. The legitimacy of feminine wisdom moves adrift in the stabilizing delineation of women. Rushdie's works manifest a keen cognizance of women firmness and temperament as he proportionately focuses on an emotive sphere of the female characters and underscores the distinctiveness and pursuit for liberation through the depiction of the profoundly hidden dispute in his characters. Abandonment being the paramount component, both forsakenness and proclamation which leads to the advent of disappointment, despair, insanity, thwart and low esteem of human being prevails as elementary truth of life. Alike his grandfather, Saleem's fate has to yield to the synergy of the tensions of "women and history". Saleem in *Midnight's Children* ceases by signifying the "connection between Mother India" and the mother statures he confronts: "Women have made me; and also unmade. It is, perhaps, a matter of connection: is not Mother India, Bharat-Mata, commonly thought of as female? And, as you know, there's no escape from her." (Rushdie 565) Rushdie's reader has to explore and fathom India through the state-of-the-art approach in the fictive tone, just as Saleem's grandfather explored Naseem. The protrusion of women in men's illustration of torment is performed through the modern maneuver of carnal character alteration. By examining the women as the torturers, impeachers and governors of Saleem Sinai, we can conceptualize his pitiful image. The women proceed but the male twirls 'like a blushing virgin' when Padma offers to wed Saleem. Padma insinuates to afflict Saleem through her abrupt retirement for two days and thus distresses and outrages him. Padma arrives with an elixir of love made with herb to invigorate Saleem's verve and



virility and thus abandon her injured pride. Female impact emerges to be agonizing to the narrator's soul. Saleem's masculinity, passion and sexual urge are ingested by the widow.

The liberating mode is ahead of the female reader's ingenuity and emancipates literature from the shackles of male sovereignty instigated by the male author. The approximation of their men's skill is never enhanced by the women as it is Soraya and Padma who yield to their men with the cognizance of their aberration and culpability while the men refuses to advance for them. Women are squashed by the male in the paternal society while male is entrusted the contingency to judge penalty. Amina is unnerved by her baby in womb and is marked as a perfidious spouse when she clandestinely approaches her ex-husband. Even Saleem as a young child who does not retain any objective to penalize his carouser father who coquette with the Anglo secretaries and fantasize to disrobe them, schemes to punish his mother for her adultery. The population perceives Lila Sabarmati's death as a gallant deed though she is assassinated by her husband. In the parallel civilization where Mary is tormented by a male apparition and Parvati has to succumb for her transgression, Shiva determines his own retribution. Saleem's narration fizzles to make Padma rely on his outlandish tale of midnight's children actions, though Padma is enthralled and bemused with the magnetism of his disposition, recital and far flung elocution. She is incompetent to fathom Saleem the narrator, still she understands Saleem the man. Similar to Soraya in *Haroun and the Sea of Stories*, Padma flounder to grasp the vigor of art and story. We anticipate a chutnification of postmodern metafictional autobiography in Saleem's representation of upper-lower, dream-real, fact-fiction, English-hinglish. Indistinguishable to the multitudinous verities of India, Saleem has several fathers, mothers, sisters and families. As Rushdie's own essence becomes inherent in Saleem, Saleem's India unites with the erudite India of the author wherein rest the chutnification of a postmodern novel. The author's bigotry is sketched through Padma's impotence to master the story which is his own fabrication. The narrator in *Midnight's Children* deployed his cognition and strong ingenuity to generate a prodigious narration which Padma cannot discern or envisage. Padma dictates, "Arre baap just tell what happened, mister!" (Rushdie 594), when she is ineffectual to decipher the thread, the manner of disclosure and the diegesis of the midnight's mesmerizing children. Similar to Soraya who is unable to interpret the irrational stories of her husband, Rashid Khalifa, Padma's brain is infused with unambiguous and pragmatic traditional tales. French Feminist, Luce Irigaray's view in "The Power of Discourse and the Subordination of the Feminine" regarding the employment of false fictive accounts, is postulated distinctly through Soraya as she calibrates herself to Mr. Sengupta's temporal perspective of rational stories, a vision that is fastened to the paternal society's brutal and domineering literary apparatus by the feminist critics. Judith Fetterly in her "On the Politics of Literature" construes Rushdie's characters as cognitively masculine and sensually feminine.

A fascinatingly arduous and varied connection is depicted between the author and the listener that of adoration and chaser-chased which appreciates as well as decries the female through the flamboyant tale. Padma's affection towards the narrator is lively as she gets entangled in the cobweb of the narrator's charisma while auscultating his enraptured story. Parvati and Padma can be seen within the similar panorama as Padma who is amply nurturing is also steered by hedonistic delight at the same time. Padma being a model of sexuality and avid listener develops into the imperative need of the narrator while for Padma, the narration persists to be the emotional staple. Padma as an expedient feminist is one of the robust characters among the women in the novel. She is ascendant as she is the recipient of the autobiographical recital and undertakes all concerns for her tenderness towards Saleem. Saleem appear to shun Padma's unfathomable fidelity and declines to convey an utterance of gratitude even though she executes all household responsibilities of cooking and making food and bed for him. Padma's presumption of acquiring equivalent emotive reverberation from Saleem gets scorned and she becomes crestfallen and discontented. Padma acts as an associate, nurturer and cohort while Saleem's temperament hints to be conjoined with women. It becomes quite glaring that like Padma, all the women plays a pivotal function in Saleem's life.

Saleem disregard Padma's allegiance persistently and clings to his egoistic fibre while remaining mindful of Padma's yearning and impassioned feeling towards him. Padma is portrayed as a faithful, ardent, conscientious and virtuous conventional woman in the novel who is effective, sanguine and anxious towards Saleem's amelioration. While writing is contemplated to Saleem's prerogative, Padma is protruded as ignorant and uneducated. Padma is mocked for her crudeness and is regarded insignificant for her household competence by Saleem, who views the mass, civilization, cultivation and statesmanship of India vigilantly.

By delineating the female reader in the dissentious reflection of a listener and advantaging the male vision and perspective, *Midnight Children* louses itself in the mainstream masculine literary dominion. Saleem emerges to be a multicoloured character- snotnose, stainfaced, baldy, sniffer, buddha, piece of the moon, while, female characters are makers or unmakers of Saleem, Janus-faced figures. As a reader's predilection and appetite succour in creating efficiency, he can also have a stake in construction of the postmodern world. Saleem ponders on relinquishing Padma's crudeness and credulity when Padma's "necessary ear" abandons him and he endures "necessary counterweights to my miracle laden omniscience". Thus, Padma who is a listener-cum-creator is disposed minor approbation in the creation of Saleem. Saleem's perception of Padma intercepting him from escalating with the sensible stance and coarseness are garrulous identical to his extravagant account. The female characters are laden with despondency as in *Haroun and the Sea of Stories*, the little son scuffles to restore the rationale behind her mother deserting her husband for bizarre and eccentric tales. While Nadir Khan and Saleem are cerebrally and aesthetically abundant but sexually passive, Padma, Parvati and Amina Bibi have scholarly or creative paucity but are adequately procreant. Rushdie's piece of implicit patriarchy cascades into formational polarities. While Mary, the old ayah makes delectably mouth-watering chutneys, the chutney formed by the narrator is intellectually content as well. Padma typifies a fragile sufferer of a male hegemony, while Saleem is observed to be the ardent proponent of patriarchal society. Padma craves for impassioned reciprocation and is willing to receive him with all his flaws and is reluctant to desire any worldly amenity. Yet she is an oblivious desolate entity with emptiness. The female sentiment is vigorously bared when she is obligated to surrender herself to Saleem's impulses. Even the readers remain enmeshed in Padma's dilemma, desperately seeking the panacea in the dismal domain. The captivating narrative makes us contemplative and generates perpetual impact on the readers.

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## MANIPULATION OF MECHANISMS OF SURVEILLANCE AND CONTROL: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF VERONICA RUTH'S *DIVERGENT* TRILOGY

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### **Abstract:**

*Veronica Roth's Divergent trilogy depicts a society where surreptitious surveillance is deeply embedded in its social structure. The current paper explores how totalitarian regime employs surveillance and ideology in tandem for the suppression and subjugations of its subjects. Michael Foucault's concept of Panopticon is used as a lens to unravel how surveillance is employed as a powerful tool for the control and containment of people. Foucault illustrates how Panopticon is used to exercise power on a human body to cultivate discipline and docility among inmates on a microscopic level. However, the study analyses how the totalitarian regime in Divergent trilogy uses the Foucauldian concept of Panopticon on the macroscopic level for the mass incarceration of the general public. In addition, the paper asserts that the present world has become a gigantic panoptic world where escape seems impossible.*

**Key Words:** *Control, Dystopia, Incarceration, Panopticon, Surveillance, Totalitarianism.*

### **Introduction**

The current paper investigates the dynamic trend of surveillance as it emerges in Veronica Ruth's *Divergent* trilogy. The trilogy delineates a gigantic panoptic world where people are treated like guinea pigs for experimentation. This colossal Panopticon encapsulates the whole society in its several layers of surveillance where escape seems impossible. An invisible US government carries out a major social experimental project to create a utopian society. For this purpose, the government assign the Bureau of Genetic Welfare, representation of Panopticon tower in the trilogy, to control and collectivize all the American cities surreptitiously. The totalitarian regime in the trilogy employs a clandestine method of surveillance to prevent the experiment from falling apart. In addition, the regime uses discipline, serums and enclosure to substantiate its rule over the Chicago city.

Panopticon is an institutional architecture designed by the English philosopher and social theorist Jeremy Bentham in late 18th century. Panopticon is a Greek word in which “Pan means everything and Opticon means vision” (Jespersen 109). Panopticon was a type of prison whose structure enables an inspector to monitor every inmate with a single gaze. The design of Panopticon is consisted of the circular structure with a watch tower at its centre. This watchtower allowed the inspector to peep into the cell of every prisoner incessantly. Hence, every inmate knew that he was constantly being watched upon and acted according to the prescribed rules to avoid persecution. The idea of Panopticon made Bentham the popular figure in his own era as it gained the tremendous attention. In 1787, Bentham proposed feasible solutions to the problems of overcrowding, lack of discipline and unsanitary conditions prevalent at that time in the prison system. He even claimed that his architectural design can redress certain issues like “moral reformation, health preservation, economic stabilization, etc.” prevalent at his time (Bentham 31). Bentham's objective was to bring humanitarian improvements in the penitentiary system as well as to make it a profitable institution. However, Bentham failed to get the endorsement “of political

establishment” not because of the prison's design per se, but for his insistence that “Panopticon should be kept open to private contractors” (Albrechtsland 2). He wanted to turn the prison into a profit-seeking enterprise in which prisoners' labor would be used as money making source. In this privatization of prison, “Bentham himself wanted to be the first contractor” (Albrechtsland 2). It was this financial element that acted as a barrier in the implementation of Panopticism in the whole United Kingdom because authorities considered it inappropriate to turn the prison into a business agency. Although, “Panopticon project was rejected by Bentham's fellow countrymen”, yet “its blueprint was extremely influential in Great Britain” and other countries around the world (Albrechtsland 2).

Panopticon's objective was to punish the inmates effectively but without inflicting pain on the body. It was the systematic confinement ever employed in penitentiary history. According to Anders Albrechtsland, “the development from physical torture to systematic confinement” is thought to be the “most humanistic improvement in the history of punishment” (2). However, this view is later challenged by Michel Foucault in his seminal book *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of Prison* (1975). Foucault maintains that this paradigm shift from physical torture to the systematic confinement is actually not a humanistic improvement but rather the systematic way to exercise power. He traces the history of the development of punishment in his most book *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of Prison* from 1757 when physical torture followed by public execution was in vogue. However, by mid-twentieth century, the public execution was abandoned as a brutal act due to the advent of modernisation and the new modern mechanism of non-corporeal nature of the penal system was introduced. Foucault describes Panopticon as the new disciplinary power structure that assists the authority to exercise its power upon inmates by objectifying and subsequently controlling them. Foucault describes Panopticon as an all-seeing eye that “hovers over everything with a single gaze which no detail, however minute, can escape” (217). The Panopticon's power does not lie in its physical presence but in its knowledge of frightening people what it can potentially do. Panopticon functions by a psychological power that is, it instils fear among people to conform. In other words, Panopticon internalizes the fear among people that they cannot escape the panoptic eye if they ever attempt to flout the prescribed rules.

The concept of panoptic gaze is present in our society in one or the other way. Jerome E. Dobson and Peter F. Fisher, the Foucauldian scholars, in their article *The Panopticon's Changing Geography* argue that “the Panopticon should be taken not literary but as a metaphor for surveillance of all types, with emphasis on power relationships” (307). This means that any sort of surveillance, no matter in which form it exists or functions, falls under the wide-ranging spectrum of Panopticism. The notion of Panopticon is not only indispensable for punitive purposes but it is also beneficial for the surveillance of “hospitals, workshops, schools, prisons . . . where one is dealing with multiplicities of individuals on whom a task or a particular form of behavior must be imposed” (Foucault 293). Any idea can function as the panoptic eye when there is an element or psychological fear of being watched by some omniscient individual or group or when one has the belief that one's every move is being watched by some powerful authority. The power of Panopticon lies in the fact that it has the ability to create fear among the hearts and minds of people. According to Dobson and Fisher, Panopticon has “left such a powerful mark on public discourse that now merely saying its name is viewed as shameless fearmongering” (307). Knowing that some invisible power is watching even when one is in his/her private chambers, creates much more psychological fear than the presence of an actual individual can create. Rayan Calo terms the notion of Panopticon as a “privacy harm” which “describes unwelcome states anxiety, for instance, or embarrassment that accompany the belief that one is or will be watched or monitored” (1131). In the context of power, the omnipresent nature of observer creates a sense of discomfort in an individual and endows much more power to Panopticism. Foucault contends that the “invisibility is a guarantee to order. If the inmates are convicts, there is no danger of a plot . . . if they are schoolchildren, there is no copying, no noise, no chatter, no waste of time” (287-288). This means that if the observation is accompanied by fear of persecution, it may assist in changing the behavior



of people as well.

### **Analysis of the Use of Surveillance as a Tool for Control in *Divergent* Trilogy**

The trilogy constitutes of *Divergent*, *Insurgent* and *Allegiant*. The prime reason for selecting the whole trilogy for textual analysis is the third part of the trilogy where most of the surveillance mechanism unfolds. However, the story in the trilogy is so compact that the third part of the trilogy can neither be comprehended nor analysed without mentioning the storyline occurring in the first two parts of the trilogy. Ruth's *Divergent* trilogy depicts the dystopian society that employs Panopticon model of Bentham for performing the social experiment to eradicate some evil tendency of humans like jealousy, ego, pride, narcissistic desire, etc. to establish an impeccable society. The fictitious US government assigns Bureau, an organization of "Genetic Welfare", to surveil the cities incessantly. The trilogy is based on surreptitious surveillance because of the invisibility of the Bureau that is located outside the Chicago city. People in the trilogy are incarcerated in the city, however, they are not cognizant of their incarceration.

The trilogy is set in the Chicago whose residents are divided into five factions: Abnegation, Candor, Dauntless, Amity and Erudite according to an aptitude test that determines to which faction an individual can best fit in. The city is ruled by the totalitarian regime that comprises of the Abnegation Council that has the legislative as well as administrative power in the city. The Panopticon functions in the trilogy on two levels; viz., the material (physical) level and conceptual level. Panopticism functions materially when some palpable object is in front of the citizens that enforces docility among them. On the contrary, Panopticon functions conceptually when the government employs what Althusser calls "Ideological State Apparatuses" like education, family, etc., to control people (141). As the society is classified into five factions, each faction inculcates its members to follow the faction norms through education. Hence, people are controlled and collectivized primarily at the faction level. Each faction implements the faction norms like dress code, jobs, family, etc. to ensure the faction's control over its members. Bart Simon, the notable Foucauldian scholar, proposes that any social institution like Panopticon is an "ordering machine" if it enforces a set of norms that enables the ruling power to control, discipline and surveil its subjects (4). It means Panopticon is not necessarily the circular building with a tower in its middle; it can be any institution or ideology which did the same function that Panopticon building did in the late eighteenth century. In addition, like Panopticon the social institutions function as "a privileged place for experiments on men, and for analyzing with complete certainty the transformations that may be obtained from them . . . as a kind of laboratory of power" (Foucault 204-205). These panoptic institutions apply "a network of mechanisms" that implements certain rules and ramifications for breaching such rules (Foucault 209). This conceptual aspect of Panopticon has so great agency in the trilogy that it acts as a barrier for its characters that they cannot trespass.

The profound panoptic essence of the trilogy comes to fore at its very inception when Tris' hair is being cut by her mother. Tris, the protagonist of the novel, sneaks a look into the only mirror in her house and expects her mother to denounce her for the extravagance. Tris belongs to the Abnegation faction that espouses simplicity and severely denounces any kind of self-indulgence. When the trilogy commences with the mirror functioning as a surveilling mechanism and the mother as a Panopticon inspector, it gives an impression to the reader that the protagonist has entrapped in the panoptic society where there is no escape. The paramount function of Panopticon is to deter any sort of deviance from the prescribed social norms. If this deterrence can be achieved by ideology disseminated as well as reinforced through faction norms, it will be the highest achievement of Panopticon. In this case, the ideology functions as Panopticon and makes an individual not only an entity of self-surveillance but a part of the panoptic eye that surveils others as well. For instance, Caleb, Tris brother, not only strictly conforms to the factions norms himself but also exhorts his sister to do the same. This illustrates that the regime has internalised the prescribed norms to its citizens through "ideological apparatuses" and succeeds in creating the "culture of surveillance" (Simon 15).



The totalitarian regime tightens its panoptic tentacles over the Chicago citizens by enforcing categorization of people into different factions. The reason for this categorization is to facilitate the regime to surveil and regulate its subjects effectively. Jean-Michel Brabant, the Foucauldian scholar, asserts, "If every strategy of power has a spatial dimension, power also has a practical dimension . . . appropriate to its strategy" (25). She proceeds by asserting that the interplay between spatiality and ideological practices of social institutions divulges "the underlying mechanisms of the force of those who dominate, and the weakness of those who are dominated" (26). The spatial dimension of the panoptic character of the trilogy can be understood by Tris's life. In the first part of the trilogy *Divergent*, Tris switches her faction from Abnegation to Dauntless. However, this switching does not endow her freedom and liberty for which she craves for in her own faction. Rather this transition demonstrates that she moves from one prison of lower order to another prison of the higher order. In the Abnegation faction, the totalitarian regime prescribes its members to exhibit an attitude of selflessness by prioritizing others because of the faction's core belief "them before I" (Ruth, "Faction History" 7). However, in the Dauntless faction, the totalitarian regime on the pretence of training its members how to overcome their fears penetrate deep into their mind to study their psychological behavior by making use of serums. Hence, the narrative encapsulates the public spheres like the faction sectors and faction's schools to psychological dimensions of Tris' life. Though there is the dramatic regime change in the trilogy as a reader proceeds from one part of the trilogy to another, yet in all the parts the panoptic nature of the trilogy remains intact because all the action occurs within the encircled city walls of the Chicago city. This physical encirclement vividly manifests the intricate prison within prison structure of the society where people are first enclosed by the faction sector, then by the city wall and eventually by the all-seeing eye of the Bureau. Bart Simon calls it the "society of prison metaphor" that essentially employs the methods of division and enclosure to dominate and control ". . . the diverse agency and irrationality of the general population" (7-8).

The first part of the trilogy *Divergent* portrays Chicago as a huge prison surrounded by "a chain-like fence with barbed wire string along the top" (Ruth, *Divergent* 123). However, people do not know the purpose of this encirclement. For instance, Tris remarks that the Dauntless', a military force in the city, "primary purpose is to guard the fence that surrounds our city. From what I don't know" (Ruth, *Divergent* 7). This encirclement facilitates the Bureau in stringent surveillance of the city. Apart from this cemented wall, all the five factions are apportioned a certain piece of land called the faction sectors within the city walls. These faction sectors are under the incessant surveillance of the Dauntless army. These faction sectors resemble the prison cells within the mammoth prison of the Chicago. As the narrative proceeds certain mysterious and mystifying incidents unfold. For instance, Tris mentions "the Dauntless guards close the gate and lock it behind them. The lock is on the outside. . . Why would they lock the gate from the outside and not the inside? It almost seems that they do not want to keep something out; they want keep us in. (Ruth, *Divergent* 128).

Though Tris is unable to critique the logic behind this restriction but she is told that it protects them from the potential dangers of the outer world. In fact, this enclosure enables the totalitarian regime to keep the citizens controlled first, by city wall in general and second, by apportioning a certain piece of land to every faction in particular. In addition, the encircled space assists the regime in powerful surveillance of its citizenry.

The only faction that is allowed by the regime to reside outside the Chicago fence is the Amity faction because of its agricultural occupation to produce food for the whole city. However, this does not mean that the Chicago regime leaves it unsupervised. The Amity sector, as well as the boundaries of the Amity's agricultural land, are under the Dauntless patrols watch. Tobias, the instructor of Tris, works in the control room of the Dauntless compound. He narrates *Allegiant* along with Tris and gives more information to readers about the panoptic structure of the society. In the control room through electronic cameras he notices that there is "no fence or wall that marks the divide between the Amity compound and

the outer world,” however, he watches the Dauntless guards from the control room to ensure that “they didn't go further than the limit, which is marked by a series of signs with Xs on them” (Ruth, *Allegiant* 99). He states, “The patrols were structured so that the trucks would run out of gas if they went too far, a delicate system of checks and balances that preserved our safety and theirs” (Ruth, *Allegiant* 99). Here, the contrast between safety and danger is foregrounded to emphasize that the enclosure, as well as the marked signs, are a safety measure for the city. This emphasizes on the enclosure and implicit dangers of transgressing triggers a need for the totalitarian regime to fortify the city with the tall cemented wall and the barbed wire over it. All these mysterious dangers provide an opportunity for the ruling power to justify the encirclement. However, in actuality, its purpose is to control and surveil the Chicago people effectively.

As all the U.S cities in the trilogy have implemented their own way of surveillance, however, the Bureau functions as an ultimate watch tower from where all the cities are monitored from a single gaze. Stuart Elden, the Foucauldian scholar, proposes that the Panopticon's “iconic value” originates completely from Foucault's “jarring description from Bentham's architectural plan” (3). The Bureau is an exemplum of Bentham's architectural design of Panopticon. The Bureau is divided into many sections and in each section, there is a guard armed with heavy armor. Inside the building, there are huge control rooms incessantly keeping watch on every city through electronic surveillance. On having a look at the trilogy's US country, it completely resembles Bentham's Panopticon. However, unlike Bentham's watch tower that is “visible and unverifiable” to its inmates, the Bureau is both invisible and unverifiable to the prisoners in these social cells (Foucault 201). The Bureau remains invisible for a very long until Tris, Tobias and their other friends discovered it in the third part of the trilogy. They observe, Bureau is highly barricaded area to keep the “Fringe rebels” from getting inside. Tobias describes the fence as:

There is tall fence stretching wide across the landscape... The fence has vertical black bars with pointed ends that bend outward... to skewer anyone who might try to climb over it. A few feet past it is another fence, this one chain link, like the one around the city, with a barbed wire looped over the top. I hear a loud buzz coming from the second fence, an electric charge. People walk the space between them carrying guns that look a little like our paintball guns, but for more lethal, powerful pieces of machinery... A gate in the first fence... and then a gate in the second. Beyond the two fences is... order. (Ruth, *Allegiant* 111)

This elaborated description of the Bureau's fortified security mechanisms indicates its complex panoptic nature. Though, the Bureau exhibits its benevolence to its inhabitants to protect them from any assault from the “Fringe rebels,” yet its primary purpose is to surveil the people residing within the compound. The Bureau constitutes another panoptic world in the trilogy with its own social order. Being the pivotal government organization, it contains sensitive data of all the cities under its supervision that makes its enclosure and fortification necessary.

When Tris reaches the Bureau, she is amazed by this fact that she is very popular at the Bureau. This popularity creates inquisitiveness in her to discover how people at the Bureau know her, though she has never stepped out the Chicago fence. Then David, the director of the Bureau, reveals the truth to Tris and her friends that all the cities of the fictitious US country are under surveillance and it is actually a social experiment being conducted by the Bureau with the sponsorship of the fictitious US government. Initially, Tris is not convinced by David response, which compels him to unfold the surveillance mechanisms of the Bureau in front of her very eyes. Tris mentions:

David nods to one of the people at the desks [in the control room] behind him. All at once, all the screens turn on, each of them showing footages from different cameras. On the nearest to me, I see Dauntless headquarters. The Merciless Mart. Millennium Park. The Hancock building. The Hub. (Ruth, *Allegiant* 128-129)

Here, it can be said that the Chicago city is under the incessant surveillance of the Bureau. However, the Bureau does not intervene in the Chicago's political affairs unless it is essential. At this critical juncture, the

Bureau intervenes because there was an apprehension at the Bureau that this truth will cause the experiment to fall apart. The Bureau hatches conspiracy with Jeanine and provide her a very sophisticated serum that controls the whole Dauntless army even from a very far through transmitters. This serum enables Jeanine to launch an assault on the Abnegation and assassinate the most Abnegation leaders. In this way, the Bureau successfully prevents the truth to reach to the common people.

After the assault by Dauntless on Abnegation faction, Jeanine Matthews dissolves the Abnegation Council and takes control over the city. In this way, the faction system collapses and there is rebellion in the Chicago. In this rebellion, after a long bloody fight factionless overthrow Jeanine Matthews' government and form a new government under the leadership of Evelyn Johnson. However, this new factionless government adopts the same surveillance procedures to control and subjugate people that were previously adopted by the predecessor government. Once again surveillance is employed by Evelyn Johnson to acquire knowledge about its subjects. She declares “a curfew: [whereby] everyone is required to return to their assigned living spaces at nine o'clock at night. They will not leave their spaces until eight o'clock the next morning. Guards will be patrolling the streets at all hours to keep us safe” (Ruth, *Allegiant* 45-46). Not only this, she even keeps eye on “all the electricity usage . . . to figure out if people are meeting in secret” (Ruth, *Allegiant* 57). This illustrates how factionless, a marginalized group, who was at the fringes in the faction system gain central significance. Although, this new regime disbands factional concept of social formation, yet it implements the same carceral methods of the predecessor totalitarian regime. This can be demonstrated by a conversation between Tobias and Evelyn in which Tobias accuses Evelyn creating the same totalitarian regime, which she topples by forging an alliance with the Dauntless army. Tobias tells Evelyn:

The reason the factions were evil is because there was no way out of them. . . They gave us the illusion of choice without actually giving us the choice. That is the same thing you are doing here, by abolishing them. You are saying, go make choices. But make sure they are not faction or I will grind you to bits! (Ruth, *Allegiant* 463-464)

The factionless system is the replica of the faction system, which emulates not only the precursor government's tactic of providing limited choice to its subjects but also replicates the system of panopticism that functions by repression. However, the question arises how does it come about that factionless becomes so powerful to subvert faction system? The chief reason for this subversion can be attributed to factionless' non-confinement and free mobility. The former totalitarian regime run by the Abnegation Council provides them the space that goes unsupervised and later on, accords them the liberty to move from one sector to another sector without any inquiry or supervision. Their free mobility can be ascribed to their functionality in the faction system. The factionless people function as scavengers, construction workers, bus drivers, train operators etc. that confers them buoyancy in the social network of the Chicago city. This free mobility endows them the multiple havens to take refuge in the Chicago city. Hence, it makes impossible for the Erudite or Dauntless to destroy them altogether.

After the establishment of Evelyn's rule over the Chicago city, faction system collapses. This collapsing galvanizes the Bureau to “reset” the Chicago population to reinstate the faction system once again (Ruth, *Allegiant* 376). David elaborates to Tris, “Resetting is our word for widespread memory erasure” (Ruth, *Allegiant* 376). The Bureau employs the memory serum to efface the memories of the people dwelling in the experimental cities if there is an apprehension of an experiment to fall apart. In addition, at the Bureau, Tris becomes cognizant of the fact that the Erudite simulation attack in which her parents die is actually orchestrated by the Bureau to conceal the truth of its existence to save the experiment. In order to avenge the Bureau and save the Chicago people from the memory loss that can cause disintegration of the familial bonds, Tris, Tobias and their friend Christina, Matthew, etc. plot to “reset” the Bureau by releasing the memory serum. According to this plan, Tris attacks the Weapon Lab of the Bureau and releases the serum. However, in the process, she lost her life. By witnessing anarchy,

bloodshed and chaos at the Bureau, Tobias suggests two solutions to the current circumstances so that people may live in peace and harmony. The first is the “Fringe rebels” notion that change can only be brought by revolution. The second is the conservative view of Tris and Tobias for which they stand throughout the whole trilogy i.e., change can be brought in the political system without going against the system. Unlike “Fringe rebels,” Tobias “fall[s] more on the side that wants to work for the change without violence” (Ruth, *Allegiant* 519). The unprecedented and unimagined chaos at the Bureau due to the release of memory serum forces Tobias to choose a safer course of action. Hence, he accepts his assigned place in the Chicago city leaving aside the thought of revolution. By knowing that violence causes death and destruction, the protagonist chooses to comply with the Chicago's political system.

### Conclusion

Ruth's *Divergent* trilogy portrays a world where panoptic propensities run amok. These panoptic tendencies penetrate deep into the social fabric and facilitate the regime in substantiating its rule over the Chicago city. The panoptic mechanism encapsulates not only social structures but also succeeds in infiltrating into the homes of people where parents function as vigilantes. In addition, the trilogy unravels the mechanism of power and demonstrates that absolute power corrupts absolutely. For instance, in the trilogy power transfers from the Abnegation Council to Jeanine Matthews and ultimately it rests on the factionless leader Evelyn Johnson, still power retains its function of oppression and subjugation in all the three regimes. The protagonist Tris and her friends stride hard to escape from the oppressive and suppressive totalitarian regime, however, they end up moving from one prison to another prison from where there seems no escape. Though the protagonist succeeds in paralyzing the people of the Bureau to efface their memories by releasing the memory serum but this success seems transitory. The Bureau is the US aegis agency, so Tobias anticipates that soon the fictitious US government will assign the new government officials to enforce the same panoptic and power mechanism in the city. Though at the end the Chicago fence is terminated, yet it is an illusionary optimistic ending. The reality is that the characters of the trilogy will never be able to escape from the larger prison of their government. In this way, the trilogy's Panopticism succeeds in foiling any radical change that wants to disturb its stringent order. Consequently, it can be said that the conservative panoptic system of the trilogy thwarts the young protagonists' attempts for personal and political freedom. By juxtaposing the terrible outcomes of rebellion, the protagonists choose to reform the political system within as a feasible course of action. Ruth seems to suggest that in current world satellite reconnaissance has changed the world into the global Panopticon that is inescapable. Roth seems to suggest that surveillance technologies have endowed so much power to the global powers that only those governments can survive in the world that are sponsored by them. Rest of the governments of the world that do not conform to global powers will either be destroyed or toppled.

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## SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN ECOCRITICAL APPROACH

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### **Abstract:**

*Sustainable development is the organizing principle for achieving human development objectives with the sustainable maintenance of ability of natural systems to provide natural systems and ecosystem. Gender equality is prerequisite for achieving the aim of sustainable development. The awareness and practice of equality is important for the achievement of objective of sustainable development.*

**Key Words:** *Sustainable development, principles, equality, ecosystem.*

Multiple factors contribute for current high level of inequality and low level of opportunities. The distortions and perversions of our economic system are enormous. Wealth at the top is derived from the rules of the game and rent seeking. We must change the rules of the game to bring equality in practice. Government too often instead of spending its valuable resources for the welfare of poor people spends its valuable financial resources for the welfare of corporations. The rules of the game must benefit all people equally. We all benefit from a well-functioning of democracy and society. The rules of the game should favour the consumers rather than favoring the banking institution only.

Political system and economic system should ensure participation of the people equally in the development strategies. Political system will be strong if it is based on the firm ground of economic equality of the people. Twenty first century is often called as the century of the environment. Ecocriticism is a coherent and broadly based movement. Without biosphere and planetary conditions human life could not exist. Ecocriticism challenges too much postmodern critical discourses as well as to the critical systems of the past. Our perceptions of nature are necessarily human constructed. Nature plays a vital role in shaping human attitudes and behavior. Literary work has the environmental context. Charles Darwin asserted in *The Descent of Man* and *Selection in Relation to Sex* that humans are descended from earlier forms of life. Human differ in degree only from other animals. Literature is related to nature and human life. Humans have to take prompt and vigorous actions to check the pollution and spoliation affecting the planet earth. Our efforts should be strong to protect the Earth's ecosystems to safeguard our future on the planet. Political leaders should understand the depth of the environmental concerns for the sustainable development of the country. We should not assess our wellbeing just in economic terms. We should assess progress not just in terms of fiscal loss and gain but in terms of earth's biological and cultural loss. It will be more accurate assessment of human success.

Ecocriticism draws the attention of the world to the crucial issues of environmental degradation through the forum of literature. Nature and culture are inclusive terms. Ecocriticism is committed to make the world less unjust. Well-conceived and sincerely implemented policies can make difference to people. High economic growth rates do not at all mean inclusive growth. The present policies in India are ill equipped to correct chronic poverty. Policies and institutions are central to a country's ability. The nation is fed up with corruption. A human society based on inequality decays in the course of time. It aims at creating the harmonious relationship between Nature and human nature. It is against the exploitative development. The ecological analysis of the human life reflected in literature has been called ecological Criticism or Ecocriticism. The critical theory deals with the relationship between the human life and the

nature. It transcends the exclusive categories of centre and periphery. It is the high time now to ponder over the evil consequences of industrialization and mechanization, globalization, privatization and liberalization. It is the study of the interrelationship between nature and human life.

The environment nurtures, uplifts our senses and sustains our existence. Wendell Berry explores the political and moral implications of degrading and neglecting place in the novels such as *The Memory of Old Jack* (1976). In the United States the environmental literature includes poetry, fiction, and drama that scrutinize the relationship between humans and the natural environment. The consciousness of the ethical component of literature is an important principle of the new ecological literary criticism or Ecocriticism. The writers such as Berry Lopez, Terry Tempest Williams, Rick Bass, Robert Michael Pyle, Scott Russell Sanders, Wendell Barry, Gary Snyder and other environmental writers achieve not only aesthetic brilliance but also an understanding of human society's relationship with the planet.

Literary artists consider that values are at the heart of their work. Literary scholars give the utmost importance to the issues of human values and attitudes. Environmental writers create interest among their readers. They present a long term vision of our relationship with the planet. They stimulate ethical reformation.

We have approached the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It has become clear that the model of free economy, Liberalization, Privatization and Globalization does not work. The problems of environmental degradation, poverty and domestic inequality have begun to threaten the very existence of the society and nation. They are threatening the quality of human life and security of nation. The model has proved ultimately self defeating, as it threatens the beneficiaries of the so called progress. The world needs an alternative approach. The new approach is of Sustainable Development. The development pattern should create social cohesion rather than social inequality.

The development pattern should aim at the improvement of the quality of life. Environmental degradations affect the quality of life. In absence of healthy environment people are victimized by various types of diseases. Future generations feel insecure. Economic development pattern is responsible for the present problems. The problems are endemic not incidental. We need to reassess what we mean by economic and social progress. We should introduce fundamental changes in the economic and social development to achieve genuine development.

Poverty is the mother of all ills. Poverty is responsible for the rise in crimes, anti-social behaviour. The shadows of globalization and deregulation markets have made even middle class vulnerable and insecure. Unequal society cannot stand the challenges, it breaks down. The middle class instead of solving the problem of the decay of the society want to evade the responsibility. They try to find peace and security within the four walls of their home. The people confront fear and tension and anxiety in their homes too. The sustainable development is the best model of development which improves the standard of life for all. The market economy has belittled the governments in the various countries of the world. It has caused anarchy in some African countries like Nigeria.

In the present model of market economy people have developed distrust over the political institution which governs them. Democracy needs to be strengthened in the real manner. Deregulated Market mechanisms are responsible for the breaking down of the traditional cultural values. People are feeling the loss of a sense of a community. The market economy has proved self defeating. The supporters of market economy had claimed that it will solve all the problems. But instead of solving the problems it has generated severe problems before the society which are the threatening the very existence of society. The present model of development has given rise to violence and alienation among the people. Equality and inclusiveness strengthen the community. It creates the bond between individuals and the society. The society at large is united in the true sense.

The supporters of globalization said that the path of globalization will reduce poverty but globalization actually widened the gulf between the rich and the poor. We need a new direction of

development. The new direction of such a type which will not give rise to division in the society but it will create cohesion in the society. Conventional economic and social policies are creating the problems instead of solving them. The quality of life is declining: The problems of availability of drinking water, homes, jobs, security have become severe. There is the rise in crimes all over the world. The poverty and inequality within the society has been threatening the very security of the nations. The people have developed disaffection for the politicians and the politics as an institution. Because politicians have become very selfish, they do not have commitment for the inclusive development. They have made the business of politics for their own selfish interest. Ecocriticism addresses these interlocking problems. The Real World offers the vision for the twenty first century which is appropriate for every nation and every century:

Our vision is of a Britain in which a reduction in inequality and an increase in both collective and individual security provides everyone with the opportunity to fulfill their potential, in which greater social cohesion strengthens both national and local communities; in which cultural diversity is celebrated; in which the improved provision of social goods raises everybody's quality of life even as material consumption falls to sustainable levels; in which a thriving democracy allows all to participate (*The Politics of the Real World*, P. 125)<sup>6</sup>

Ecocriticism is avowedly political mode of analysis. It enables us to analyze and criticize the world in which we live. Culture is something lived, part and parcel of one's everyday existence. The authentic culture must be natural. Radical changes have taken place in the study of literature during the last decades of the twentieth century. The human beings themselves have done a lot of damage to the nature and ultimately to themselves. The harmony of humanity and nature enhances the quality and standard of life. It is closely related to history, philosophy, psychology, art history, and ethics. It is a political mode of analysis of literature, as the comparison with feminism and Marxism suggests. It draws much from the environmentally oriented developments in philosophy and political theory. It sees a synthesis of environmental and social concerns. The theory is moral and political oriented.

John Passmore has made a distinction between 'problems in ecology' and 'ecological problems'. According to him problems in ecology are scientific problems which need hypothesis, experiment they need scientific analysis but ecological problems have arisen out of our dealing with nature. Ecocriticism helps to define, explore and resolve ecological problems and other consequent problems. Structuralism and post- structuralism dealt with the linguistic function of the signs that relate to each other. They do not refer to the real things, events and incidents on the earth. It is an interdisciplinary approach that draws on literary and cultural theory, philosophy, sociology, psychology and environmental history and ecology. It has profound moral and political significance in 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Ecocriticism is the study of the relationship of the human and the non-human. It analyses the human life in the context of nature. Ecocriticism supports indigenous ways of life as potential models for a harmonious existence on the earth. It explores human life in the scenario of globalization, privatization and liberalization. Environmental crisis poses severe threats to the values, political, economic and cultural life of the people in various nations of the world. Ecocriticism began in the 1990s. It has historical background. From ancient times various people have been expressing concerns about the natural world. Ecocriticism takes a strong ethical stand. It has a commitment to the natural world as an important thing rather than as an object of study only. It is the very young school of Literary Criticism or Movement. It explores how to use the stored energy of literature into effective political action for solving the contemporary problems.

Lawrence Buell published *The Environmental Imagination*, where he defines "Ecocriticism as a study of the relationship between literature and the environment conducted in the spirit of commitment to natural environment. It explores environmental issues and its influence on the human life. It takes an ethical stand for effective change in the world. Ecocriticism is not only a critical approach to analyze literature but also a movement towards a sustainable development on the earth. It expresses the need for a

cultural change in the world. It broadens the view of life to include nonhuman life forms and the environment as a part of the global community. Glotfelty rightly said that traditional criticism failed to address “green” issues. It is an important literary theory.

### **Evolution of Ecocriticism in Literary Studies**

William Rueckert is the first person to use the term Ecocriticism. In 1978, Rueckert published an essay titled *Literature and Ecology: An Experiment in Ecocriticism*. He made an important suggestion to apply ecology and ecological concepts to the study of literature. Ecologically minded individuals and scholars have been publishing progressive works of ecotheory and criticism since the explosion of environmentalism in the late 1960s and 1970s. However there was no organized movement or school to study the environmental aspect of literature. They were scattered and categorized under different subject headings: Pastoralism, Human Ecology, Regionalism, American Studies etc.

British Marxist critic, Raymond Williams wrote a seminal critique of pastoral literature in 1973, *The Country and the City*. He professed decidedly a Green Socialism. Another early ecocritical text is Joseph Meeker's *The Comedy of Survival* published in 1974. He made an argument that environmental crisis is caused primarily by a cultural tradition in West of separation of Nature from Culture. The argument dominates Ecocriticism and Environmental philosophy. Ecocriticism analyses representation of nature in literary genres. Early efforts made by the critics were disunited. Ecocriticism crystallized into a coherent and organized movement in 1990s in the United States of America.

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## ECOFEMINISM: AN IMPORTANT THEORY OF LITERARY CRITICISM

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### **Abstract:**

*Ecofeminism is a philosophical and political theory. It combines ecological concerns with feminist ones; it criticizes the injustice done to women in patriarchal society. Its theorists say that paternalistic or capitalistic society has led to a harmful division between nature and culture. Ecofeminists propagated that the division can only be healed by women's instinct for nurture and holistic knowledge of nature's processes.*

*Ecofeminism describes the movements and philosophies that associate feminism with nature. This movement seeks to eradicate all forms of social injustice, not only injustice against women and nature. Francoise d'Eaubonne coined the term, Ecofeminism. The ecofeminist framework establishes the way of viewing and understanding of the present world. It also offers us the ways to improve the ills of injustice in the present world. The four sides of the frame are: 1. the mechanistic and materialistic model of the universe is resulted from the scientific revolution; 2. self and other dualisms and the inherent power and domination ethic, and capitalism and its intrinsic need for exploitation, destruction and instrumentalisation of earth, animals and people for the sole purpose of creating wealth.*

**KeyWords:** *Ecofeminism, capitalism, exploitation, injustice.*

Ecofeminism is a movement or theory that applies feminist principles and ideas to ecological issues. The movement unites environmentalism and feminism. Around the world economies, cultures and natural resources are plundered. Twenty percent population of the world consumes eighty per cent of the natural resources of the world in the name of progress. Mary Mellor, Maria Mies and Vandana Shiva are the famous Ecofeminists who have offered a new vision to look at the world and transform the world on the principles of equality. Ecofeminism uses the basic tenets of feminism that is the equality between the genders. It re-values non-patriarchal and non-linear structure of society. It advocates an alternative view of the world: the earth is holy, human life is based on natural world, and embraces all life as valuable. Ynestra King popularized Ecofeminism with the publication of her article "What is Ecofeminism?" in *The Nation*. She pointed out that belief system of the society is responsible for the oppression of women and nature. Ecofeminists advocate the revaluation of science to acknowledge the role of science and intuition. They support the alternative world view which considers all life forms valuable. They insist on the solving of problems of class, race, gender, and inequity in development. They believe through affirmative and non-violent ways problems should be solved.

Ecofeminism is a branch of feminist theory. It is also known as ecological feminism. The feminist theorists argue for the equality between genders. According to them incomplete world view should be replaced with the holistic and organic world perspective. They present the alternative world view. They value the sacredness of the earth. They acknowledge that human life depends on the natural world. They believe that all life forms are valuable. They campaign that the problems of environmental crisis and social injustice should be solved through assenting and non-violent manner. They have offered a new perspective to know the world. Rosemary Ruether wrote in her book, in 1975 in *New Woman / New Earth: Women must see that there can be no liberation for them and nonsoultion to the ecological crisis within a society whose*



fundamental model of relationships continues to be one of domination. They must unite the ecological movement to envision a radical reshaping of the basic socioeconomic relations and the underlying values of this (Modern Industrial Society) (204).

The Ecofeminists, Maria Mies and Vandana Shiva observe that there is the association between global militarism and the destruction of nature. The world has been facing the danger of wars between the states. Ecofeminist perception is rooted in the needs of everyday life. They reject both the militarism and the destruction of nature. They articulate the deepening of the human values among the people. They take a new look at the human beings and the world around them.

Environmentalism and feminism are two of the most important political movements of the late twentieth century. They offer us a philosophically well-versed description of the relation of women and nature. Male domination is closely related with the domination of nature. The relationship between human and nonhuman is material as well as cultural. Their relationship is inherently intertwined with questions of gender equity and social justice. Ecofeminists explore the super strategy for the liberation of human beings and the earth. Patriarchal system is responsible for unjustified domination. Domination of women and other humans is connected with the domination of nature. We need to substitute oppressive theoretical structure and baseless dominance. Ecofeminist perspective explicates the issues of environmental and social justice.

Ecofeminist politics addresses the questions of cultural globalization, environmental crisis and economic exploitation. Ecofeminism explores the relationship between humanity and nature. The spiritual, religious and philosophical beliefs concerning women and ecology should be just. We should protect, preserve and improve ecological systems for the future generations.

In contemporary times we face the social and ecological crisis. These problems threaten the preservation of life on the planet earth. To solve these problems, we should understand the dynamics of patriarchy and expose the answers or false solutions that obscure, perpetuate and even deteriorate the contemporary circumstances. It is the life of the earth herself that must be protected. At present geoengineering is threatening not life on earth and the natural system itself. Technological interventions have made a huge impact on systems like, climate, ocean currents, temperatures, humidity, droughts, and effects of nuclear tests that have occurred in many countries of the world.

According to Jennifer Munroe we find relationship between men, women, animals and plants in the plays and poetry written by the world famous dramatist, William Shakespeare. William Shakespeare is a playwright of all times. He knew the intricate relations between men, women and nature. Nature is the basis of human life.

Heidegger has also provided valuable views on the problems of ecological crisis and social disintegration. He has offered the identification of our world's problems and possible health-giving prescriptions. Heidegger and Nietzsche differ in their perspectives of the world. We do not agree with Heidegger for his views on Nazism. But the productive and healthy thoughts in his philosophy should be accepted. We should rethink the techno-industrial paradigm of the world through the creation of new myths and transform the present human life beyond anthropocentrism and egocentrism.

Contemporary Ecofeminists have explored the effects of race, class, ethnicity and sexuality on women's social positions. They battle against the systems of oppression and domination. They believe in the plurality of the belief systems. The Ecofeminist movement is inclusive. It addresses the inherent problems of patriarchal and hierarchal systems. The role of science in human life should be revalued. Subjectivity and intuition also play an important role in human life practically as well as theoretically.

Vandana Shiva is a physicist, philosopher and feminist activist. She is the world renowned environmental thinker. She is the author of hugely successful book, *Staying Alive: Women, Ecology and Development*. In this book she describes the link between ecological crisis, colonialism, and the oppression of women.

Ecofeminism offers a deconstruction of the phallogocentric dichotomies of nature and culture, self and other, and the concepts of power, action and making. Ecofeminists endeavor to reconceptualise the natural, cultural situation of human beings in a way that is not built on control or essentialist structures. They denounce the suppression of the feminine in western culture. They criticize phallogocentric thought and culture. We should create gender balance in the home and in the world. The Ecofeminism theory is based on sociological, psychological corpus. They affirm that the oppression of women, the exploitation of the earth, and the oppression of the people of colour are based upon the domineering thought processes.

Marxist Ecofeminism investigates and explains the ways in which women are oppressed through systems of capitalism and private property. According to the Marxist thinkers, women's liberation can be achieved through a radical reorganization of the current capitalist financial system. They see a parallel between a devaluation of earth and the devaluation of women.

Words exert power in the world. Ecofeminism presents the rhetoric of care. They believe that environmental problems can be solved through cooperation and partnership rather than hierarchical subordination. They encourage forms of communication that value mutual understanding over persuasion and control. They deconstruct domineering practices and expose the domineering practices and expose the underlying ideologies. Language has the transformative capacity to foster emancipation and liberation of human life.

Ecofeminism is entangled with identity politics. The nature is often deformed by the multinationals' corporate practices. The theory strengthens democracy. It is important for sustainable development and climate change politics. It explores the deep interdependence of humanity and the ecosystem.

Moral values are the base of human life. The theorists assume that human behaviour to war the natural world is governed by moral norms. In contemporary society film has provided a powerful instrument for molding of such ethical attitudes. Historical ethical values can be reimagined and reconstituted. There is the saying that 'Without vision, there the people perish.'

The Ecofeminists, Maria Mies and Vandana Shiva criticize prevailing economic theories, the myth of catching up development, the philosophical foundations of modern science and technology. They reject any form of exploitation, the endless commoditization of needs, and violence.

Marxist Ecofeminism explores the political and ideological rationalities operating under the constraints of capitalist market. Different forms of social domination are interrelated. The matrix of social domination is dynamic- constantly shifting and changing.

Ecofamilism has become famous in contemporary times. It believes in the conviction that any real and sustainable change must begin with the family. Ecovillage is a movement which promotes the community living. It promotes learning the best elements from traditional and indigenous cultures. The followers of the movement implement low impact living, organic, local food, small scale participatory governance. We should aim to minimize the ecological impact, while maximize human well being and welfare.

Ecofeminism helps in remaking a better, more ecologically sustainable world. The critics envision a world that is more compassionate, more equitable and more loving. They describe the complexity of human life. They advocate equal rights for women in political, economic, social and cultural spheres. They believe that transformation in the world is possible through consciousness raising, healing and communication with nature. Time has come to replace human arrogance with ecological humility and an understanding of ourselves as members of the whole community of life on earth.

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## RADHAKRISHNAN'S CAMOUFLAGED PRESENT IN THE POST MORTEM OF THE FUTURE

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### **Abstract:**

*Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, the second President of India, through perceptive analysis of the text of Kalki surveys the tenets of the present civilization. The ills of the generation so evocatively put on the scanner hundred years ago revisit the minds of the reader. The present is analysed and demasked one century ago. The ideas bear an unmistakable contemporary relevance to the twenty first century and are demonstrative of the visionary faculties of Radhakrishnan. The paper traces the nuances of the study of Radhakrishnan by interlinking the reality and relevance of contemporary times.*

**Key Words:** *Civilization, past, present, analysis, ills of the civilization, way forward.*

Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, the second President of India, assumed the highest office with a spectacular heterogeneous heritage of a teacher, philosopher, thinker, scholar, orator, writer, patriot, educationist, statesman, administrator, diplomat and above all a universal human being. The impact of Radhakrishnan on the world of ideas and words has been phenomenal. His remarkable success as a philosopher lies in his deft unravelling of the obscure layers of the knowledge of philosophy, religion and spiritualism and the threading of the idea of ultimate reality with clarity; mastery of the classical texts of the Hindu and Western philosophy and his first hand exposition of the complicated thoughts. The synthesis he had initiated in the thoughts of the East and the West is a unique achievement. Bertrand Russell spoke glowingly about him: "It is an honour to Philosophy that Dr. Radhakrishnan should be President of a great country such as the Republic of India and I as a philosopher take special pleasure in this. Plato aspired for philosophers to become kings and it is a tribute to India that it should make a philosopher her President." His incisive capture of the ultimate reality and faith in the abiding human values led him to write numerous books. Dr. S. Gopal comments, "A study of philosophy was to him not an exposition of past and present systems of thought or dialectical thinking about thinking but the reasoned adoption of a way of life, which included the contemplative urge to the knowledge of reality and the practical impulse to weave that knowledge into life. Philosophy assumed a living character only when there was this striving to invest life with significance: 'Every human life should become a poem.' When Plato had said that philosopher should be kings, he had had in mind not the making of laws and the solutions of political problems but the philosophic temper of mind, the exalted, calm, noble, dispassionate attitude, unmoved by motives of personal gain, ambition or power, which alone could solve such problems. Philosophy was not a speciality but an integration of specialities and the philosopher, 'travelling in truth and protected by honest thought, ever alive in mind to the ways of spirit', provided the reflection on life's problems." Thus his writings voice the concerns of the civilization, devotion to the society and political empathy.

*Kalki or the Future of Civilization* (1929) of Radhakrishnan was one of the books published in "Today and Tomorrow", a popular series on the themes of futurology, in which authors like Bertrand Russell, Haldane, Liddell Hart and Gerald Heard wrote books selecting symbols drawn from mythology. This text was an extended form of his lectures given at the International Congress of Philosophy in Harvard University. In Hindu mythology, *Kalki* is the name of the last avatar that is expected to descend when the

world approaches the levels of degeneration. The book is marked for its commentary on the perils of technology, its incisive discussion on the ways to tide over the crisis of the civilization, presentation of the threats, the diagnosis of the symptoms of the disease that has set into the present civilization and mandatory agenda for the reconstruction of the human society. The ideas even though enunciated in the twenties of twentieth century bear an unmistakable contemporary relevance to the twenty first century and are demonstrative of the visionary faculties of Radhakrishnan.

Radhakrishnan observes that the present civilization is at the threshold of one of its periodic crises with restlessness, uncertainty, dissatisfaction, confusion and unstable enthusiasm as its symptoms. He sees the rapid, wide ranging and lateral progress of the science as one of the main factors for the onset of crisis. He says, "If we take an animal out of its normal environment and thrust it into another, it is bound to feel restless and uneasy until it adjusts itself to the new situation. When the Bishop of Ripon suggested a scientific holiday for a short period of time, he meant to warn us that, while science is progressing pretty fast furnishing us with new inventions, man, the user of them, is not refining him at an equal rate." The outward uniformity of the world with all the signs of modernization stretching across the globe has not resulted in the inner unity, clarity, harmony and happiness. Maxim Gorky says: "Yes, we are taught to fly in the air like birds, and to swim in the water like fishes, but how to live on the earth we do not know." Today the foundations are shaking and there is an impression of dissolution in the air. Hence, future civilization has to lift itself to have a universal vision of man and human life. Radhakrishnan forecasts the victory of mechanical inventions in the future civilization and desires the preparation for spiritual unity.

Radhakrishnan was dismayed at the erosion of foundations of the religion due to onslaught of sciences like psychology, sociology, biology and anthropology. People who profess religious beliefs and principles are perceived to be inside mental hospitals. He says, "Stories of the supernatural are but fairy tales of the world's childhood. The textbooks of the past are not of much help in solving the problems of the present. Any attempt to interpret ancient scriptures to suit modern demands may show reverence for the past but not intellectual honesty." There was divided opinion about the presence and believability of god. Many people in every religion want to have the comforts of the religion without the discomfort of thinking and as a result, they are all converting themselves into blind faith. Some others, in search of spiritual freedom seek refuge in excessive individualism and some, in naturalism and some more, in scepticism and negation. Radhakrishnan rues that the confusion continues by extending the rule of disorder of belief.

Radhakrishnan attributes the lax standards of family life to disorganization brought about by the world war, late marriages because of economic conditions, and the passion for self-expression, diluted parental control, inadequate sex education, Freudian influence and the methods of birth control. He observes that the women are refusing to obey a code of conduct different from the men. He paints the reality: "The ideal of virginity which the men persuaded the women to accept has largely lost its hold. Women as much men, we are told, are wayward creatures full of roving passions who prefer romance to routine. They are insisting with great force and much success on being not our superiors or inferiors but our equals in constancy as well as in inconstancy. Sexual licence is an old habit, as old as the human race, but we justify it by giving it a new name, self-expression. Looseness is commended in good fiction and accepted in high society. The woman who 'sins' because of economic necessity is being driven out of the business by the amateur intent on indulging her cravings while preserving her conscience. Many 'sin' not so much out of passion as owing to a feeling that a married woman ought to have lovers. Sexual promiscuity is getting to be regarded in some circles as a social duty. Since social rules happen to be favourable to men and unfavourable to women, most of the latter do not want to be bound by them. Economic independence with freedom from the ties of marriage and the responsibilities of motherhood is the ambition of many a young woman of the growing 'smart set'. Divorces are increasing in numbers and children are pushed back and forth between the parents whose only communications with each other are through their solicitors." Radhakrishnan captures the divergence between ideals and practicality and says that while polygamy is



illegal and at the same time its practice is real. There is no purpose served in dwelling on the high mountains of idealism. People want to live their life completely, beautifully, adventurously and taste the cup of life before death snatches it away. For them there is no need for repression and concealment of their thoughts and desires. To them moral restraint is an old hat and piety, a blind belief. Established institutions and systems of practice are perceived to be the enemies of the present civilization which have to be brought down to unveil a new order.

Economic individualism and rapid industrialisation made the life of man easier and offered him plenty of leisure. However, Radhakrishnan opines that the monotonous mechanical processes have robbed the mystery, beauty and reverence of skill and the artisan has become a mechanic and a tool for voluminous production. Now, the workers seek their pleasure outside the work. Instead of using the leisure for higher goals, the workers drench their souls in pubs and cabarets. Through labour human beings are expected to follow fellowship and cultivate the well-being of all and in rest they are required to know their self and at worship, they are enjoined with others to become aware of the spirit and purpose of the universe. Radhakrishnan forthrightly expresses his observations and grasps the contemporary picture: "Today labour is a means of isolating man from man and deadening his social instincts; rest is used for blinding the eyes of the mind and worship, for coarsening the spiritual fibre by the acceptance of lower values. We are unable to bear loneliness. It is sheer desolation to be left alone in labour, rest or worship. We must work in factories, enjoy in crowds, go out in parties, sin in company, and worship in congregations. Quiet evenings at home, solitary walks in the country, the cultivation of spirit and meditation seem to be boring. Ours is truly a sleepless generation."

Radhakrishnan candidly says that money and wealth production is the most popular industries. One of the disastrous consequences of the industrialisation is the collapse of home and the evaporation of family ties. He castigates the present industrial environment and its catastrophic ramifications: "An industrial age believes in the creation of new wants. The consumer's appetite grows by what it feeds on. To want more, and to get more, is the way of material progress. By means of this exciting competition, we are concealing from ourselves the barrenness of life. Our machine age caters for the general needs of the public to the exclusion of the individual whims. Art goes to the wall."

Radhakrishnan sees a testing time for democracy. The working of democracy is not satisfactory and it has become mechanical and titular. The elected representatives have no conscience and conviction and they participate in unreal discussions and unnecessary debates. He analyses, "Democracy has become confused with ignorance, lack of discipline, and low tastes. Our newspapers testify to them. A democracy, which reads mainly about divorces and murders, dance halls and police courts, is cultured only in a superficial sense. Though educational facilities are within the reach of large numbers, the level of culture is not high. It has become more easy to get into college and more difficult to get educated. We are taught to read but not trained to think. Popular education, thanks also to the Press, the film, and the wireless, has succeeded in furnishing the average mind scrappily, though somewhat effectively, with ill-digested bits of Freud and Jung, Behaviourism and contraception, and various odds and ends. Those who know better are afraid to speak out but keep step with the average mind. Uncriticized mass impulses, crowd-emotions and class-resentment have taken the place of authority and tradition. As the mass is the most significant factor, its opinions prevail over those of the thinking few." Political equality is hollow when there is no economic equality. The political life is reliant on the independence of mind and the will to allow it. Unfortunately, in the present set up this seems to be an unavoidable impossibility. Radhakrishnan suggests that there should be a better method to conduct the human affairs than the lottery of the ballot box.

The international scenario is no different with nations clamouring for peace on one side and practicing war on the other. Nationalism reached a new height with the dangerous ambition to lead the humanity. It is symbolized by the waving of flags, blowing of bugles, songs of patriotism and hymns of hate. Radhakrishnan looks at the war hungry ways of the slave leaders. He comments, "Reasonable men

are turned into will-less slaves. When the trumpet of war blows, the pretences of civilization disappear and man helplessly reels back into the beast. War with its devastated fields and ruined cities, with its millions of dead and more millions of maimed and wounded, its broken-hearted and defiled women and its starved children bereft of their natural protection, its hate and atmosphere of lies and intrigue is an outrage on all that is human. So long as this devil-dance does not disgust us, we cannot pretend to be civilized. It is no good preventing cruelty to animals and building hospitals for the sick and poorhouses for the destitute so long as we are willing to mow down masses of men by machine-guns and poison non-combatants, including the aged and the infirm, women and children and all for what? For the glory of God and the honour of the nation.” Radhakrishnan wants the growth of the internationalism with a soul rather than a superficial and mechanical framework with selfish nationalist working in the garb.

Radhakrishnan, after the study of the negative traits of the civilization, proceeds to present the problem in a proper perspective. He says that criticism or commendation of a civilization is solely dependent on its soul and scale of values. He draws from the Hindu and Greek thought in presenting the human body as triple mixture of body, mind and spirit. The body takes on the animalistic, the vegetable ancestry, and some mental faculties point to the relationship with the animal world whereas spiritual aspirations separate and elevate the human being to a different level. Since ages, this spiritual longing manifested itself in multitudinous forms of raw superstition and myth, polished systems of philosophical thought and ethical procedures. Radhakrishnan declares that the community, which accords greater importance to mind than body, is higher in scale and desires that the amassed knowledge should be used for the higher self than the bare physical needs. He reads the situation: “The sort of mental life which prevails is at a low level. Emotional thrills and intellectual sensations, aesthetic occupations and mental excitements attract us and not deep appreciation of great literature and noble art. Mechanical plots, detective stories, cross-word puzzles allure and amuse us.” Drawing extensively on the history of the civilizations, Radhakrishnan puts forth his conception of civility in a civilization and finds fault with the varying perceptions of it. He explains the paradox without mincing the words: “Civilization seems to be as ancient as savagery. We regard the Eskimo, the Red Indian, the Basuto, and the Fiji Islander as barbarous, simply because they had not risen to our conception of civil society with its schools and hospitals, law courts and police stations, but undoubtedly, they exhibit an individuality in their modes of life, customs, and beliefs as much as the advanced Greeks and Romans or even the British and the Germans of today. We cannot call them savage or barbarian simply because their social organization was different, their knowledge of nature narrow, and their appliances crude. Even today, we tend to regard politically backward nations as semi-civilized or semi-barbarian, on the assumption that the test of civilization is political success or economic prosperity or skill in the destruction of human beings. Japan came to be regarded as highly civilized when she fought and defeated Russia, though, on this assumption, the Tartars who overthrew the Sung dynasty and the barbarians who overran the Roman empire are also to be held up as models of civilized humanity. While the crude beginnings of civilization exist even in the most primitive communities, civilized societies have surviving in them a large mass of barbarism.” Radhakrishnan further elucidates the point that civilization is internal and it can be found in our moral values, religious ideas and social outlook. He makes it clear: “We cannot call ourselves civilized simply because we use the steamship, and the railway, the telephone and the typewriter. A monkey trained to ride a bicycle, drink a glass, and smoke a pipe is still a monkey. Technical efficiency has little to do with moral development.” Hence he concludes that the present civilization is still in the phase of economic barbarism and is concerned with world and its power than the soul and its perfection. He laments that education has not freed the present humanity from its psychological and intellectual bondage. This has led to lack of inner unity and mental lawlessness.

Radhakrishnan cites Dr. Alexander Irvine's explanation of the history of civilizations for the last six thousand years in terms of a clock metaphor and deduces that the civilizations which consumed their

energies on politics, patriotism, and mutual extermination have destroyed themselves either from within or from without. History was full of arrivals and departures of empires one after another in quick succession. Curiously, the survival of the Asiatic civilizations demonstrates the life-sustaining nature of human and spiritual values. In spite of the presence of wars and war mongers in their civilization, their love of the higher life and ideals alone made them survive the vagaries of time. Radhakrishnan sounds a warning when he says, "Empire after empire perished as the result of its ambition to impose its dominion on the whole globe, and civilization after civilization declined on account of spiritual bankruptcy. The author of a Hindu text *Vishnu Purana* asks us to take thought and expect the advent of the next Avatar, Kalki, when society reaches a stage where property alone confers rank, wealth becomes the only source of virtue, passion the sole bond of union between husband and wife, falsehood the source of success in life, sex the only means of enjoyment, and outer trappings are confused with inner religion. If the vulgar and barbarous ideal persists too long, our life will become clogged and our civilization will perish of its own weight. The facts are clear and the laws of history are pitiless. They leave us no choice."

Yet Radhakrishnan assures that there is no need for despondency and panic. The arrival of man on this planet is recent and there is plenty of time ahead of the civilization to adjust, recover and march on. The prospect for humanity is tremendous and exciting. A straightforward analysis and an open criticism of the civilization are mandatory for the proposed reconstruction and recovery. Under the umbrella of reconstruction, Radhakrishnan re-examines the aspects of religion, family life, economics, politics and international relations and offers his explanation. He deliberates elaborately on religion and its role in human relations.

### **Religion**

Radhakrishnan sees the inescapability of humanity from religion and its need to be in touch with the unseen reality. The only recourse is devising fresh concepts to capture the universal truths, which are in agreement with modern knowledge and criticism. It has a double task of weeding out the tyranny of the tradition on the one side and avoiding the confusion of disruptive subjectivity on the other. Radhakrishnan sees no wrong in the diversity of religions and calls for exchange of transforming ideas among the religions. He further says that in the matters of spirit, each one must follow the lead of his own conscience and one must go on a self-correction path until he or she achieves the realization of the truth. He avers, "The religion of the future must be a comprehensive one embracing within its scope all those who are religious-minded in sentiment, allowing them full liberty so far as creeds and thought-pictures are concerned. For religion is not so much a theory of the supernatural as an attitude of spirit, a temper of mind. The essence of all spirituality is the greatness of soul, which is unconquered even in overwhelming catastrophe...Religion, is not mere good form. The consolations, which are cheaply won, are not truly religious. To look upon life as an uninterrupted pursuit of enjoyment is the mark of irreligion. Suffering is not an accidental accompaniment of life, but is central to it. In pain and travail all high achievement is wrought. The end of life is not pleasure (*preyas*) but the realization of the good (*sreyas*). A life of joy and the joy of life are not the same. If suffering leads us to the fulfilment of our ideal, it is as much happiness as a life of pleasure is. The most poignant pain can be joyously accepted if it is recognized as contributory to the realization of one's ideals." Radhakrishnan lays stress on internal transformation and cultivation of moral fibres for the strengthening of the civilization. Man has to evolve from time to time at every step keeping the higher ideal in view and it would be a journey of 'acceptance and adventure'. He observes, "The modern revolt against conventional morals is a sign of the quickening of conscience. Changes in the moral codes are generally brought about by a few individuals who throw aside their prejudices and get at the reality, which is much bigger and finer than our conventions make us believe. Every moral reformer is an immoral force in the eyes of the conservative who prefer the comfortable sloth of conventional morality to the alarming activity of reflective intelligence. For morality is nothing else but the current brand of social custom, and anyone who insists on doing differently is immoral, though his immorality acquires ethical value in the next

generation and becomes part of the tradition in another. At any one period, we always have a few who are in advance of the highest self-conception of the time and some behind it, while a large number are about it. The first are the rebels, the second the criminals, and the last the normal individuals. All progress is due to the rebels.”<sup>18</sup>

### **Family Life**

Radhakrishnan treats the physical, vital, mental, emotional, aesthetic and ethical aspects of human life as necessary and sacred. He advises that the man should not neglect the vital self of the body and starve it. He terms the sex act as sacramental for the construction of a perfect marriage and as an outward sign of an inward grace. Analysing the ideals of family life and marriage, he argues, “Marriage as a form of life means joy as much as suffering. Divorces are due to a false idea that marriage is but a state of bliss and, when anything interferes with it, it must be ended. They are not generally due to infidelity and sexual errancy of either partner but to disharmony of temper and different preferences of life.” Family life and children should be seen as gateway to a higher life. The unnatural and abnormal tendency of the recent times to neglect and ignore the love and care of the children is avoidable if they are considered as the bridges to the future generation. Radhakrishnan despises the trend of State nurseries for the care of the children.

However, Radhakrishnan, on the aspect of sexual licentiousness, adds that both rigid and loose marriage codes are irresponsible. He calls for levelling up rather than levelling down in man and woman relations and demands that men should lift themselves up to the level of women. He expresses his farsighted observations, “The new knowledge has freed women from the penalties which have been theirs throughout the ages, but this new freedom and knowledge, however dangerous, cannot wreck us so long as we face the facts with faith and courage. It is quite true that in the transition period we may have undesirable results. Modern schoolgirls are more alive to the development of the sex life than those of the previous generations are. Their professions of modernity shock the puritans. In colleges and schools where co-education prevails, there are incitements to impropriety.” He advises careful grooming of the individual before allowing him or her into the domain of freedom of marriage and sex so that self-discipline comes automatically and warns that the marriages should not be taken lightly and carelessly. He condemns the ultra-modern marriage which last only an hour as 'ludicrous'.

### **Economic Relations, Politics and International Relations**

While discussing the economic affairs of the new machine civilization, Radhakrishnan recommends cautious and careful handling of the machines and warns against becoming slaves to them. Workers should attach a society centred attitude to their work. He says that wealth shall not be the sole object but cultivation of mind for peace and freedom shall aid the progress of the humanity. He expresses, “Science helps us to get rid of the squalor and bareness of lives and attain leisure but let us learn to use our leisure in the proper way. Right education can help us here.” Radhakrishnan looks at democracy as an ideal rather than technical procedure or practice and says that it has succeeded in many countries because it is not true democracy. By treating the inequality as a natural trait of human beings, he shreds the fallacy that democracy will erase them but affirms that equality of opportunity is a sound social ideal. He wants constant effort and education to realize the ideals of democracy.

Elaborating his stand on international relations as a part of his reconstructive effort, Radhakrishnan calls for the cultivation of universal unity and fellowship and removal of misunderstanding and pseudo-patriotism. He mentions that the world peace does not depend on signed documents and paper conventions, economic treaties and political combinations but on the confluence of conscience of minds and their exchange of culture, knowledge and ideals. He wants a shift in a nation's war psychology and demands oneness of mind. He observes, “After all, the author of the universe has not made mankind a homogeneous whole. He has made the nations of different races. But there is an easier and more reasonable way of merging national aims in a higher synthesis and international endeavour.” He moots the idea of



either world-dominion or world-commonwealth to achieve unity of the world and accepts national freedom as an indispensable prerequisite for unflinching international cooperation. Peace can reign among equal partners only.

Towering above all the thinkers of the twentieth century he succeeded in bringing the abstractions of religion and philosophy to the vistas of the common mind. He was particularly noted for harmonizing eastern and western thought, his perceptive knowledge of humanity, advocacy of universal religion and modern outlook. Radhakrishnan was a fine human being who transferred all that had been good in the past a remedies to the suffering humanity. His thoughts wrapped in simple words kindled the fire of mind and offer succour to the needy. Dr. S. Gopal rightly says, "His lifelong search for insight was a voyage of discovery of himself, a penetration of the depth of his own nature; but he had sharpened this insight from whatever outside sources available, evolved his own spirituality by applying it to everyday life, and transmitted it to those who would also apply it in their own way and learn from it."

A superb master of prose, Radhakrishnan, by his dexterous handling of English language made the English envious. It is impossible to paraphrase his ideas as he had already selected the right word to express his thoughts and no other word could so lucidly express the idea as his. In *Kalki or the Future of Civilization*, Radhakrishnan stands out as a universal visionary who has captured the pulse of the civilization and has projected the human picture in all its true colours. The organization, the analysis and the reconstruction of the book establishes Radhakrishnan as a practical philosopher. The book was marked out as a great prose work because of its use of logical perceptions of the human psyche. As the central character in his writing is humanity, his enunciation of permanently transitory ideas like religion, marriage, creative abilities, democracy, politics, war and peace, social beliefs or psychology transcend the physical boundaries of the nation. His discourse aims at making a good human being and his ideas whether they are of 1920's or 1960's act as antidotes to the widespread maladies of the civilization. Consequently his writing is not authoritative but reflects his universal outlook simultaneously mirroring the present in all hues crystallized a hundred years ago. "Readability is the unfailing characteristic of everything written or spoken by Dr. Radhakrishnan through the half-a-century and more of his working life. But he achieves this quality, not at the expense of depth of thought or accuracy of expression or the recourse to any popular devices of rhetoric, humour or oversimplification. He combined profundity of thought with lucidity of exposition and emphasis of statement with elegant expression."

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## THE BUTTERFLY EFFECT: ANALYSIS OF THE SNOWBALL EFFECT IN *13 REASONS WHY*

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### **Abstract:**

*Suicide is a topic that is hardly ever dealt with in front of adolescents. The Television show *Thirteen reasons why* brings out the reasons behind one girl's suicide. Although it received a lot of criticism, the show wishes to convey a message that is rather relevant to today's times. In this paper we have connected the stages of suicide ideation and related it with that of the show using substantial evidence from previous research. Our hypothesis of how everything affects everything is proved to be true. Further research can be done on the other character of the show having a larger sample thus resulting in a variety of responses to situations.*

**Keywords:** *Suicide ideation, depression, victimization, 13 reasons why, butterfly effect, chaos theory.*

On March 31<sup>st</sup>, Netflix released the Television show *Thirteen Reasons why*, an adaptation of Jay Asher's book, *Thirteen Reasons why*. The story revolves around a young boy, Clay whose friend Hannah Baker leaves behind seven tapes mentioning the reasons she killed herself. The rules are the first person on the tape listens to all thirteen, passes it on to the next person (the next reason) till it reached the last person. If they break the rules then the tapes will be made public. It sounds like a game but on screen the depiction of each tape portrays what an individual goes through in High school and how it changes their lives for better or worse.

Along with good reviews, there was a lot of criticism that was brought forth regarding the graphic content in the show. Although it was meant for an above 18 audience it was watched by teenagers. This was because the book was meant for their target group and they were familiar with it prior to the show. Critics raised their voice saying that the show was glorifying the notion of suicide. Another concern was that the reasons mentioned were not important enough for suicide. Different aspects of the show were picked apart, the graphic suicide scene, the idea of suicide as revenge, these were a few among the many negative remarks about the show. What was not mentioned however, was the last episode titled 'Beyond the Reasons' that talked about the intention of the show, how "Everything affects everything" (Baker, episode 3).

The narrator of the story, Hannah Baker talks about the Chaos Theory, a pattern that seems random or complex there is always a beginning that starts the whole process, and the butterfly effect, when a butterfly flaps its wings there is a hurricane in some part of the world (Baker, Episode 3). We will base the research on the two theories mentioned above, both lead us to the question of what led Hannah to her death. As each tape is shown, we notice the events have a snowball effect on Hannah's life drastically changing everything. There is a lack of understanding these core concepts of the show and the need for this show. One can never really understand the psychological trauma a person goes through before committing suicide, some dots are left unconnected. We never have all the motives, either the person is unwilling to share every bit of detail or they are successful in their concluding act, suicide (Johnson, 1987). *Thirteen reasons why* makes the connection between each factor that leads to one girl's suicide making people more aware of the effect their action has on someone.

Hannah's final decision of suicide was not impulsive or a ploy to get attention but the effect of consistent bullying, depression and hopelessness along with a lack of self-expression.

The aim of this paper is to examine each reason in detail, substantiate it with previous research done on that particular topic. We will also compare Hannah's decision with characters from the movies, 'Easy A' starring Olive Penderghast and the movie 'Speak' starring Melinda, to understand why they survived and Hannah did not although their situations were similar in many ways. Along the process we will look at the outcome of bullying, slut shaming in particular, the need for interpersonal relationships consequences of loneliness. We will also understand why Hannah made the decisions she did, and why she did not ask for help when it was most needed. We will look into the questions by analysing each tape and the effect it had on Hannah, from her perspective substantiating the evidence with previous research done on the subject. Then we will connect all the dots and see how the flow of events led Hannah to her death.

According to a study conducted by the office for national statistics, London, suicidal thoughts occur at least once in the life of 25% to 45% of older adolescents (Hawton et al, 2005). The stresses that often lead to suicidal ideations are coping with the society, romantic relationships, competing with the surroundings and finally, a reason to escape from current situations, broken homes, Psychiatric disorders, or substance misuse (Barbre, 2000). Communicating with others about problems that one is facing can be beneficial. The desire for interpersonal attachments is a fundamental human motivation (Buameister R. F. and Larry M. R., 1995). The problem with depression is that you want to have someone to depend on but you also have a contradictory feeling, to be left alone (Stuart, 1967). Emotion regulation is imperative and one way of doing this is to hurt oneself, either to create a negative effect or to break a pattern of psychological numbness (Prinstein, 2008). This is where we will compare Hannah's decisions to the characters of the other movies under study, how self-expression and interpersonal relationships helped them and lack of it affected Hannah.

High-school is a hard place and time for most children due to victimisation. According to CDC, 2005 8.5% of high school students attempt suicide in 1 year (Prinstein 2008). The effects of bullying can be low psych well-being that is general unhappiness, loneliness then anxiety and depression (Rigby 2003). Verbal bullying is depicted in the show and the repercussions are fatal. It includes gossip, labels and rumours which lead to a feeling of rejection from the society, loneliness and anxiety (Jacobsen and Sheri Bauman 2007). All three characters we're dealing with were deemed as sluts with no ounce of truth to the label. This paper attempts to study the repercussion of such an act. A continuation of victimisation leads to anxiety and depression, this condition is most noted among young girls. (Bond et al, 2001).

Victims of depression feel a sense of hopelessness. It leads to a lack of purpose in life following suicide ideation or drug abuse (Harlow, et al, 1986). Depression is a group of disorders, one of which is called hopelessness depression (Abramson, et al, 1989). Beck had conducted an experiment where he created a hopelessness scale in order to find the relation between hopelessness and suicide. (Beck et al, 1985) His study further reveals the intensity of the suicidal desires is stronger in those who have no hope, there is a sense of pessimism towards their future. This state of mind leads to a certain vulnerability that exists in the patients. We notice the same problem faced by Hannah after her encounter with Bryce and finally with the councillor. We will understand how hopelessness played a role in her final decision.

We have taken a brief look into the existing literature on these aspects separately and we see how it fails to reach through to people because of the research done in detached chunks. In this paper we will bring all the pieces together to form the underlying picture the show is trying to expose. There is not a lot of research done on this particular show although it is very important for the present day with suicide being the second leading cause of death among youths. So much can be done to help, prevent and identify suicide ideations and we will look into those that are brought out from the show.

### **Victimization and its effects**

Bullying is an ordinary affair faced by high school students in the United States, as portrayed in

every high school related T.V show or movie. As this paper deals with a work of fiction, we shall take this point into account. Students are harassed on an everyday basis as depicted in the show. One of the reasons for bullying is to establish a hierarchy in power. This immediately puts the victim in place of low self-worth. Low self-esteem is scrutinizing the negative attributes that one possesses (Owens 1994). In the show we see how the Jocks are in power, how they command the rest of the school. Characters such as Bryce Walker, Justin Foley, and Zach Dempsey fall under this category, each have a tape of their own. Let us now look into the core aspect of the issue, starting with Justin. Justin Foley received the first tape for showing off compromising pictures of Hannah to his friends who then made it public. This can be described as an act of peer pressure because sex is considered a necessity before high school or it is insulting, as I've noticed in many works of fiction. When Justin tells his friends about Hannah 'putting out' on the first date he creates an image of Hannah being easy. We will not look into what Justin himself was going through that led him to this decision although it would be a rather interesting study. We will focus only on Hannah Baker and her responses to victimisation. The picture is circulated throughout the school making Hannah a victim of cyber and verbal bullying. That includes rumours, unnecessary gossip and labels. Another aspect about bullying is repetitiveness and intent to harm (Jacobson and Bauman 2007). After this episode the next tape is for a rather different jock, Alex Standal. Alex made a list objectifying the girls in class, rating them on the best and worse body part. He gave Hannah the title of best ass and his girlfriend the worst. Not only did Hannah lose her two best friends, she was furthermore tormented in school. Clearly, the intention of the list was to hurt Jessica but it had an effect on Hannah's life, something Alex did not foresee. Here, the show displays the effect one action can have on a person you did not expect and how it can set into motion an array of obstacles that the person will have to go through due to one small list. The effect bullying has is very serious, it can change a person forever and the memories can haunt them later in life. The risk is greater if there is less social support (Rigby, 2003). This leads to poor social adjustment making the person less and less trusting of other, building a wall around themselves. Rigby says that it can lead to suicide ideation because of less self-worth. After the list was out, Hannah had an encounter with one of her classmates, Bryce who grabbed her behind in a store. This was the first time Hannah was truly hurt and disturbed. Her self-esteem was low because all the boys saw was an object, not a person. Low self-esteem can bring to light all one's negative attributes shadowing the good (Owens, 1994). Hannah felt that everyone would only look at her in a sexual way and not see her for who she really is. Name calling such as 'slut' can have serious effects on one's social and mental health (Rigby, 2003). The dominos had begun to fall, one after the other. Once Hannah Baker's identity was ruined and she was objectified, the boys in the school lost all respect for her and started to treat her differently. Even Clay Jensen was one of the people who believed the rumours and pictures that were being circulated although they has no truth to it. The show clearly depicts the power of social media and gossip, a combination that is hard to stop without the right help. As we are doing a comparative study with two other works, the movies 'Speak' and 'Easy A' it is imperative to notice that both characters in the movies face similar problems. We will not get into the details of the stories as it plays a rather small and comparative role in this paper. Olive, from Easy A is also deemed a slut due to various circumstances, not similar to Hannah's. Melinda from Speak is cast away from her social group of friends, because she called the police to one of the parties where she went through a traumatic experience that no one was aware of. All three women went through the same social changes but the way they got there was different and how they reached out to others.

### **Interpersonal relationships and their effects**

Durkheim says "Man is man only because he is social" (Hynes 1975). There is a lot of truth to this statement as the complexity of human language is one of the many aspects that differentiate us from other species. The ability for human beings to express what they feel through words is rather a gift because it is known to relieve oneself of the burdens on their shoulders, getting it off their chest. Hannah Baker had only two friends, Jessica and Alex who ignore her after the list incident. All she had was Clay but they were not

close enough. The only place Hannah felt safe was home and that was ruined by Tyler Down, the school photographer who was stalking Hannah because he had a crush on her. Hannah reached out to a friend, Courtney who said she would help catch the culprit but in the process they end up kissing. Tyler takes a photo of this and makes it public after an argument with Hannah. This affects them both, Courtney and Hannah who no longer remain as friends. In this incident we note that Hannah's safety was threatened, someone could get into her room and expose everything. Nowhere was safe for her, not school and now not her home. Safety is one of the basic needs of a human according to Maslow's hierarchy of needs. On top of this we see how Hannah lost another friend due to cyber bullying, another picture circulated at school destroyed a bridge she had built with someone. We can notice in this scenario that the picture was circulated only after Tyler had tried to talk to Hannah but she turned him away. So we see the aftermath of Hannah's response and the effect it had on Tyler. The show does not just bring to light Hannah Baker's reaction to someone else's actions but the effect she had on the others. Courtney took it further when she spread rumours about Hannah and her already tarnished image got worse and had some sort of confirmation. The boys in school needed only this to take complete advantage of her.

Marcus Cole is one such person who goes out a date with Hannah on Valentines' day. He brings his friends along just to show that he is going to move on Hannah and publically attempts to sexually assault her. After her efforts to say no he exclaims that she was supposed to be easy. Hannah is frozen to the seat speechless, being called a slut once again. Hannah is bombarded with the idea that she is a slut and after a while one loses the hold they had on themselves and starts to believe what the rest are saying. Hannah, for instance thought in some way maybe she did make it seem like she was easy although that was not the case. Right after this incident, Zach Dempsey sits near Hannah, quiet and patient, waiting for her to talk but she doesn't respond. Before we get into Zach's effect there is a scene in the show where Clay takes Courtney to Hannah's grave and she runs away because she is not able to deal with it. It shows how people, bullies are never really blamed for their actions or refuse to take responsibility because they want to believe otherwise and society agrees with them because in some way or another, they are also a part to blame. Another incident where Alex Standal gets into a fight, the show clearly symbolises or connects that incident to that of Hannah's, although Alex reacted in a way no one expected, the other kid who was driving too fast was to blame for his actions because he almost ran over Alex but in Hannah's case it was her fault. The other kid takes responsibility but says Alex reacted unnecessarily. This is sadly the way suicide is commonly dealt with, the victim is always criticised for taking that option but the reasons for that decision are never explored. We tend to be quick to blame the victim but never take any responsibility or think what could have gone differently. Zach Dempsey did something that might seem small to others but was more hurtful and had a worse end result than the former reasons. "Humans are a social species. We rely on connections to survive" (Baker, episode 7). After her previous encounters with people that had gone so horribly wrong, Hannah had given up on trying. Suicide ideation arises for many reasons varying from bad report cards to rejection by friends (Johnson et al, 1987), a feeling of loneliness is created, thinking no one can understand them. Here is where hopelessness arises, a main factor causing people to refrain from social interaction as they fail to see the point. Hannah's sense of hopelessness was aggravated after Zach. Hopelessness depression is then divided into two factors, negative expectations 1) were the future seems terrible 2) The helplessness theory were one cannot control the outcomes of the future thus feeling useless as they think that nothing good will come out of any situation (Abramson, et al. 1089). This is how Hannah felt about Zach's attempt to being her friend. She thought he was reaching out for the wrong reasons and so refused his friendly advances. Zach was offended so took away one of her last lifelines, communications class. Everyone needs compliments, it keeps people going. Dempsey stole Hannah's complement chits from class thus taking away her one form of feeling good about herself. Even after she confronts him about it, Zach does not budge. Later in class Hannah writes an anonymous note contemplating suicide, if the best way to not feel bad is to not feel anything at all. The different opinions from the class depict the different



ways people see suicide attempts or depression, a joke or the most common, attention and rarely do people see it for what it really is, a cry for help. By this stage Hannah was depressed. Lack of interpersonal relationships can have ill effects on health. The need to belong is strong and fundamental (Baumeister 1995). Depression leads to a lack of purpose in life and this is where Hannah was. Boys tend to lean towards drugs and substance abuse while women commit suicide (Harlow, et al. 1986). Comparing this show with the two movies, we see how social isolation affected these women. The three of them were alone, sad, and felt like they had no way out and that no one would listen to them. Without knowing having a reason to exist, why exist at all? The idea of interpersonal relationships is that someone is always there to support you, a rather romantic notion would be a person to catch you when you fall. Even the Bible states that two is better than one and three is still better (New King James, Ecclesiastes 4: 9-12). So it is essential to have people one can trust or count on when situations are bad. Bad experiences of relationships leads to a pessimistic view of people, even good individuals are not easy to trust. Even if there is a person to comfort, the victim of hurt does not see them as a helping hand rather another that will break them even more. This leads to loneliness and a closed off attitude towards society leaving the individual more vulnerable than before. But Hannah found a small loophole, Poetry.

The next relationship we will look into is that of Hannah's and the school newspaper editor/publisher Ryan Shaver. Hannah joined a poetry club and read out loud one of her poems which was made public by Ryan. Due to this Hannah lost her interest towards poetry. It was the only way for her to tell someone how she feels because teenagers cannot understand what they are going through themselves (Hedrick, episode 14). Barlow says that vulnerable individuals when faced with sad situations go through uncontrollable bouts of sadness causing double depression (Mineka, et al, 1991). Thus writing it on paper helps one to express emotion. This is in some ways therapeutic as it brings about the notion of sharing your burdens with someone else making the load lighter. Religion is one way to follow this, another is expression through art or writing. As Wordsworth has said "Poetry is the spontaneous flow of feelings" (651). "See me for my Soul alone" (Baker, episode 8). This is a line from Hannah's poem expressing that people stopped looking at her as a human and she wishes that it would stop. When Ryan made this public, he broke the trust that Hannah shared with him and poetry reminded her of the time her inner thoughts meant for the club was published in the school paper. Here Hannah lost the only form of self-expression she had. Melinda from the movie *Speak* uses art as her way of communication. She expresses all her thoughts and fears through drawings and thus relieves herself of all the built-in pressure of sadness.

The one person who was still there was Clay. Clay Jensen and Hannah had a sexual encounter at a party which ended with Hannah pushing Clay away because she thought of Clay as every other boy in her school who sexually assaulted her even though she had given him her consent. Post-traumatic stress disorder can be seen in rape or sexual assault victims (Kilpatrick and Veronen, pp. 113). Hannah started seeing vivid images of every time she was called a slut, grabbed or harassed. When she yelled at Clay he left as he was asked to do, but Hannah in her tape mentions that she did not want him to leave. Here we note the Para-suicidal behaviour which is manipulative in nature, to expect others to help them even when they least want it (Page, 1996). In a depressive state one is not of sound mind, making them weaker thus having to depend on someone else for strength and when neglected they lose all hope. Social Anxiety disorder is a risk factor for major depression and when heightened, it can lead to suicidal ideations (Stein, et al. 2001). We clearly see by this time Hannah was done with trying to reach out to a friend and even if she wanted to she didn't know how.

### **Guilt and Its effects**

Another reason for suicide ideation is self-blame. Guilt can have a very powerful hold on someone. Hannah experienced guilt when she left for a party where she saw her friend Jessica get raped but couldn't do anything about it. Fight flight or freeze, these are the responses one has when faced with tough situations (Hendrick, episode 14). Given the mental state Hannah was in she couldn't move in that moment.



In the last episode of the show, 'Beyond the reasons' psychologists talk about how it would be easy for the audience to talk about what they would have done in that position. But it is not that easy to do. After that, Hannah was involved in an accident with a classmate and they broke down a stop sign which resulted in the death of a classmate. The show is very affective in bringing out the Butterfly effect of life, how one occurrence can affect another in an unexpected way. Hannah tries to make amends with Clay but he is still hurt about the previous incident and rightfully so. Although she wants to talk to him, she feels like he would not understand or that she is not good enough for him. After Hannah realises all her friends are gone, she also feels like she disappointed her parents after she loses a chunk of money. Hannah continues to say that no matter what she does she only hurts people. When a person is always bright and happy but then goes through a series of unfortunate events there is a chemical imbalance that occurs in their minds (Johnson, et al. 1987). This leads them to change drastically and most often the change is noticed.

### **Rape and its effects**

Hannah had changed forever and could not find her way back. She felt a void in her and so went to a party. Taking a look into this we notice that Hannah just wanted any form of human communication at this point, anything to make her feel again. The party was at Bryce's house, she encountered Bryce who raped her in the hot tub. The scene is rather graphic and real with camera shots of Hannah's wrist being scraped against the sides of the cement platform depicting a sort of death that happens during that moment. As I could not talk to a person who had gone through rape, we will look at the previous literature done on the effects of the crime. 13% of college students had been raped in study done on the subject. They all had fear, worry and diminished self-esteem with the sense of helplessness. They also experience a numbing of responsiveness (Kilpatrick and Veronen) exactly what Hannah went through. We can also compare this to a work of literature, the rape of Lucretia. (Glendinning, pp. 61-82). This figure had killed herself after she was raped, a rather dramatic moment in the story. After a lot of research was done on the subject, there were many perspectives, one more relevant to Hannah Baker's condition. Augustine says that Lucretia killed herself because deep down, she felt like she had consented somehow. Hannah Baker did not openly say no but she did not say yes, she tried to get away. But the society would not respect her stand because she did not openly say the words. The show brings light to how high school boys should be educated on what consent really is and the victim should not be blamed. In reference to the current day, Al Qaeda recruits female rape victims to be suicide bombers. This shows the extent of the distress rape has on the victim, it is severely life threatening. This was the final incident that lead Hannah to her decision. After that she felt dead inside, like nothing else mattered. Once hopelessness has entered into the minds of a victim suicide ideation is inevitable.

In most rape cases the victim knows the assailant. Comparing this to the two other movies under study we see that Melinda from the movie *Speak* was raped by her school senior. She stopped talking to people and closed herself off completely. But her one way of expression was art class, a teacher who took interest in her, who knew she was broken. It is the same with *Easy A*, Olive Penderghast's English teacher takes an interest in her and tries to talk to her. Although he is not the reason she changed he was one of the factors that helped her in her situation. She also had a friend who was with her when it mattered the most. Here we see how teachers can guide one back from suicidal decisions or depression. This was precisely the problem in Hannah Baker's case.

After her rape, Hannah went to the school councillor, Mr Porter for help because she was already contemplating suicide and wanted someone to direct her in another way. Here we see that Mr Porter is unequipped to give Hannah the help she needs. Mr. Porter also hesitates to believe Hannah thus making her lose trust in him. This could be avoided however if he knew the psychological conditions of a rape victim diagnosing her of being a victim (Massaro, pp. 395) a study done to show victims have been raped in court just reviewing their psychological and physical well-being.. Here, Hannah blames Mr Porter for not being able to help her, we see an interpersonal disturbance in her, a feeling of being sick and not able to do

anything hence others are imposed to help (Stuart, 1967). Hannah could not put her feelings into words and this leads to a belief that one cannot have ideas, thus cannot alter life and has a lack of control over it (Stuart, 1967). When others fail to respond the way the victim expects it is almost as if that person is hurting them on purpose. One of the well-known works in this area of interest (suicide) is Durkheim's *Suicide*, explaining four different types of suicide, egoistic, altruistic, anomic and fatalistic (Hynes, 1975). Egoistic suicide is when one feels that there is no support for them in the society, that they are all alone. The present failure moves to future failure. Here, the show conveys a message on how schools need to be more equipped to handle situations such as the mentioned. Even family and friends fail to see the real pain a loved one is going through. According to a study done, proximity to a person makes it difficult for one to see the situation for what it really is, and immediately seek help as they do not want to believe it (Owens, et al, 2011).

The need to discuss this show or book in classrooms is highly essential due to its relevant content to the real world. Unlike other shows or movies, one is not always lucky enough to have a happy ending. The last episode 'Beyond the reasons' is a full-fledged explanation of why the show exists and what its purpose is. Many fail to watch it as it has no real drama in it. But Drama was not the point, it was to discuss a topic that has been hid long enough and is on the rise now, in epidemic proportions. It discusses the role of a peer, a teacher, a parent or a random soul who could reach out and change the life of one person. What we haven't looked at is the flaws in Hannah's reasons. The producer of the show talks about how Hannah was an imperfect person and how she could have done much more. This was another piece of the puzzle the show was trying to discuss. When asked, the people who watch the show all have similar opinions, Hannah was dramatic, everybody goes through it so what makes her any different, and the most common was she could have done so much more. The cast of the show agrees. This was another notion they wanted to bring out in the minds of the audience that no matter how terrible a situation is there is always help. This aspect of the show is hardly known because it is never discussed and this brings us back to the need of this book in schools. It is out there in the world and it is the job of the educators or parents to interpret it in the right way so children get the right message.

There is an interesting scene where Clay and his former friend Sky have a conversation and she brings up self-harm as a substitute for suicide. The show brings out every aspect of depression including self-harm. Non Suicidal self-injury [NSSI] is a condition in certain people in which they deliberately hurt themselves (Knock et al, 2009). It most often involves cutting oneself with a knife or a blade, burning the skin in specific areas or punching walls. But the above reasons comprise physical harm but there is also emotional pain that can be inflicted, such as masochism. Most children in school practice this and it is ignored as people are not aware of the reasons or are not equipped to deal with the situation. But in this paper we will only deal with Suicide ideation thus not further exploring into NSSI. Another scene that needs mention is when Hannah sees her future with Clay by her side. This shows suicidal people that if they could only wither this storm then a life of bliss and happiness is on their way, but most often than not it is forgotten.

Suicide is a subject that has been dealt with time and again due to the phenomenon being contradictory to basic human instinct which is survival. Fiction rarely shows suicide especially that of a teenagers because the idea of a person saved is better for cinema than the other option. But reality is not so kind. In the present day, a game called 'The Blue whale challenge' has been circulated to school children and others that are older. The aim of the game is to complete fifty tasks that are assigned to the player by a user, the tasks include carving of one's skin, others that cause psychological and physical trauma, and finally to end one's own life. Many children have already lost their lives to this game. Children must be educated that there is nothing glorious about suicide, that it is gruesome, painful and lonely, precisely what the show brings about through the last scene. Some depressed patients have fantasies about gloating on the misery they cause other people (Stuart, 1967). Some people feel as if they have been forced into that

condition as they expect others to help them out, putting a huge responsibility, their own lives on someone else's shoulder (Stuart, 1967). Literature has a way of romanticising the concept of suicide. The most well-known story would be that of Romeo and Juliet who kill themselves because of undying love. The story more related to this particular research problem would be the show under study. The protagonist Hannah Baker dies leaving behind a legacy and crushed souls. As the paper deals with a work of fiction, the notion that suicide is a grand yet gruesome gesture on the television or in paper is relevant and noteworthy.

But in this paper we only look at how the victim got there and why nothing was done to help them and in what way could they have been saved. Most often people forget this question and focus on everything else. It is important for suicidal people to know that their action hurts those that were not intended to feel the pain. In this story, Hannah's parents go through a very difficult time coping with the death of their only daughter. Jay Asher in an interview said that he intended for the book to reach teenagers and make them aware of how they treated others. He was glad that many reacted positively and understood the message (Gillis 2011). Two teacher in a high school, James and Trent (2012) took up this book for their course plan for the 10<sup>th</sup> graders and started a conversation in class. Most children said that she was being dramatic and oversensitive but one girl spoke up to mention that it was not about the final reaction but what got her there, but a chain of events that brought her down each time. This is the intent of this paper, to bring out the importance of its discussion in classes teach children how to identify victims of depression, to be more sensitive to other people. It is not always that people in the worst situations kill themselves, it could be people like Hannah, someone from a good social background with loving parents. Each person has their own level of tolerance and a problem that seems trivial to one may not be to the other.

The final scene of the show ends with Clay reaching out to Sky, a girl who he notices is falling down the same road as Hannah. This is the intention of the paper, to make people more aware of their actions and its effects, to notice those in trouble, who need help and if not capable of providing the necessary help then contact someone who can. The victims of depression can learn from Hannah that there are people who want to help, they do not have to face situations alone and communication is of the utmost importance, either through words of some other medium. What could not be looked into is the effect Hannah had on other people, although she did not want to be treated badly, she left behind tapes that ruined the lives of 13 kids and took one life, Alex Standal who shoots himself in the last episode. Although cruel, it was necessary for the children to know how they can affect people. A more in-depth study can be done to see how other kids deal with their problems and why Hannah chose to kill herself. This will show an array of reactions people have to different situations, a wider sample will give a better perspective, something we could not explore in paper. Here, pupil's definition of bullying differs from that of a researchers and this paper gives a clear view of the pupil's definition not filtered by a researchers' (Suzanne, Hennessy 2002).

In conclusion, Hannah Baker did not bring it upon herself but was deeply affected due to a sequence of unpleasant trials that lead her to believe that no one would ever help her. People must be criticised for the way they treat one another and should know the distress they bring on their fellow peers or the people around them. Suicide Ideation starts with problems, escalating of the problems, no adaptive techniques (withdrawal from society), loss of last friend, depression and hopelessness (Johnson, et al. 1987). As we have put together all the pieces one can now be more aware of the effect they have on others. Zach Dempsey perfectly says "If one thing had gone differently somewhere along the line maybe none of this would have happened" (Dempsey, episode 12).

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## THE IMPACT OF USING WEBQUEST ON IMPROVING THE READING SKILLS AMONG ELEVEN GRADE EFL STUDENTS

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### **Abstract:**

*The application of various web-based resources have revolutionised the social interaction and the educational system more especially in the late 20th-Century to the 21st-Century. The present study aims to investigate the impact of using a WebQuest on improving the reading skills of eleven grade EFL students of Jordan. The study employed a quasi-experiment design where the participants were purposefully selected and divided into two groups; experimental group and control group. 40 eleventh grade students were chosen from two classrooms of Zarqa Boys Secondary School to be the sample of the study. In each group there were 20 students. Reading comprehension test is the instrument used to collect the data in this study. The Mann-Whitney U Test and Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test were utilised in the study to examine the significance difference between groups' performances and within groups' performances. The results of the study revealed important differences in the total results of the preliminary test between two groups, the experimental and the control, at ( $p < 0.05$ ) for the sake of the first group which showed better performance than others. Based on the conclusions of the paper, other researchers are recommended to seek WebQuests as a good intervention in the educational process in the Jordanian schools. They also recommended that there is need for good teacher training programs on web-based teaching of English language skills for the secondary schools teachers in Jordan.*

**Keywords:** *Computer-Assisted Language Learning, EFL learners, Educational Revolution 4.0, Reading Skills, WebQuest.*

### **1.0 Introduction**

The 21st-Century has witnessed new trends in teaching and learning with rapid increase of e-learning resources which was characterised as the Educational Revolution 4.0 (Alkhataba, Abdul-Hamid & Bashir, I., 2018). This succession in using Internet or web-based resources is very challenging though highly demanded in our society. It is continuously proven, through the challenges, that people need a raised level of competitiveness to successfully meet their goals. Moreover, the application of technological resources and web-based resources has proven to be very important for controlling the full process in education in this era (Arkorful & Abaidoo, 2015). Therefore, one of the most important assisting tools for the language aids for students to promote self-confidence and to make the learning process easier (Ozden & Sengel, 2009). Jordan has realised the importance and detriments of using e-learning technological tools in education, particularly in high education. Recognising the importance of modern technologies in the teaching and learning environment, Jordanian Ministry of Education stressed the need to improve the educational processes through engagement in using various e-learning platforms and other computer related programmes.

Using web-resources in teaching and learning is related to Computer-Assisted Teaching (CAT) or Computer-Assisted Instruction (CAI) in general. And when it is related to language it is called Computer-Assisted Language Learning' (CALL) (Stockwell, 2012). When internet is used it referred called Web-Enhanced Language Learning reference to internet and other multi-media application used to enhance or

support learning (Kukulkska-Hulme, Lee, & Norris, 2017). However, this study focuses on the Web-based resources WebQuest which was introduced by Bernie Dodge and Tom March in 1995 (Dodge, 1997).

English language is learnt as foreign language in Jordan. It was first introduced to Jordan in 1920 through the British colonisation of the country. The Ministry of Education in Jordan gives substantial attention to English teaching especially to the English curriculum and teacher training (Al-Khasawneh, & Al-Omari, 2015).

Reading skill is one of the four essential skills of language which is regarded as a basic life skill needed for students at all level their academic education (Pugh, Pawan&Antommarchi, 2000). Reading is one of the problematic in learning English as foreign language (EFL). Many studies report that Jordanian EFL learners are facing difficulties in reading comprehension more especially at secondary school level (Alhabahba, Pandian& Ali Mahfoodh, 2016; Migdadi, A. &Baniabdelrahman, 2016 Al-Damiree, &Bataineh, 2015; Al-Ghazo, 2015).

### 1.1 Research Questions

This study aims to address two overarching research questions:

1. Are there great differences between the marks of eleventh grade students taught through and the students taught using traditional way in the subject of reading comprehension?
2. Is there a difference in eleventh grade students' performance within the group taught with WebQuest and group taught traditional way of reading comprehension?

### 2.0 Overview of WebQuest

WebQuest is one of the Web-based resources applied in the various fields of teaching and learning. The WebQuest was first developed by Bernie Dodge, incorporates request arranged exercises in which the data utilized by students is drawn from the Internet (Dodge, 1998). Many researchers have adopted WebQuest approach such as (Yang et al., 2012; Alshumaimeri&Almasri, 2012; Tuan, 2011; Abu-Elwan, 2007) have perceived that WebQuest as a potential academic instrument in terms of consolidating the Internet into the classroom, empowering basic reasoning, correspondence and connection (Awada, &Ghaith, 2015). According March (2007) the essential feature of WebQuest is its scaffolding structure. This is the element of WebQuest “that encourages students motivation and facilitates advanced thinking with integration of enriched learning resources” (p. 02).

Webquest has seven major elements through which the learning activities and the processes are introduced to students (Dodge, 2004; Turville, 2008; AL-Khataybeh& Al-Awasa, 2016). The elements are introduction, task, process, resources, evaluation and conclusion. These elements should be considered when designing WebQuest for intervention teaching.

1. **The introduction** stage comprises knowing the learners' background information, brainstorming, and setting the goal for learning.
2. **Task:** it is description of the activities learners will have accomplished by the end of the webquest session.
3. **Process:** it includes the step by step procedures to be adopted during the WebQuest class.
4. **Resources:** it comprises of the selected web-based resources to be used in the class with clear guidelines on how to use them to achieve the set learning goals.
5. **Evaluation:** a number of criteria to evaluate student's work. The criteria should be clear, fair, and consistent with the specified task.
6. **Conclusion:** this permits learners to think better and it makes it easier for instructors to sum marks
7. **Teachers' page:** this is the only section in which writing is directed to the students. It consists of your details, on the WebQuest designing the processes of implementation so that other facilitators can use or adopt it in their classes.

## 2.1 Related Studies on Application of WebQuests in Reading Skills in EFL Contexts

Various studies employed WebQuests when they teach reading in the departments that teach foreign languages and adopt the task-based learning (TBL) approach. Here are some of the studies using WebQuest in EFL contexts.

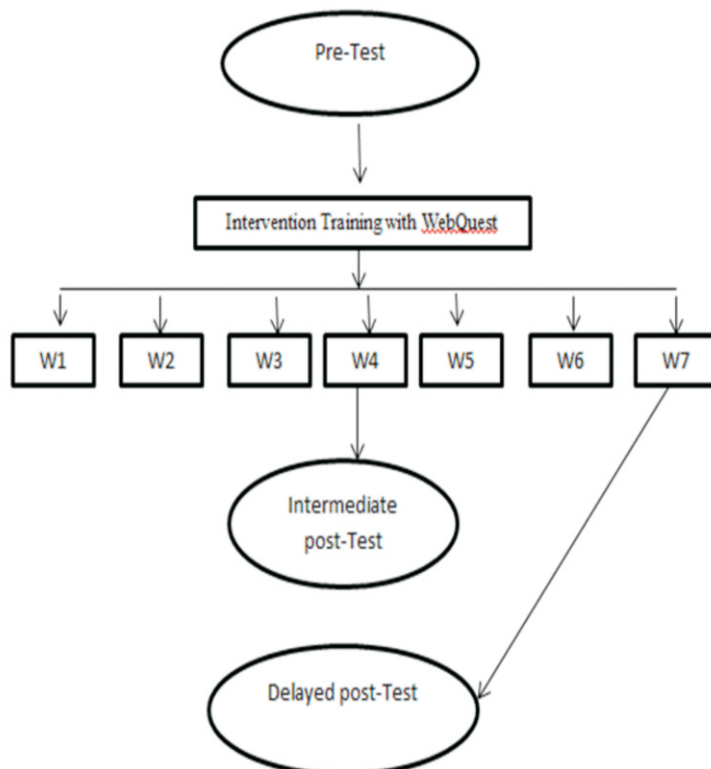
Alshumaimeri and Almasri (2012) examine the effects of using WebQuest on reading comprehension performance of Saudi EFL students. The 83 male student at a university first year preparatory program participated in this study. The participants are divided into two group experimental group using WebQuestresources and control group taught using traditional method. The results of the study show that there is a significant difference between the post-test and the pre-test in the comprehension subject for the experimental group, which shows that the use of WebQuest would promote the reading comprehension of the students. The results show that WebQuest could possibly improve the reading comprehension. These researchers suggest there isa need to give hand on training to the students so that they can use WebQuests more effectively.

Tuan (2011) investigates the effect of a WebQestion reading comprehension skills. He uses quasi-experimental research approach with 44 Vietnamese students participants are put into two groups equally, one is experimental and the other is a control group. The study results indicated that students using WebQuest in the class achieved more progress than the control group regarding the subject of reading comprehension.

## 3.0 Methodology

### 3.1 Design

The quasi-experimental design is used to measure the influence of WebQuest in developing the reading skills of eleventh grade EFL students ofZarqa secondary school, Jordan. The design has three sections, pre-test, intervention and post-test. Quasi-experimentis a research design similar to experimental research designs that are used to test hypotheses about the effects treatments on the subjects (Thyer, 2012).The difference between quasi-experiment and experiment research designs is the lack the process of random assignment in the former which was used in the later (Nielsen, Randall, & Christensen, 2017).



Quasi-experimental design used in this study is illustrated in Figure 3.1

## **Quasi-experimental**

### **Pre-Test**

After selection of the two groups (experimental and control) the researchers administered the first test to both controlled and experimental groups during the first week of the study. The test is reading comprehension test design by the researchers for both experimental and control group

### **Intervention**

The intervention training is using WebQuest is given to the students in experiment group within seven weeks. At the same time the students in the control group received the same lessons using tradition way of reading comprehension. The seven elements of WebQuest listed in section 2.0 above are used in designing the intervention program for the students in the experimental group. Moreover, Jordanian curriculum is used to identify learning needs of the eleventh grade students. The experimental group are taught using one of the best ELT websites <http://www.wordle.net/create>.

### **Post-Test**

Two post-tests are used in this study, immediate post-test administered at the middle of the intervention period of the study (week 4). And the second post-test (delayed) is administered at the end of the intervention period of the study (week 7). The test is reading comprehension test design by the researchers for both experimental and control group.

## **3.2 Sampling Techniques**

The subjects involved in this study consist of eleventh grade Zarqa Boys Secondary School Jordan students, who were in the session of 2017\2018. 40 students are purposively selected as the samples of the study. The students were divided into two 20-student groups, one being experimental and the other is control. Two classes were chosen from eleventh grade classes of the ZarqaSchool, Az-ZarqaDirectorate, Jordan. The students are homogeneous in nature that all shared a same cultural background and have similar level reading comprehension proficiency.

## **3.3 Instruments of the Study**

Reading comprehension test is the instrument used to collect the data in this study. The reading actives are based on the *Jordan-Action Pack activity Book Eleventh Grade*. The control group were taught reading skills based on their curriculum using traditional approach, while the experimental group were taught reading skills based on their curriculum through the modified website <http://www.wordle.net/create>.

## **3.4 Analytical Techniques**

Two analytical non-parametric statistics are used to analyse the data collected through the reading comprehension tests administered three times in the study. These are the Mann-Whitney U Test which was equivalent to ANOVA (parametric) and Wilcoxon Signed-Rank test. The analysis was done using SPSS version 23. Nonparametric statistics is used here instead of parametric because data was not normally distributed as the researchers test the degree of normality among variances. In addition, non-random selection of the participants in quasi-experiment has violated the assumptions of the homogeneity of distributions across samples (Webb & Copsey, 2011).

Moreover, r-value is used to indicate the effect sizes in the non-parametric tests. This is very important test which provided the exact level effect of the significance of the results (Kotrlik, Williams, & Jabor, 2011). P-value is important but cannot tell you the exact effect size (Sullivan & Feinn, 2012). In this study the following classification is used to interpret the effect size values (small 0.10; medium 0.30-0.49; large  $\geq 0.5$ ) (Kotrlik, Williams, & Jabor 2011)

## **4.0 Results and Discussion**

In the following sub-sections the results and discussion of the findings of the study are presented. To answer the first research question the Mann-Whitney (U) is employed to find the significance

difference between the scores of the two groups experimental and control while Wilcoxon Signed-Rank test is used to find out the significance difference of scores of reading performance the within the groups.

#### 4.1 Between Groups

The researchers used the Mann-Whitney U Test to find whether there is significance difference between the scores of eleventh grade students of Zarqa secondary school in their reading comprehension performance from the tests administered three times (pretest, immediate post-test and delayed post-test). The results are presented in Table 4.0 below.

**Table 4.0 Between-Group Overall Score**

	<b>Experimental</b>	<b>Control</b>				
	<b>Mean Rank</b>	<b>Mean Rank</b>	<b>U value</b>	<b>z value</b>	<b>p value</b>	<b>r value</b>
Pre-Test	32.67	21.67	869.5	-1.183	*0.237	-0.123
Immediate-Test	72.44	51.11	538.0	-3.946	*0.000	-0.418
Delayed-Test	90.22	73.00	326.0	-5.697	*0.000	-0.604

Note: \* $p < 0.01$

Table 4.0, presented the results of the Mann-Whitney U Test obtained from the analysis of pre-test, immediate post-test and delayed post-test between the experimental and control groups. The total results showed that the pre-test results are different between experimental and the control group ( $U \geq 869.5$ ,  $z \geq -1.183$ ,  $p \geq *0.237$ ,  $r \geq -0.123$ ). Moreover,  $r$  value  $\geq -0.123$  indicated that small size effect therefore the effect of difference between the experimental and control group at the pre-test level is not essential one.

Moreover, the result of the Mann-Whitney U test in Table 4.0 showed great difference in the total score of the immediate post and pre tests between experimental and the control groups ( $U \geq 538.0$ ,  $z \geq -3.946$ ,  $p \geq *0.000$ ,  $r \geq -0.418$ ). Comparing the two means of the both groups revealed that the value of the mean rank of the experimental group (mean rank  $\geq 72.44$ ) which is more than that of the control group (mean rank  $\geq 51.11$ ). Effect size of  $r \geq -0.418$  showed an average effect. Therefore, this shows that the performance of the experimental group students is better than that of the control one.

Furthermore, the results in Table 4.0 indicate important differences in the total results of the delayed test between the experimental and the control groups. ( $U \geq 326.0$ ,  $z \geq -5.697$ ,  $p \geq *0.000$ ,  $r \geq -0.604$ ). The mean rank of the experimental group is (mean rank  $\geq 90.22$ ), which is more than that of the control group (mean rank  $\geq 73.00$ ). The effect size of  $r \geq 0.624$  represents a large effect, thus indicating that the effect of experimental group compared to that of control group was an essential one.

#### 4.2 Within Groups: Experimental Group

The results presented in the sub-section below aimed to find whether there is a difference in eleventh grade students' performance within the group taught with WebQuest and group taught traditional way of reading comprehension. The data collected in the three tests (pre-test, immediate post-test, and delayed post-test) are analysed through the Wilcoxon Signed-Rank test. The Results are presented in the tables below.

**Table 4.1 Within-Group Overall Score**

<b>Group</b>	<b>T value</b>	<b>z value</b>	<b>p value</b>	<b>r value</b>
Before	-13.73	-5.852	*0.000	-0.872
Immediate				
Total				



Note: \* $p < 0.001$

Table 4.1 shows the results of the Wilcoxon Signed-Rank test which compared between the pre and the post tests between the two groups. The score indicate a significant difference in the total score of students in experimental group ( $T \geq -13.73$ ,  $z \geq -5.852$ ,  $p \geq 0.000$ ,  $r \geq 0.872$ ) before and during (after 3 weeks) the training with WebQuest. The result indicated that WebQuest significantly improved the performance in reading comprehension. The very large effect size of  $r \geq 0.872$  indicate that the effect of WebQuest approach in increasing the students' reading comprehension was an essential one.

**Table 4.2 Within-Group Overall Score**

Group	T value	z value	p value	r value
Before	-17.56	-5.880	*0.000	-0.876
Delayed				
Total				

Note: \* $p < 0.001$

Table 4.2 showed the result of the Wilcoxon Signed-Rank test which compared between the scores of pre-test (before) and delayed post-test within the experimental group. The result indicated that exposure to WebQuest had a significant impact on the experimental students' performance in the reading comprehension ( $T \geq -17.56$ ,  $z \geq -5.880$ ,  $p \geq 0.000$ ,  $r \geq -0.876$ ). The effect size of  $r \geq 0.876$  showed that there is a very large effect which was substantive effect.

**Table 4.3 Within-Group Overall Score**

Group	T value	z value	p value	r value
Immediate	-13.46	-5.894	*0.000	-0.879
Delayed				
Total				

Note: \* $p < 0.001$

Furthermore, Table 4.3 showed result of the scores of the pre, immediate, and post tests for the experimental group as compares through the Wilcoxon Signed-Rank test. The results revealed great difference in the total score of the students in that group ( $T \geq -13.46$ ,  $z \geq -5.894$ ,  $p \geq 0.000$ ,  $r \geq 0.879$ ) during (after 3 weeks) and after training with WebQuest. The result indicated that intervention training of WebQuest greatly influenced the performance of students of the experimental group in the reading comprehension subject. The very large effect is represented in the size of  $r \geq -0.879$ , which indicates that WebQuest approach effect in increasing the performance of the students in reading was an essential one.

#### 4.2.1: Within Groups: Control Group

**Table 4.4 Within-Group Overall Score**

Group	T value	z value	p value	r value
Before	-4.158	-3.571	*0.000	-0.532
Immediate				
Total				

Note: \* $p < 0.001$

Based on the result presented the Table 4.4 the Wilcoxon Signed-Rank test which compared between the

sores of pre-test (before) and immediate post-test within the experimental group. The result revealed that there was a significant difference in the overall score of students in control group ( $T \geq -4.158$ ,  $z \geq -3.571$ ,  $p \geq 0.000$ ,  $r \geq -3.571$ ) before and during (after 3 weeks) the training with using trading method of teaching reading comprehension. The result indicated that training significantly improved the performance in reading comprehension. But unlike in the experimental group effect size of  $r \geq -3.571$  is medium.

**Table 4.5: Within-Group Overall Score**

Group	T value	z value	p value	r value
Before	-5.060	-4.049	*0.000	-0.604
Delayed				
Total				

Note: \* $p < 0.001$

Table 4.5 showed the result of the Wilcoxon Signed-Rank test which compared between the scores of pre-test (before) and delayed post-test within the control group. The result revealed that training students with traditional method of reading comprehension had a significant impact on the control students' performance in the reading comprehension ( $T \geq -5.060$ ,  $z \geq -4.049$ ,  $p \geq 0.000$ ,  $r \geq -0.604$ ). The effect size of  $r \geq 0.604$  which showed that there is a large effect which was also an essential effect.

**Table 4.6: Within-Group Overall Score**

Group	T value	z value	p value	r value
Immediate	-26.12	-5.845	*0.000	0.871
Delayed				
Total				

Note: \* $p < 0.001$

Table 4.3 showed result of the scores of the pre, immediate, and post tests for the control group as compares through the Wilcoxon Signed-Rank test. The results revealed great difference in the total score of the students in that group ( $T \geq -26.12$ ,  $z \geq -5.845$ ,  $p \geq 0.000$ ,  $r \geq 0.871$ ) during (after 3 weeks) and after training with traditional method of teaching the subject of reading comprehension. Continuous training has proven to greatly influence the performance of the students of the control group in the subject of reading comprehension. The large influence of the size of  $r \geq 0.871$  shows how great the influence is.

## 5.0 Conclusion

The significant impact of WebQuest on the performance of EFL learners is reported in this study with evidence analysis of data in different ways. It was concluded that the application of WebQuest had a great impact on the reading performance of eleventh grade EFL students of Zarqa Secondary school (for boys). WebQuest was found to have significant intervention approach for students at secondary school level and good teaching model for teachers in the 21st Century. This study is evidence that the training students received whether with an intervention treatment or using traditional approach has significant impact on performance and improving their learning skills. However, by comparing the results of the two groups obtained in this study, we found that the students who were taught using WebQuest perform better than those who were taught using traditional approach teaching reading comprehension.

Relying on the conclusion of the present study, researchers are recommended to adopt WebQuests as a good intervention in the educational process in the Jordanian schools. It is also recommended to train teachers well on the web-based instruction of the skills of English language, especially the teacher of the

secondary schools in Jordan.

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## THE WAYS OF LOOKING AT A HIDEOUS INSECTION FRANZ KAFKA'S METAMORPHOSIS

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**Abstract:**

*The Metamorphosis (German: Die Verwandlung), one of the seminal works of 20<sup>th</sup> Century was first published in 1915. Many consider it to be the finest short story of the century unsurpassed in theme or form. The transformation of the central character into a large insect is the central aspect of the story. Kafka offers no explanation for this sudden transformation and merely chronicles its effects. Various theories have been suggested to explain this transformation, with some critics question the authenticity of the transformation itself. Writer for one didn't propose any straight forward explanation to it leaving it for the readers to speculate. This article isolates the central situation of the transformation of a man into an insect and interprets it in relation to the universal human conditions.*

**Key Words:** *Metamorphosis, unsurpassed, transformation, chronicle.*

Gregor Samsa, a travelling salesman is the hero of The Metamorphosis. Gregor doesn't enjoy his job; in fact he hates the underpaying suppressing profession. He was left with no choice as his father owed a huge debt to his current boss. He accepted the job and worked round the clock travelling to pay of the huge debt. Furthermore he was happy that his hard work enabled him to provide for his family comprising his father, mother and sister, Grete. He was the sole bread-winner of the family who succeeded in providing them with a fairly comfortable life. He even dreamt of saving enough to have his musically talented sister to study violin at conservatory. Gregor Samsa comes across as a man completely devoted to the cause of his family. Though he hates his work, he is ready to sacrifice his own pleasures for the comfort of his family. The transformation of Gregor into a huge hideous insect is completed within the first sentence of the story.

'As Gregor Samza awoke one morning from uneasy dreams he found himself transformed in his bed into a gigantic insect'

The insect is variously described by the critics as 'a huge beetle', 'cockroach and a giant slug. No clear cut description of the insect is given in the text. Kafka himself was much against depicting the insect in the front cover; he thought it would kill the story. In fact as per clues inside the story the insect would be an etymological impossibility, though the descriptions are as realistic as it can get. The first edition cover of The Metamorphosis depicts a man, unsettled he sure seems but certainly not an insect. The absence of clear instruction by author himself gives us liberty to speculate on the nature of transformation that Gregor underwent. Freudian, Marxian, religious and existentialist interpretations all have been proposed. It would be safe to assume that there is no one explanation to the transformation of Gregor, all explanations are plausible. Kafka doesn't offer any reason for this metamorphosis; he merely states it in an indifferent way like a magical realist writer. But somehow that fantastical element is not what makes the story memorable. It acts as a space where readers can speculate on the nature of metamorphosis, deeper meanings embedded in it. A shrewd reader would find that the transformation was nothing but gradual; his thankless job and fruitless life had been preparing his psyche into this transformation. His physical body might have responded to this mental degeneration dramatically. While the metamorphosis was completed in the first sentence itself, the events that lead to this change were set in motion much before. Franz Kafka wrote



literature of quest about a dark brooding world. He raised questions and never bothered to answer them. In fact he is notorious for leaving manuscripts unfinished. In a Kafkean world there are no easy answers, like a modern day Socrates he created doubts and questions in us and invited our own interpretations.

The alarm clock is symbolic of the punctuality his job demands. It doesn't take his company much time to send their chief clerk to call upon Gregor when he misses his regular 7 am train. Like in 'The Trial' the unseen authority works through its agents to monitor the life of ordinary human beings. The transformation here could be the trick of mind to escape harsh realities. This escapism doesn't solve any problems in real life, though it shields human mind from accepting unacceptable conditions. In this reading metamorphosis into a giant insect is an escapist dream come true for Gregor.

Gregor is depicted as pathetically devoted to his family. He devotes himself so completely to his family that he rarely thinks about his own comforts. Even when he finds himself transformed into a giant insect in the morning, his first thought is to find a way to report to the work. He hangs on to a job he despises tolerating all humiliations because he knows it lets him take care of his family's debt and its prospects. Even after he becomes an insect he nurtures love to his family though unable to express them. His physical outlook changes completely but his mental landscape remains the same; therein lies the misfortune of this change of events. In one level his family and his company takes advantage of the sincerity Gregor has. If Gregor had been a nobody in the company no one would have bothered to check on him when he is late for the train. But they send the chief clerk of the company to inspect. We can also deduce that it is the first time ever Gregor missed his train to work. He is surely an asset for the institution that he works. Blinded with sincerity and unsure of himself he succumbs to the pressures he is subjected to and fails to identify his merits. The same happens in his relation to family. He is the sole bread winner of his family who works hard to erase the debt his father has accumulated. Still it is arguable whether he received the respect and stance he deserved within his family. We can trace the beginning of his degeneration into the lack of his self-respect.

Gregor's efforts to connect with his family prove to be disastrous. Though his preferences change inside the hide of the insect his basic human nature to give and receive love remain. He detest milk, the one drink he loved as a human being and prefers to have all the furniture removed so that he can move freely through the floor and crawl on the wall. To that much we can assume his animalistic instincts have taken over. Gregor retains all old memories and bondings. He loses his ability to connect with other humans by and by. Even his mother can't stand the sight of him. She insists to see her son and when she does, faints. Gregor wants to help but succeeds only in startling his sister Grete. Gregor's father with whom he had a difficult relation pelts him with apples to drive him away. The scene is humorous as well as pathetic. It is said that Kafka had a problematic relationship with his father. In this reading the transformation denotes Kafka's own transformation. As he grows intellectually he is no more able to connect to his family. However hard he tries his family cannot understand him. Communication is the basis of human society. It is not just a social tool but a basic need of all human beings. When a human being is devoid of vistas to connect with others he is faced with an identity crisis. Normally we associate identity with the sum of memories thoughts and impressions upon mind; Metamorphosis makes us question this notion. Kafka argues that identity is created by social interactions depending upon our ability to communicate. When the communication channels are cut we land on an identity crisis. The central character of Gregor Samsa is particularly a self-less man. He identifies himself as a son to his parents a brother to his sister and a low level employee of his institution. In short his identity is determined by his interactions with society. He doesn't have an inner life which gives him an identity on the spiritual level. When Gregor is cut off from his family and social life he is left without an identity.

In more than one instance Kafka seem to be criticising the values of middle class society. They work for big companies under tyrants and for dependents round the clock in a thankless job. There is always a new assignment which provides no time for rest and leisure. Caught up in this rat race they forget

to live, losing touch with the humane aspect of their life. Gregor Samza tries to conform to the various roles the society has cut out for him and when he can no longer perform he is pushed out of the system. No one cares for him. The same person who has worked hard for the wellbeing of the family is left to rot in his room. No one can bear to look at him. His father is particularly intolerant of him. Only his sister Grete has some concern for her brother. She provides him with food, though Gregor has to hide whenever Grete comes in with the tray. By and by her enthusiasm also wanes. Though she still leaves food for him, doesn't make sure that Gregor has eaten it. Kafka, the ardent pessimist he is, rejects the notion of unconditional love. There is no such thing as unconditional love he argues. Even the most sacred of relationships comes at a price. A relation exists only when you can connect with the other party. When one transforms, the bond no longer holds, commitment might hold it a bit longer, but ultimately such a relation is doomed.

The music of Grete's is a motif developed through the story. Grete is passionate about her violin, and in a life devoid of luxuries Gregor's dream is to send her to the conservatory to learn violin professionally. Music played by Grete for the benefit of the lodgers' touches the heart of the hideous insect that Gregor became. Music doesn't bring about an inner transformation in him. Poor Gregor thinks that he can bridge with his kid sister again by showing appreciation of her music. It is often said that music connects people. But here Gregor's efforts to connect with his sister again through music prove futile. He is eager to show how touched he is, and his efforts have disastrous consequences. Lodgers leave without paying their dues and family finally decides that they should give up the notion that the insect is their son. They argue among themselves that if it had indeed been Gregor, it would have been more sensitive and considerate to their plight. It would have surely left them saving them from the painful ordeal. The only thing that connected Gregor to this world even after his transformation was his connection with his family. With them denouncing him, the final string is also broken relieving him from his miserable existence as a non-entity.

The story is sometimes praised for its symmetrical three part structure. There are many critics who rate it as the finest short story of 20<sup>th</sup> Century. The First part of the story deals with Gregor's relation with respect to his profession with an emphasis on how his profession helps him to serve his family. The second part deals with his relation with respect to the family and final part with himself. These three part structure enables the writer to explore the three layers which contribute to our identity. For him identity is not static; it expresses itself in exchanges with oneself, family and society. How we perceive ourselves is a lot depended on how we interact with our surroundings. When such an outlet which enables us to interact cease to exist we are no better than a vermin.

The final question regarding the metamorphosis of Gregor Samsa is whether it is an extension of his life before. Many argue that a good section of humanity is living like vermin that they may as well wake up one day to see themselves transformed into vermin. There is a lot riding for this argument. Gregor is a front line employee of his company. He works hard, earns little as respect or money. He is held under the shadow of the debt his father had accumulated while his boss breathes down his neck as he go about doing is job. The work pressure is much and the authorities treat him like a non-entity. The same is true about his relation with family. Gregor spends his days and nights thinking about the family. He is the ultimate family-man. He is self-sacrificing to the extent that he seems oblivious to how his family is taking him for granted. They can love healthy and hardworking Gregor who supports the family, but their love is put to real test when their son becomes a hideous insect who can no longer attend to their needs. The pathetic nature of the characterisation along with his vulnerability attributes an 'insect which can be quashed' aspect to the personality of Gregor, still there are various places where Gregor rises above average human being. We attribute a senseless, survive at any cost attitude to vermin. Gregor on the other hand provides for his family and is immensely proud about itches even nurtures the secret dream of providing for the violin classes of Grete. He is optimistic and his unwavering love for the family guides him through the trying situations. Considering the story like this it would be a mistake to identify the life of Gregor as an insect a

mere extension of his earlier life.

### **Conclusion**

The central aspect of *The Metamorphosis* is the transformation of Gregor Samsa into an insect overnight and how it turns his world upside down. The writer neither provides one direct answer for this metamorphosis nor advocates such a simplistic answer. The scope of the story is such that we can have numerous reasons for such a transformation and everything fits. But the clean symbolism or one-to-one allegorical correspondence that so many search for in this novella is in the end elusive. Therein lies the charm of this story.

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## AN INTERVIEW WITH LAVANYA SANKARAN: A VOICE FOR THE VOICELESS

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**Abstract:**

*Indian women writers have been exploring feminine subjectivity and dealing with themes that range from childhood to complete womanhood. The women wings started to fight against the atrocities done to them. The modern women groups have started only to fight for the reason of quest for their identity as equal members of the men dominated society. Women's writing in India has seen a galaxy of women writers with much more quality and depth in projecting a vision of their own. One is aware that patriarchal traditions of India have kept feminism from becoming a widely apprehended phenomenon. The new women writers have moved away from traditional portrayals of enduring self-sacrificing women, towards searching for identity. A major preoccupation in recent Indian women's writing has been a delineation of inner life and subtle interpersonal relationships.*

**Key Words:** *Feminine, subjectivity, womanhood, identity.*

**WHO IS LAVANYA?**

Lavanya Sankaran has joined the galaxy of these women writers as a voice for the voiceless. Her works, *The Hope Factory* (2013) and *The Red Carpet* (2005) have got several awards and were world-wide acclaimed. Her writing style is compared to that of Charles Dickens by the British Press. Lavanya Sankaran seeks to establish equal opportunities for women on par with men economically, personally and socially. All her characters reveal her passion for identity. Her writing remains a living example and her characters move around one sometimes making him/her be part of those characters.

She travels into the lives of the common man, industrialists, their families, labourers, children deprived of care and love, slum-dwellers' pathetic conditions of living, domestic violence, the quest for identity of every educated and uneducated. *The Hope Factory* is an inspiration to women who face hurdles in making themselves fit to be a part of this patriarchal society.

She is also a social activist speaking out against the caste system, rape and political corruption in India. She writes articles in the leading newspapers and in her blog.

*This interview is carried out to deal with the quest for identity in the works of Lavanya Sankaran. Each of her women characters aims at securing a protective identity of individuality, freedom and independence. These issues are the main aspects where Indian women still crave for redemption. She sees gender inequalities as rooted in the attitudes of the social and cultural institutions.*

**Q.1. Kamala has never succumbed to the patriarchy. Nowhere in the novel *The Hope Factory* she has expressed her sorrow for her plight. Comment.**

**Lavanya :** I think Kamala expresses a part of myself which I find very valuable. She is actually a beacon of light for me in my life. When I think of Kamala she is very much the kind of person which I would like to be.

**Q.2. Is she a beacon of light to those women who still compromise with their fate?**

**Lavanya:** So when I think it's not so much whether she is inspiration for others, for some men and some women, but she is very much inspiration for me as she struggles to live a decent life with her only son wanting to lay a good future for him.

**Q.3. Fine. Can we say *The Hope Factory* is an autobiographical work?**

**Lavanya:** No. No. No character in my fiction is autobiographical because what I try and do is I gain inspiration from the world around. Each fictional character is crafted to become their own complete being very separate from any one in real life.

**Q.4. Are Kamala and Shanta victims of subjugation and men dominance? Both have a common problem of being neglected by men.**

**Lavanya:** I think the primary issue in both their lives is that economic difficulty. Yes, of course they are facing issues of being not necessarily supported by men specially Shanta by her son or husband. It does not sound like being supported by women either.

**Q.5. Can you please elaborate on why Shanta becomes an enemy to other women, specially Kamala?**

**Lavanya:** Shanta is facing extreme difficulties which is why she is also a difficult personality. She does not give kindness to anyone because she has not received kindness from anyone. So I would love to see Shanta. If she had proper economic life, if she had money, if she had love and affection how would she be different.

**Q.6. Are Kamala and Thangam be compared as the beacons of liberty to the suffering women in India as these two women want to lead an independent life?**

**Lavanya:** I think there is an interesting relationship between these two characters because there is generation gap. See, Thangam is much younger to Kamala. Kamala comes from a slightly old fashioned perspective. She has a son to bring him up. This is her biggest dream. That is only her dream. Whereas Thangam without children, without marriage, she is very clear that she doesn't want to get into the same trap as she sees someone like either Kamala has, Shantha has. She has her own dream just because she is a younger generation. She is finding different ways because we see it in younger generations.

**Q.7. The socialite who jumped from hotel roof in Delhi seems to be a real story of a famous politician as per my research. How do you relate this to your story?**

**Lavanya:** As per the suicide or so it was inspired by a real life event because I want to show that relationship that, you know, someone like Sita in *The Red Carpet*, who comes from a background of full of integrity and ambition about her future. It is about how in the darkest moments of our lives there is that difficult moment which we can adjust. And that is the story about the Sita as well. On the day when she wants to kill herself like her father instead she steps away to survival.

**Q.8. Can we conclude that men are always like pouncing tigers waiting for a prey like Ramu in Mysore Coffee?**

**Lavanya:** I hope not. (laugh) I am a firm believer in the humanity of human beings. I think Ramu is a negative character. He, in particular someone who doesn't reflect on himself. He spends more time thinking about and evaluating other people. He doesn't evaluate himself. So whenever he appears in story, he slightly the person that we all know someone like him who thinks very highly about himself and jump to judge other people. So he is that person. I think he would be that way either he is male or female. So that is his nature.

**Q.9. No Woman protagonist in *The Hope Factory* and *The Red Carpet* express their discouragement even though they are victims of various factors. What do you want convey through these women characters?**

**Lavanya:** All these women are just an inspiration for me. When I think about them even someone like Shanta I don't feel so separate from my life. If I didn't have kindness in my life, how would I be? So I think to say that the most difficult of circumstances I should be able to say what now can I do about it? This actually not an attribute that I aspired to have unsuccessfully.

**Q.10. How do you evaluate Indian society?**

**Lavanya:** I feel a characteristic of India. When we look at the Indian society, people have gone through such amazing difficulties culturally, historically, economically. Yet we find that Indians would smile.



There is kindness. You know, we show love to each other. So this is the characteristic that is part of our culture. That is something that I want to tell you. The positive thing is, whatever happens, we laugh about it, we make jokes about it, we sing a song about it. Then we get up and make a plan about it.

**Q.11. When is your next book hitting the market?**

**Lavanya:** (Laugh...) nice that you are asking me like my publisher. The time speaks all that.

Thank you so much for allotting your busy schedule for me. I only wish May your tribe grow to become a voice for the suffering women in our country. Let your pen remain mightier.....

**Lavanya:** My Pleasure such a great pleasure to have a chat with you. I wish you the same.



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~~“YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE WRITTEN ME LIKE THIS”~~: METAFICTIONALIZING  
SHAHRIAR MANDANIPOUR'S *CENSORING AN IRANIAN LOVE STORY*

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**Abstract:**

*In one of his interviews with Larry McCaffery, when asked about the early metafiction writers like Vladimir Nabokov and Robert Coover and about the present state of metafiction, David Foster Wallace retorts critically. He says:*

*But when you talk about Nabokov and Coover, you're talking about real geniuses, the writers who weathered real shock and invented this stuff in contemporary fiction. But after the pioneers always come the crank turners, the little gray people who take the machines others have built and just turn the crank, and little pellets of metafiction come out the other end...<sup>i</sup>*

*Wallace's comment depicts the exact scene which the metafictional mode of writing is witnessing since the late 1990s to early 21<sup>st</sup> century. From an indispensable literary technique which had the capability to criticize, satirize and draw our attention to the discrepancy and parallels that exist between the real and the fictional world with deep political implications, metafiction has been reduced to just a mere trick, a prank to exhibit wit. In the last few years we have witnessed an unwavering publication of metafictional works usually clubbed in the category of experimental fiction which have nothing new to offer and thus take recourse to the act of turning the said technique bland. The publication of these novels rather than augmenting metafiction has turned it into a marketable stunt to be relished by the readers who are nothing more than consumers of the language. Novels like *The Eyre Affair* by Jasper Fforde, *The Storied Life of A. J. Fikry* by Gabriella Zevin and *Inkheart* by Cornelia Funke among others can easily be put into this category. What is most disheartening about this phenomenon is the fact that one of the most significant aspects of metafictional writing among others, if not overt, was the emancipation of the reader from the position of a consumer to an active participator. The publication of these novels sadly is doing exactly opposite what the pioneers were fighting against. This paper will try to delineate how Shahriar Mandanipour's novel *Censoring an Iranian Love Story* topples the clichéd logic of using metafictional techniques as a way to fight the crimes Realism as a genre is said to have committed. In the selected novel, the author would use the metafictional technique (among others) as an indispensable medium without which the story cannot be told.*

**Key Words:** *Metafictional technique, realism, emancipation of the reader, Consumer.*

What is pertinent here is to understand the fact that metafiction came on to the literary scene along with the shift from Structuralism to Post-Structuralism. This shift in itself encompasses the shift from representation to the act of how the thing is being represented, that is, the shift from the object to that of medium. As a medium, language thus became an obsession with the post-structuralist philosophers. One can see an almost exact reaction with novelists of the time as well - writers like John Barth form a definitive stance against a reaction towards Realism. His position becomes clear in his essay 'The Literature of Exhaustion' whereby he reiterates the act of introducing some new forms with which to detail the contemporariness of the world. What Barth is actually critiquing is the “used-upness of certain forms or

exhaustion of certain possibilities" (162) of literature per se and an immediate need to redefine the same. In almost the same vein, J. G. Ballard in his introduction to the 1973 novel *Crash* pens a visionary statement while talking about the shifting dimensions of the world we live in and how a writer now has a greater responsibility to write and 'invent the reality' thereby. He writes:

I feel that the balance between fiction and reality has changed significantly in the past decades. Increasingly their roles are reversed. We live in a world ruled by fictions of every kind - mass-merchandizing, advertising, politics conducted as a branch of advertising, the pre-empting of any original response to experience by the television screen. We live inside an enormous novel. It is now less and less necessary for the writer to invent the fictional content of his novel. The fiction is already there. The writer's task is to invent the reality. (4)

Ballard's comment exactly captures and warns the shifting roles of life and and proposes an immediate need to invent the reality against the fictional we as humans are pitted against. It is precisely at this juncture in literary history along with the post-structuralist insistence of the linguistic problematics that Metafiction as an important narrative technique comes into birth. Michel Foucault further elucidates this shift philosophically through his brilliant analysis of Velazquez's painting *Les Meninas*. The analysis of Foucault's description about the painting provides a philosophic framework about the uses of Metafiction as the subject of the painting is that it is a painting about the art of painting itself. In his book *The Order of Things*, Michel Foucault goes on to discuss how the painting with its depiction of a painter looking directly at the onlooker turns a mere viewer into a subject. He writes:

The painter is turning his eyes towards us only in so far as we happen to occupy the same position as his subject. We, the spectators, are an additional factor. Though greeted by that gaze, we are also dismissed by it, replaced by that which was always there before we were: the model itself. But, inversely, the painter's gaze, addressed to the void confronting him outside the picture, accepts as many models as there are spectators; in this precise but neutral place, the observer and the observed take part in a ceaseless exchange. (4)

Just as the gaze of the painter in the painting replaces the spectators in a ceaseless exchange in almost the same manner a metafictional novel replaces the author from its essential epistemic position and places the reader in its position. This exchange of the reader in place of the author cannot take place unless and until the linguistic condition of a narcissistic text is made possible. What is equally important in this connection is Maurice Blanchot's assertion in relation to the shifting movement of literature per se and the need to comprehend it within the confines of linguistic assertion. In his essay 'The Disappearance of Literature', he writes:

One sometimes finds oneself asking strange questions such as 'What are the tendencies of contemporary literature?' or 'Where is the literature going?' Yes indeed, a surprising question, but what is more surprising is that, if there is an answer, it is an easy one: literature is going towards itself, towards its essence which is disappearance. (*The Blanchot Reader* 136)

All these writers and philosophers alike categorically propose a breakage with the earlier modes of writing and suggest in their own fashion a way to deal with changing circumstances.

Although a barrage of definitions in conjunction Metafiction are in vogue whereby some define it as "fictional writing which self-consciously and systematically draws attention to its status as an artefact" (Waugh 2) or as a form of writing obsessed with its own craft, mindful of its own "textual awareness" (Hutcheon 1), what is pertinent here is to focus on Mark Currie's definition. Mark Currie defines metafiction in a light quite different from his predecessors. He writes: A metafiction is not definitely a novel whose author is both a writer and a critic, but a novel which dramatizes the boundary between fiction and criticism (3). According to this definition a metafictional work, other than being narcissist and self-conscious, takes upon the task of not only fictionalising the world in a narrative conundrum but also at the

same time indulges in the act of commenting upon what is being said. A metafictional narrative thus works simultaneously on two edges, that is, of the fictive and the critical. It is this particular designation of Metafiction that we find Mandanipour's narration frequently indulging in throughout the work. Not only is the novel trying to depict a love story between the protagonists in the censored society of Iran but it is at the same time discussing the ways how the same can never be possible without taking recourse to experimentalizing or metafictionalizing the narrative.

The story of the novel *Censoring an Iranian Love Story* takes place at different levels literary as well as linguistic, where the personal and the social, if not 'burned away', take different recourse parallel. To simplify, three narratives run parallel to each other first there is the official love story between the two fictional protagonists Sara and Dara, written in bold letters with some sentences and passages crossed out, which the author Mandanipour wants to submit to the Ministry of Culture and Guidance. The second narrative is the story of Sara and Dara written in plain text, but which is not intended to be part of the official story, nonetheless written in order to give the readers some more information about certain events and actions of the characters. The third narrative is that of a fictional Mandanipour who makes the reader aware about the various problems regarding literary, cultural, political, social and economic problems and events that have happened and still continue to happen in Iran. This narrative also includes the writer's constant meetings and exchanges with the particular person called Porfiry Petrovich, the head of the censoring committee, and the one on whom depends the fate of the publication of the love story Mandanipour is writing. The story is weaved within the margins of censorship and the constant policing of the main censoring body alias Porfiry Petrovich (other than the self-censoring narrative of writer himself). Raha Namy sees these intertwined narratives or "layers" as she calls them essential to portray "the layered existence that marks contemporary Iran". For her, the life in contemporary Iran "cannot be exposed, except by a layered narrative of the kind Mandanipour uses; the uncertainty of life by merging reality and fiction." Towards the middle of the novel Mandanipour mouths an interesting proposition from one of his character who happens to be a poet lecturing on Censorship in a state-run cultural center. Mandanipour writes:

That night . . . I quickly walked to a state-run cultural center where, as an exception, they had allowed an Iranian poet to give a lecture . . . The poet's speech was about censorship. . . This great poet's discovery was that censorship drives a poet or a writer to abstain from superficiality and to instead delve into the layers and depths of love and relationships and achieve a level of creativity that Western poets and writers cannot even dream of. (*CILS* 138)

The poet's discovery in the novel about censorship is itself the whole craft of Mandanipour's novel the act of telling a story situated, from the beginning till the end, in Iran fraught with certain peculiar censored and uncensored information about contemporary Iranian culture, politics, customs, prejudices, a constant mingling of the private and public, fact and fiction, social and political at one and the same time becomes a tale of certain dexterous ideas conscious of their existence in a censored atmosphere. It is this consciousness of the characters of the novel *as characters in the novel* which renders it a tone often employed by American writers to showcase 'the end of the novel' era. However, what is essential in relation to Mandanipour's novel is the fact that this consciousness in the characters is not brought out by some post-structuralist manifestation but by the problems of a society under constant surveillance. It is the act of censorship by the authorities and the people alike that compel the writer to take recourse to metafictional writing. In other words, it is this censoring atmosphere prevalent throughout the novel that the writer becomes conscious of his vocation as a writer which thereby makes his writing self-conscious.

Linda Hutcheon describes metafictional writings as "fiction about fiction - that is, fiction that includes within itself a commentary on its own narrative and/or linguistic identity" (1) or what she describes as "Narcissistic Narrative", a narrative obsessively and primarily conscious of its own existence as a narrative. This thing is quite explicit in *CILS* from the very beginning from the very onset of the novel



while Mandanipour is weaving his official love story between the two main characters and regularly censoring it, he makes continuous stops to define and enlarge the reader's vision to comprehend the story together with the different nuances of Iran. The incorporation of various verses from Nizami's poem *Khosrow and Shirin*, in the very first chapter, defining it and commenting on it both from the cultural and political standpoints is not just a casual act on the part of the author to assert that covert sexual imagery has a long history of its own in Iranian literary history but a critical venture on the part of the author to build the plot of his novel on censorship which forms an important part of Iranian history. In connection with this Mandanipour writes:

In this romance, as in all romances, there are many incidents and events that impede Shirin and Khosrow from meeting each other and from being alone together away from the eyes of the fiercely devout who behaved much like modern-day censors. (*CILS* 21)

Mandanipour writes a critical commentary on the poem in the very first chapter bringing together different nuances of Iranian landscape thus making at the very start the crux of his novel which will dwell deep into the various events (imaginative or factual) where the problematic relationship between literature and society will be foregrounded. Mandanipour's subsequent narrative throughout the novel is composed of the various problems, other than political and moral policing, within Iran of censoring names (discussed mainly in Chapter 2 of the novel), of pornography (*CILS* 51), of film and media censorship (discussed elaborately in Chapter 4), of Sex Education (*CILS* 98), of sartorial measures throughout history (*CILS* 106), about the state of Music (*CILS* 152), of Iranian Feminists (*CILS* 166), of censoring magazines (*CILS* 183), of judiciary (*CILS* 194), of the condition of prisons in Iran (*CILS* 198), of economic problems (*CILS* 241) etc. are all given space by the writer. As the novel comes to an end we come to realize that the commentary or the non-fictional part of the novel exceeds the fictional part with which the writer wants to convey the impossibilities of writing fiction, or more precisely, a love story in Iran. Throughout the novel the narrator juxtaposes the real Iran with the fictional one and through his own discussions and commentaries holds the narrative together and tries to "assault or transcend the laws of fiction" (Scholes 107) which forms an important component in metafictional works. In this regard Waugh writes:

... the lowest common denominator of metafiction is simultaneously to create a fiction and to make a statement about the creation of that fiction. The two processes are held together in a formal tension which breaks down the distinctions between 'creation' and 'criticism' and merges them into the concepts of 'interpretation' and 'deconstruction.' (6)

And in the novel *CILS* we find, this formal tension, present at regular intervals between the creation of fiction and the criticism of that fiction both at the same level.

Mandanipour, in a manner similar to Italo Calvino, is throughout the narrative preparing the reader not only to read the selected novel in a particular way or "how to read Iran" (Messud), but preparing him/her, in general, to read certain texts in a particular fashion thus critiquing the nature of reading literature itself.

"Censorship", as a critic puts it, "has been as much a part of Iran's literary history as betrayed love, bewitched lovers, and broken love affairs" (Milani 325). Hence, writing a love story in Iran can itself be termed as an act of defying the age old tradition of censorship. Michael Levine's view about censorship in which he states that censorship acts as "an impediment whose very resistance makes another, more equivocal and double-edged style of writing possible"<sup>iii</sup> seems an exact proposition which Mandanipour is trying to depict through his novel. "So throughout the book", writes James Wood, "whenever the story of Dara and Sara becomes unacceptably political or erotic, offending sentences are crossed out not blotted out ... but struck through with a horizontal line, so that the reader can examine what might constitute a literary offense in Iran" (Wood). Mandanipour's experimentation with the linguistic domain of novel therefore showcases his own vulnerability of being a writer belonging to that part of the world where the private world and the public domain slip over each other.



The metafictional highpoint in the novel comes when the character Dara fervently accuses the writer Mandanipour of his representation in order to pass his novel from the clutches of censorship. Mandanipour writes the scene in an eloquent fashion:

Dara grabs my throat. He shoves me back and slams me against the wall of his room . . . In my face he shouts:

“You shouldn't have written me like this. You shouldn't have written me as browbeaten and pathetic. You wrote me as an earthworm. You wrote me so that no matter what they do to me, all I can do is squirm and bear the pain. You wrote me like this to pass your story through censorship. I don't want to be written as an earthworm that even when they cut it in two turns into two earthworms. You are my murderer too for having written me as so utterly miserable. All the torment and misery there is you have written for me. You are no different than the torturer who would flog me so that I would concede there is a God. I want to write my own murder.” From the pressure of Dara's powerful grip my air passage is constricted. Yet I struggle to say:

“Dara, this is just a story.” (*CILS* 229)

This act on the part of the writer to tell his character that this is just a story is perhaps another trick of the writer Mandanipour, which he had earlier confessed to use, in order to write his novel in such a manner that it “survives the blade of censorship” (*CILS* 9).

In the novel *CILS*, Mandanipour thus takes up the task to narrate not only the story which he wants to convey but also the left-over tale which is often “surgically remove[d]” (*CILS* 48) by the censors. In this way, Mandanipour's boy-meets-girl story who love each other dearly caught in an environment where it is almost impossible to display ones romantic feelings for someone, seems at times an age old clichéd story. But, what brings charm and grace to the novel is the form of the story together with the way it is told. The continuous authorial intrusions within the narrative of the novel and the existence of certain characters' consciousness being characters in a censored novel make the novel a metafictional tour de force. The narrator's constant commentary and explanations on the love story, he is trying to write, together with the facts and necessary information about Iran in general and his vocation of being a writer in Iran within the space of the novel make it a composite site where both the modes of writing, of fact and fiction are present at one and the same plane. The narrator constantly juggles these modes so as to inform the reader, the western one perhaps, preconceived by the narrator as too naive, who does not know much about the cultural, social and literary underpinnings of Iran, its rich literary and cultural landscape, is at regular intervals invoked and answered in a somewhat sarcastic manner. This direct address to the reader and the constant interruptions to the official love story is seen by the narrator as necessary interruptions without which the story won't be easy to comprehend. As the narrator writes:

I don't like to constantly interrupt my story's progress to offer explanations. But it seems I have no choice. Some things and certain actions in Iran are so strange and outlandish that without explaining them it is impossible for an Iranian story to be well understood by non-Iranians. (*CILS* 183)

These necessary interruptions, other than offering explanations to the official story, fracture and dismantle the whole narrative flux of the story at almost every juncture. And at times, one is almost annoyed at these breaks and injunctions by the author but, may be, that is what Mandanipour wants to do: to annoy the reader with constant explanations and interruptions so as to give the reader a lesson in the workings of literary censorship or idea of a work that is constantly gagged and censored by the authorities due to various reasons. These interruptions together with the crossed out sentences at every page make the novel look like some kind of a rough draft of some work intended to be published at some point in time. At the very beginning of the novel, the author confesses that the crossed-out sentences “are [his] own doing” (*CILS*) and must not be, in any way, clubbed with some kind of “fanciful eccentricity” (*CILS*) to “postmodernism or Heideggerism” (*CILS* 15). This admission about the employment of a particular

technique should be taken as a sign, on the part of the author, not to read or to take this technique just as an innovation or a theoretical stunt but as a necessary and indispensable part of the novel. In fact, these self-reflexive references act as anchors to understand the various meanderings of the problematic of the narrative present in the novel which lends the novel a metafictional flavour.

Perhaps the high point in the novel regarding "literature of games" (Bruss 154) vis-à-vis censorship comes when the author clubs the great poet like Nizami as a victim of censorship who in order to evade the censors himself has described the lovemaking between Khosrow and Shirin, in his celebrated poem, in a soft romantic way. Mandanipour subverts the whole edifice of the traditional Iranian love poetry by bringing the element of censorship in it when he writes:

To tell you the truth, I . . . am shocked. I am thinking, What if King Khosrow's lovemaking with his bride Shirin was not as our great poet Nizami has described, ever so romantic, ever so soft, as soft as flower petals and stamens . . . I am shocked and terrified to think that Nizami too may have been afraid of censorship and has offered an account contrary to reality. (*CILS* 116)

Moreover, Censorship in the novel is not depicted always in the form of something done to someone in the old traditional "persecutor-victim model" (Holquist 16) but something which:

happens in more than just the process of writing; it happens every day in people's lives when they make choices against their hearts to pursue the life they are supposed to lead . . . Dara censors his desires for what he wants to do in life both because of his previous arrests and because he needs to support his family; or Sara seems to consider censoring her feelings for Dara in order to get the luxurious life she wishes for through the rich suitor, Sinbad. The novel encourages us to construe censorship broadly, not only as something enforced by government agencies and regulations; different forms of it can also be forced upon one by history, traditions, the general public's or one's family's beliefs and opinions; or they can simply be (un)conscious and/or self-imposed. (Namy)

It is this form of censorship which Mandanipour has in mind or what he himself, in the novel, calls a form of "sociocultural censorship" (48). This sociocultural censorship and similar repressive apparatus that Mandanipour has to deal with leads him to an unusual level of innovation as Michael Levine puts it more succinctly that, "censorship functions, on the one hand, as a debilitating impediment and, on the other, as an impetus to stylistic innovation."<sup>iii</sup> It is the latter which is pursued actively by Mandanipour in the novel.

Through the artifice of certain tricks and manipulations the writer tries to tell his story so that it can pass the censorial gaze. It is the use of these tricks and various other manoeuvres which, as the novel progresses, lead to innovations in the novel's narration as. However, these innovations and experiments are not something limited to Mandanipour's novel but instead it permeates the whole literature, cinema and various other cultural activities in the post-revolutionary Iran.

Whereas in the West, metafiction may be a technique used to designate the exhaustion of the novel as a genre, which to some critics in turn designates the death of the novel, to point towards our life, history and society etc. as nothing but provisional artifacts and to draw attention to the heightened sense of self-consciousness that case, however, is totally inverted in Mandanipour's novel where it is used as a basic methodology to draw attention to the complex play of censorship. In this novel, metafiction is used and exploited as a necessary and inevitable form of narrating a story which deals absolutely with the themes of censorship itself. In a country like Iran, if a censoring body has a supreme right to comment/distort a literary work, in that case why can't an author possess the creative right to comment and explain the problems of writing fiction through the use of non-fiction within the very space of the novel? The metafictional endeavour of the novel thus not only comments on the fictionality of fiction but also to the metafictionality of literary censorship itself.

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**End Note:**

- i. Quoted in Larry McCaffery, "An Interview with David Foster Wallace." *Review of Contemporary Fiction*. 13.2 (1993): 127-150. The interview can be retrieved here: <<http://www.dalkeyarchive.com/a-conversation-with-david-foster-wallace-by-larry-mccaffery/>>
- ii. Quoted in Gerhard Richter's review of Michael Levine's book *Writing through Repression: Literature, Censorship, Psychoanalysis*. p. 2.
- iii. Quoted in chapter "Censorship in Iran: Shahriar Mandanipour's *Censoring an Iranian Love Story*" in the book *Iranian and Diasporic Literature in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: A Critical Study* by Daniel Grassian. p. 169. In this chapter Grassian tries to show how Mandanipour's narrative in the novel is a kind of double-edged style and the ways in which he executes it within the confines of censorship itself. Grassian's book is so far the first book in which an entire chapter is devoted to Mandanipour's novel.

## SIN AND EXPIATION IN THE PLAYS OF T. S. ELIOT

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**Abstract:**

*Sin and its expiation is a major theme in Eliot's plays. He has tried to solve the basic problem of man's existence from the Christian point of view, rejecting Greek and Freudian stand-point. In Christianity due to original sin man is a sinner by birth; he has to expiate his sins by spiritual enlightenment, by total submission to God, repentance and sacrifice. Becket, Harry Celia, Colby and Claverton suffer from different kinds of sin as inherited sin, personal sin and deadly sins; such as greed, lust, selfishness, covetousness, unfaithfulness, false pretenses etc. They expiate their sins in their own way. The present research paper attempts to study sin and expiation in the plays of T. S. Eliot.*

**Key Words:** *Sin, expiation, existence, spiritual, sacrifice, repentance.*

When Eliot declared in 1926 that he was “Classicist in literature, royalist in politics and Anglo-Catholic in religion”, he seriously meant that he was adhering to the basics. In 1939 he wrote in the *Criterion*” for myself, a right political philosophy came more and more to imply a right theology and economics to depend upon right ethics”. In his opinion man's primary problem is to free himself from the temptations of evil and love a righteous ethical life, a life purged of the original sin. An attempt to escape the original sin will be suicidal and, therefore, he must face it and only then he can get redemption. It is only through expiation, man can be purgated and absolved of sin.

Eliot's message is: we are all sinners but we can get rid of sin, and save ourselves and our people by self-analysis and expiation. Eliot considers sin and expiation as the primary factor in the existence of man. So he presents sin in all its phases, aspects and kinds. Sin and expiation are closely related concepts in Christianity. Sin is breaking of God's laws, the behavior which goes against the teaching of the *Bible*, the conduct that defies norms prescribe by the Church and is a part of mankind's nature.

Eliot's emphasis on contemporary society is obvious. He looks at the modern problem and analyses the plays from the Christian point of view. He finds that all kinds of breakdowns in man's life have their origin in sin, sin in family, sin in society, sin in thought and action and social and moral sin as well. Eliot's view of life is essentially Christian. He wrote his plays with the intention of propagating the Christian values of life. The choice of such themes as conflict between good and evil, sin and expiation, selfishness and sacrifice, cruelty and love clearly reveal the religious purpose of his drama. There is always a Jesus pattern in ritual of martyrdom and the protagonists of his plays are martyrs and expiate man's original sin.

All of Eliot's plays deal in one way or another with his Christian conception of human freedom. Typically, the dramatic situation involves the hero's discovery of the Catholic” view of life as the only tenable one, no matter how painful is that recognition. By recognizing divine necessity, the central character frees himself from subjection to human desires of the flesh, from the horror of the world's apparent disorder, and ultimately from the human limitations of physical death. By recognizing the existence of free-will, he also gains release from the determinism of the modern scientific world view. And typically, as the hero's discovery is made manifest, those around him demonstrate levels of awareness of the true meaning of freedom, which is the first step of expiation.



The plays of Eliot are written on the important Christian themes: First of all, he believes in the imperfectability of human soul. It is all due to original sin but if he reposes his faith in Church and follows the light from it, he is likely to make his life better here and hereafter. What is required is that man should repent for his mistakes, misdeeds and sins; he should make confession of them and should be ready to follow the Godly ways of life, which is the best way of expiation. Eliot thinks that faithlessness is a sin. A man must have faith and he should rigidly follow his faith. He must fight against the forces of evil and disbelief, sometimes he might have to sacrifice for the sake of belief but he must stick to his faith as Thomas Becket, Harry, Celia, Colby and Claverton do in the plays.

Eliot's plays show that Eliot did not dislike this world and its ways, rather he liked it very much because it is God's creation. However the trouble is that most people do not regard it as created by God. They consider it differently. The result is estrangement of human relationship, perversion of moral and ethical values, debauchery and corruption. The path of affirmation requires the observance of the goodwill towards others. This is what Eliot has said in the two of his plays, *The Confidential Clerk* and *The Cocktail Party* where characters get a new vision of life, when they free themselves from the clutches of egotism, pride and self-importance. Sometimes a person feels the mood of weariness, sense of aloofness, a sort of detachment from the worldly matters of life; for such a person, the negative way is the best way. In fact both the Christian ways require selflessness, love and sacrifice on the part of its followers. Both are the ways of God and lead up to him. Thus Eliot presents the predominance of the negative way in *The Elder Statesman* where Mr. Claverton renounces the world of politics and accepts the life of austerity, moral discipline and meditation.

The play *Murder in the Cathedral* is not just a dramatization of Thomas Becket; it is a deep searching study of the significance of martyrdom. In Becket's martyrdom we have both the sense of sin and fate modified by the Christian idea of sainthood and crucifixion. The notion of sainthood and crucifixion is embodied in the character of Becket. The play as a whole contains the sin-laden God figure in the person of the Archbishop with his antagonist. It develops several similarities between the Gospel accounts of Christ's passion and Thomas's martyrdom. The most obvious analogy is between the crucifixion of Christ and the murder of Becket; and the acceptance of death by both Christ and the martyr as a part of God's design for the redemption of mankind.

Becket's martyrdom can be broadly analyzed into two parts; his struggle towards awareness of himself as God's elect and his total submission to the will of God. The first episode may be called the temptation episode and the second part the episode of self-purification of Becket through the state of intellectual darkness which separates man from God. In this state of darkness perfect humility is achieved by the Christian soul and Becket comes to be aware of limitation of human knowledge. The theme of Becket's martyrdom has been given a universal appeal by presenting it as a common cause of Christianity—the triumph of cross.

In the play, *The Family Reunion*, Harry shares the sins of humanity or we can say parents sin on son. Father and son both thought to murder their wives. Although there was no actual murder but there was the intention of murder. In Christianity intention is as evil as deed. We can say father's sins are on son or the son receives sins in inheritance. Eliot has transferred much of the guilt from Amy. It is Harry's father who falls in love with another and plans to murder his legal partner. Amy, although, she knows his love for Agatha, keeps him. In doing this, she may be thought to have killed the real man. Thus Amy too is involved in the tangle of sin. She uses a person in an inhuman way and seeks to impose her will upon all around her; therefore, she is equally guilty of willing someone else's death. The theme, sin and expiation, in Eliot's play are largely in the pattern of Greek drama. Eliot has perceived a relation between the Greek 'Furies' and maddened conscience. The Furies at first haunt Harry like the fateful spirit of revenge but towards the end of the play appear as the bright angels whom he gladly follows. This transition is an indication of the fact that the hero accepts the Christian idea of original sin for expiation. The furies follow Harry not for what he



himself has done, but for the sin of his father. In this supernatural predicament, Harry discovers the necessity of Christianity for resolution can come only by accepting an original sin which was not his own but his father's only.

Agatha says that it is the story of sin and expiation, not a crime and punishment. Sin can be expiated variously. In Christianity, it must be willing and conscious sacrifice; she shares the consciousness of the sin of the Monchenseys' with Harry so that both of them may expiate it. She calls him "the consciousness of his unhappy family" burning in the purgatorial flames and advises him to resolve the crises. He thus symbolizes the spiritually rich man in quest of belief who has met another fellow quester who has gained insight into the meaning of this quest and his family symbolizes the whole of humanity in spiritual travail.

So the play *The Family Reunion* is a play of sin and expiation. Harry, Mary and Agatha belong more or less to the first group. All of the participants except Mary may be described as "conscious participants" in the drama of sin and expiation. It is indeed wholly fanciful to suggest that the play is intended as an allegory illustrating the Christian concept of original sin and the necessity of expiation. In an allegorical interpretation of it, Amy would stand for the world, her husband for man and Agatha for orthodoxy. Man married to the world discovers a better love but that love is guilty especially in the eyes of the world, and man himself cannot get rid of sense of betrayal and guilt. In *The Cocktail Party*, the theme is again the loneliness of human beings, with emphasis on the choice they must make. The Chamberlaynes' marriage comes to grief; Celia Coplestone has an affair with Edward Chamberlaynes, Peter Quilpe is in love with Celia, but both fail to see her as she is, and is in love only with some aspiration of her own. Celia's choice means relinquishing ordinary social life for religious discipline and communion with God through devoted nursing followed by martyrdom amongst a remote primitive people. The Chamberlaynes' choice is to face the knowledge of their difficulty in loving and giving. They make the best of a bad job, and they go on with conventional social duties as represented for them by the cocktail party.

Celia's sense of sin is connected with the Christian doctrine of expiation. The sense of sin is troubling her like a bad dream and the fear that it is more real than anything she believes in, frightens her. The sense of sin despaired her. She is prepared to expiate for her sin. In a sense she has created a God in man's image and the real man can never have up to it. So the first symptom of her illness is this awareness of solitude. The second symptom is a sense of sin which is strong in her. Despite the fact, she has always been taught to disbelieve in sin, but the sense of sin that oppresses her is not sin in ordinary sense; it goes deeper than the sense of personal wrong-doing while she thinks over about her affair with Edward.

Celia's position is different, is unique. She has a sense of sin not for anything specific, but a general sense and she desires to atone. A way is pointed out to her and accepted by her. The path chosen by Celia leads to crucifixion. Her sacrifice shows 'the power of the saint's sacrifice to fertilize the lives of others'. Celia has chosen the path of martyrdom. She has courage to face her own truth. She does not suffer as ordinary people suffer. She pays the highest price in suffering. Celia's death is upon the expiation of a group not for an individual. The expiation of a group is centered on Edward and on Lavinia who organizes the cocktail party. Celia's suffering is like that of Christ. She dies for the expiation of the sin of humanity.

In Eliot's plays upto the time of *The Cocktail Party* the predominant emphasis is on the negative aspect of Christian experience. While the Negative way is present in Celia's path to martyrdom, dramatic attention is divided equally between Celia's marriage to God and the Affirmative Way of Christian marriage represented by the Chamberlaynes. *The Cocktail Party* abandons the Christian tradition of sacrifice and expiation. Celia has to die for the group. This plays is superior to *The Family Reunion* for two main reasons. The first is that expiation is satisfying and universal, the second the dramatic action is unconfused. Both the plays have the same theme the necessity of expiation, but expiation in this play is spiritually true. In *The Confidential Clerk* Eliot keeps the theme of sin and expiation hidden in the plot of the play. Cobly's awareness of original sin is indicated by his desire to atone for his father's failing by following his vocation. He chooses to accept Mrs. Guzzard's statement as true because this gives him the

sense of liberation that comes through his determination to expiate for human failing towards God (symbolized by his father's frustration) by honestly taking to his father's profession with all devotion.

In *The Elder Statesman*, the theme of Sin and Expiation is presented in its barest possible outline. Eliot's last play marks a distinct change in his outlook. The central character Lord Claverton has certainly loveless married life like Harry and Edward. He suffers, like many other characters in Eliot's plays, from a sense of guilt and isolation, the reason in his case being his betrayal, out of moral cowardice, of two persons who trusted and loved him. In trying to evade his guilt, he has become a hollowman completely out of touch with reality and his relations with his family are a sham. He can find release from his burden only by acknowledging his failure to escape from his past and facing the reality of his guilt. The Act I shows Claverton's loneliness and relations to his shady past. Act II shows his deceptive life and his frantic effort to save Michael from those mistakes which he himself has committed. Act III offers resolution through Claverton's acceptance of reality through love or expiation of his past sins through love.

So, Eliot considers sin and expiation closely related concepts. He has presented the theme in all of his plays. He has tried to solve the basic problem of man's existence from the Christian point of view rejecting Greek and Freudian standpoint. Eliot has been able to give the solution to the problem of man at personal, family and social levels through his plays. The infusion of the Christian principle in his plays gave a great support to the suffering humanity.

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## THE QUEST FOR AFRICAN RENAISSANCE IN JOHN HENRIK CLARK'S 'THE BOY WHO PAINTED CHRIST BLACK'

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### **Abstract:**

*Exceptionally brilliant in exposing the ethnocentrism of White colonizers who forced their ideology via culture onto the colonized land, the short story by John Henrik Clark opens the window to wide range of possibilities in the Ethnic studies of African-Americans and their quest for a self-reliant identity. An aesthetic attempt which seeks to maintain and highlight traditional African culture and sensibilities is seen in the short story in the way of representing the painting of Jesus Christ in an African ethnic cultural pattern. Traditional White ideology in focusing on a specific Western model is rejected by substituting it with an African model of Christ which provokes the ethnocentric hierarchy. This paper attempts to showcase ethnocentrism, the White ideology against the African-Americans that is expressed in the short story, and the counter reaction utilizing the attitude of countering for an identity on the backdrop of movements like Harlem Renaissance and Négritude. Cultural relativism explains why and how the Christ figure had a different identity to the African Americans. Adjusting and blindly accepting a dominant culture without projecting a self-reliant identity does not help in the progress of any ethnic community, rather the difference has to be sorted out to express their way of representation which helps to find a space among the divergent ideological identities.*

**Keywords:** *Ethnic studies, ethnocentrism, cultural relativism, negritude, harlem renaissance.*

Of historically been decadent from African roots for slavery from 1619 onwards, the race of African Americans had been subjected to intense racial discrimination and subjugation for satisfying the American Dream of wealth for the settlers. Ships from different parts of Africa loaded with an incessant number of African slaves reached the ports of America. The highest number of manpower was dealt with west central Africa. As the northern states of America empowered themselves through urbanization and industrialization, the southern states relied on agriculture which demanded the rise in slavery. The American Civil war from 1861 to 1865 marked the full-fledged fight in the name of slaves and slavery. Though the rights and freedom were granted to the black African-Americans, recognizing them as equal citizens with equal priority along with the White settlers of America, the group of black African Americans is still under threat of racial and ethnic attacks related to their colour and origin. Despite been recognized as equal citizens, the black citizens face discrimination. John Henrik Clark's '*The Boy Who Painted Christ Black*' doesn't end its discussion into its aesthetic pleasure of reading. It points out the past, and the present of a community haunted by their historical background of ethnic origin. Aaron Crawford, the only black-skinned student of Muskogee County School represented as "school-for coloured children. Everybody even remotely connected with the school knew this" (Clark). An informal separation in the difference of skin colour itself initiates the clue for a discrimination hidden in the memory of their past. Published in 1948, John Clark would have not thought out of the box to imagine an African American President for the United States of America that got accomplished with Barack Obama in 2009. If so, "Once I heard her say: If he were white he might, someday, become President" (Clark) reference could have been omitted. These two references show how discriminated was the life of a black skinned African American to live his life

among the dominant White. There are references to his physique to show that it differed entirely from the majority White. A 'Centrality' towards the dominant and powerful part of the binary contrast in case of white/black difference existed in the community and culture in where Aaron studied.

Though black skinned, Aaron was accepted among them for his variety of talent in drawing and painting. The hardworking nature of the African American community for which they were appreciated and had demands reflects in the talent of Aaron who was unique from the other white-skinned students. The community of African Americans had demand for their unique talents which itself ended up in the fate of being a slave in the same way how Aaron, whose talent was appreciated got into troubles with the authorities on the same matter. While presenting the controversial painting of the Christ in black, the teacher asks Aaron about the inspiring history behind the painting. The innocent artist speaks the truth that his uncle who lives in New York who teaches classes in Negro History at the Y.M.C.A, while visiting his home told about many great black folks who have made history. Aaron continued:

“He said black folks were once the most powerful people on earth. When I asked him about Christ, he said no one ever proved whether he was black or white. Somehow a feeling came over me that he was a black man because he was so kind and forgiving, kinder than I have ever seen white people be. So, when I painted his picture I couldn't help but paint it as I thought it was” (Clark).

The narrator says he noticed the picture close and found it different from the one which hung in the wall where he studied his Sunday school. He details much more relatively that the eyes of Christ closely resembled the eyes of Aaron's father, the deacon of the local Baptist Church who had deep-set and sad eyes. It was more like a helpless Negro, pleading silently for mercy. Every emotion of an African American is exposed through the writing, referring to the painting drawn by Aaron. The painting of Aaron was different from the usual and widely accepted paintings of Jesus Christ, the white and fair skinned man for the white people. Aaron had painted the figure of Christ with a dark complexion, which he could relate to his culture and people that he believed through the words of his Uncle. His uncle related Christ to a black man who is kind and forgiving, unlike the Whites who torture them. Aaron related his culture of living and ethnic complexion into the Christ figure finding those identities more suitable to the figure in Christ in black than for the white Christ of the white people. Moreover, he even related the eyes of the Christ to that of his fathers, which certainly ended up being a Negro pleading silently for mercy. The picture of Christ in black reflected the life situation of the black community that Aaron saw around him. He could not relate the kind-hearted Jesus Christ to the White people as they differed entirely according to his experience.

This lack of kindness and forgiving was true according to him when he dealt the issue of the painting of the Christ in black with Professor Daniel, the White supervisor who visited the school. Seeing the painting, Professor Daniel demanded sharply “Who painted this sacrilegious nonsense” (Clark). Efforts to establish an African stand was taken by Aaron and the black Principal of the school, George Du Vault who boldly tried to convince the Professor about the essence of the painting. A space to find their identity before the White Professor was done by the black Principal when he said:

“I encouraged the boy in painting that picture,” he said firmly. “And it was with my permission that he brought the picture into this school. I don't think the boy is so far wrong in painting Christ black. The artists of all other races have painted whatsoever God they worship to resemble themselves. I see no reason why we should be immune from that privilege. After all, Christ was born in that part of the world that had always been predominantly populated by coloured people. There is a strong possibility that he could have been a Negro” (Clark).

The Principal seeks to maintain and uphold traditional African culture and sensibilities like how the writers after 1930s through the Négritude movement tried to highlight the aesthetic importance of the African culture through their works. Négritude is a term coined by AimeCesaire, a French poet and



dramatist from Martinique and the Senegalese poet and politician, L. S Senghor (Cuddon 464). Négritude also claimed a distinctive African view of timespace relationships, ethics, metaphysics, and an aesthetics which separated itself from the supposedly 'universal' values of European taste and style. Wole Soyinka makes precisely this point in his analysis of Négritude in *Myth, Literature and the African World*:

Négritude, having laid its cornerstone on a European intellectual tradition, however bravely it tried to reverse its concepts (leaving its tenets untouched), was a founding deserving to be drawn into, nay, even considered a case for benign adoption by European ideological interests (qtd. Ashcroft et. al).

A form of Négritude is expressed in the story in explaining to convince the White Professor about the richness and importance of black culture and blacks which has equal or more significance with other cultures in the world. The right of a black boy to represent Christ in black is supported by the black Principal.

Harlem Renaissance has to be remembered along with the Négritude movement as it was the corner stone for generating a conscious need for a recognizable identity for the community. It is the literary and cultural movement among black Americans which flourished from early in the 1920s to the 1930s. It was also called the 'New Negro Movement' or 'Negro Renaissance'. It emphasised the African culture and heritage of American blacks (Cuddon 325). The Black Arts Movement that came in the mid-1960s to the mid-1970s aimed of helping forge an independent black identity of their own distinct from the White model (80).

“Have you been teaching these children things like that?” he asked the Negro principal sternly (Clark). Ethnocentrism of a White colonial master is expressed through the words of the White Professor. Coined by the American political scientist William G Summer in 1906, the word denotes the centrality of one's nation or ethnic group to the world by being culturally superior about one self-exhibiting stereotypes, prejudice and hostile attitude towards other nations or ethnic groups (Cuddon 256). The White as well as the European colonial giants has always been ethnocentric in their attitude towards other nations, especially to the ethnic groups they colonize. Forced imposition of western/ White ideologies into a different identity helped them to colonize the “other” culture. Euro centrism is not so far from Ethnocentrism. The assumption that Europe constitutes the centre of the world has played a major role in the perception and construction of other cultures. Edward Said, in his *Orientalism* explains:

European culture could manage and even produce the Orient politically, sociologically, militarily, ideologically, scientifically, and imaginatively during the post-enlightenment period. In the case of Asia, Orientalism can be discussed and analysed as the corporate institution for dealing with the Orient- dealing with it by making statements about it, authorizing views of it, describing it, by teaching it, settling it, ruling over it; in short, Orientalism as a western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient(Said 11).

The Ethnocentric approach in dealing with other cultures is also utilized in valuing the painting of the Christ in black. According to the White Professor, the figure of the Christ must satisfy to the aesthetic pleasure accepted to his culture and representation. To his culture, Christ has to be represented in white and not in black as Aaron represented. He felt it as a blasphemous act of being against the rule of the Church, indirectly the rule of the White dominant society. Though there is no specific picture of Jesus Christ, different ethnic societies represent the figure adaptable to their cultural acceptance. In the story, Cultural relativism is provided as a whole in the case of the picture. Cultural relativism, the principle that a person's beliefs, values, customs, and world view do not possess absolute or universal validity but are shaped by her particular cultural circumstances (Cuddon 175). What is considered morally good and accepted in one culture might be assessed quite differently in another. Implications of cultural relativism may extend into the spheres of epistemology, ethics, morality, linguistics, literature and politics. The cultural difference



influences the emotional and personal beliefs of a person in formulating his view on anything, including interpreting and finding the truth. As no culture can avail what is exactly the truth, every cultural interpretation has to be accepted to be multiple truth of the same. A forced imposition of a foreign culture onto one may harm the repressed in its development. In cultural imperialism, a ruling state or ethnic group will often impose its political ideals, cultural values, and often its own language, upon a subject group. It is not 'the White Man's Burden' (Kipling) to enlighten the black African Americans by forcefully imposing their culture on to the subjects, but it is their right to choose what fits to their culture and how to project it as their own.

“I have been teaching them that their race has produced great kings and queens as well as slaves and serfs,” the principal said. “The time is long overdue when we should let the world know that we erected and enjoyed the benefits of a splendid civilization long before the people of Europe had a written language” (Clark).

Words of the Principal reflect how ancient and significant is the culture of Africa and its people who later was captured by the Whites for their benefit. He spoke back to the power centres about his culture. The after effects of his words were severe. He resigned to join a small school as an art instructor and took Aaron along with him. Was the adamant stand for an identity of their own, a failure? No. It was a success as they had no broken heart when they stepped out. In the last lines of the short story, the narrator says:

I watched them until they were so far down the street that their forms had begun to blur. Even from this distance I could see they were still walking in brisk, dignified strides, like two people who had won some sort of victory (Clark).

The victory of having represented something significant in an African way was seen in their smile. Being an African origin has to be seen as a proud moment and finding relativity to one's own culture than of others has to be the primary step towards enlightenment. Cultural relativism as a whole engulfs the ethnocentric pattern in which the Négritude and counter reactions to represent own identity becomes the primary concern of a culture. Thus, an African model of Renaissance takes birth in the story with the Principal, George Du Vul and Aaron who leaves the colonial imprisonment of their culture by the Whites. They set out to find new space for them to express their thoughts and ideas in their own culture rather than being half-heartedly pointing on to the White ideology.

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## THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE ABSURD ON DRAMATISTS AND THEATRE IN 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY

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**Abstract:**

*Absurd means 'out of harmony' literally. It is talking about the dilemma of modern man, a stranger in an inhuman universe. Recognizing such strangers in stage characters in the 1950s, critic Martin Esslin's influential Theatre of the Absurd applied the term to contemporary playwrights who presented man's metaphysical absurdity in an aberrant dramatic style mirroring the situation. The absurdity of the human condition itself in a world where the decline of religious beliefs has deprived man of certainties, when it is no longer possible to accept complete closed systems of values and revelations of divine purpose, life must be faced in its ultimate, stark reality. Beckett's question, 'what has one thing to do with another?', is quite as much a formal matter as a philosophical one.*

**Keywords:** Dilemma of modern man, theatre of absurd, uncertainty, out of harmony.

Immediately after the Second World War, Paris again became the capital of dramatic art in the west and French Theatre was soon associated with a short-lived eruption of surrealistic drama which came to be known as "*theatre of Absurd*". It is popularized by the works of Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* in 1952 and Ionesco's *Exit the King* in 1962. It was the decade of the 'cold war' and the extreme tension between the nations of the east and the west. Those playwrights working in Paris and thought of absurdist during that time were not a common philosophy. The theatre of the absurd was a writer's theatre not a director's like Irish Dramatic movement.

The sudden outburst of French absurdism explained as a nihilistic reaction to the atrocities, the gas chambers and the nuclear bombs of the war. Theatre of the absurd revealed the negative side of Sartre's *existentialism* and expressed the helplessness and futility of a world which seemed to have purpose. Beckett's bleak images of life in *Godot* and *Endgame* conjure up a human existence is like an 'Intolerable imprisonment spent' between the compulsion of birth and the worse compulsion of death.

Our life has its temporary freedom, but it is the freedom of the slave to crawl east along the deck of a boat travelling west. (p.58)

In *Exit the King*, Ionesco's characteristic subject is death, together with, in this play, the actual dissolution of the mind and the body. In such drama, every signal from the stage is a representation of irrationality designed to surprise and shock. Its grim vision of life reflects Kierkegaard's spiritless man, wholly negative and atheistic-unless one is willing to believe that what is negative may also embody some inducement to take positive action. As if to say, 'when things are as bad as this, why not do something about them? Camus's existentialist use of the term 'absurd' in *The Myth of Sisyphus* was ten years later vastly narrowed to connote man trapped in a hostile universe that was totally subjective, and made to describe the night mare that could follow when purposelessness, solitude and silence were taken to the ultimate degree.

Absurdist plays fall within the symbolist tradition, and they have no logical plot or characterization

in any conventional sense. Their characters lack the motivation found in realist drama, and so emphasize their purposelessness. The absence of plot serves to reinforce the monotony and repetitiveness of time in human affairs. The dialogue is commonly no more than a series of inconsequential clichés which reduce those who speak them to talking machines. As plays, they do not discuss the human condition, but simply portray it at its worst in outrageous image chosen to undeceive the innocent and shock the complacent.

As a result of this singular content, absurdism presented a special set of practical problems to the writer who wished to make his way in the theatre. Purposelessness is inconsistent with everything dramatic art has achieved in the past. The early plays of Samuel Beckett particularly drew upon the content and techniques of mime, the music hall, the circus and the *commedia de' ll arte* to represent the business of everyday living. All the characters of *Godot* and *Endgame*, Vladimir and Estragon, Pozzo and Lucky, Hamm and Clov, Nag and Nell, are essentially pairs of comics or clowns who divert themselves, and so their auditors, with double-acts of cross-talk, tumbling and the *lazzii* of falling asleep, switching hats and so on. The tramps who wait for Godot quarrel, eat, try to sleep, even attempt suicide, all in the fashion of such performers, and the loss of dignity implicit in their antics itself becomes an absurd image of life. As in farce, cause and effect are discounted, time is speeded up or slowed down, fate is unpredictable and anything can happen. This must seem as it is in an irrational universe.

In Britain, the actor and director Harold Pinter started using Psychological realism in his plays. For Pinter, Beckett is 'the greatest writer of our time'. In his recent plays *Landscape and Silence* in 1968, he has inclined towards Beckattian monologue. But for the most part Pinter's extraordinary talent for suggestive obliquity in his dialogue is distinctively his own. It is called as English Drawing comedy. Speaking of his script for the film *Accident in Sight and Sound*, Autumn 1966, Pinter said,

Life is much more mysterious than plays make it out to be. And it is this mystery which fascinates me; what happens between words, what happens when no words are spoken.

Part of his achievement has been to find a dramatic way of revealing the threat behind the evasive exchanges of everyday life, and to convey the tension between people who think they know each other. In the one act play *The Room* in 1957, a woman learns with alarm that a stranger has been waiting outside the house for several days to see her. When this person is eventually seen, it comes as a completely unexplained surprise to find that he is black man, and when without motivation the woman's husband kills him, it comes as even greater surprise to learn that she goes blind. He is concerned to show people engulfed in trivia, whether of persons or things or talk. Pinter has added a powerful ingredients to his concoctions, that of sexuality. When relationships between the sexes are under his microscope, each little fear of rejection and loneliness, each hint of a threat to security and identity, is as amusing as before, but also much more painful. Pinter's perception of human behavior is acute, and his ability to convey objectively what he sees through character.

The major dramatists of the School of the Absurd, in Esslin's view are Beckett, Adamov, Ionesco, and Genet. The senselessness of life and irrationality in terms of the old conventions are projected in majority of plays. Esslin makes certain important suggestions when discussing the significance of the Absurd. According to him, the number of people for whom god is dead has greatly increased in the present century. The theatre of the Absurd is one of the ways of facing up to universe that has lost its meaning and purpose. As such it fulfills a double role. Its first and more obvious role is satirical when it criticizes a society that is petty and dishonest. Its second and more positive aspect is shown when it faces up Absurdity in plays where man is "stripped of the accidental circumstances of social position or historical context, confronted with basic choices, the basic situations of the existence." The Theatre of the Absurd presents anxiety, despair, and a sense of loss at the disappearance of solutions, illusions, and purposefulness. Facing up to the loss means that we face up to reality itself. Absurd drama becomes a kind of modern mystical experience.

Man's identity, his limitations, and his place in the universe are at issue in the writings of Dramatists. Beckett's play, *In Happy Days* we find a woman, Winnie, buried waist-deep in sand against background that suggests the aftermath of an atomic holocaust. Her companion, Willie, is barely visible behind the mound. The conversation of the two is outrageously out of keeping with their situation. Our familiar postures and verbal habits, the standard poses of human wisdom and consolation, are subjected to a ruthless scrutiny in being adopted by half-buried woman. The counters of contemporary discourse-pretentious and unpretentious- are employed in a situation of impotence and near-total negation in which they bear the weight of sheer tragedy and comedy at the same time. *Krapp's Last Tape* and *Endgame* continue the same pre-occupations, the latter with Nagg and Nell in dustbins and their blind son chair-bound. Against paralysis and powerlessness of this kind, Beckett brilliantly employs a dialogue that is at once tragically and farcically at loggerheads with the immediate. It moves to tears and to laughter, yet compassion persists through nightmares of negation and absurdity.

By the time Beckett came to write *Krapp's Last Tape*, his only themes were memory and the contrast between a lost past and the sour present. The stage and the action in this play are, therefore corresponding bare. We find an old man, sitting alone, listening to a tape of himself talking thirty years before. It is a tape he had recorded when he was thirty-nine. The tape is a retrospect of a year just past and records the death of Krapp's mother, mixed with memories of a dutiful nursemaid, a dog and a rubber ball. There is also a moment of revelation at night by the seashore during a storm, the storm and darkness apparently reflecting some truth of *Krapp's* inner life. But what that "never to be forgotten" vision was we are not told. The old man keeps skipping the tape forward in an effort to find a scene which he has described in his ledger as "Farewell to Love ." having found it, the old man then goes on to record his latest retrospect of the year that has just ended. His present style of recording lacks the fluency and precision of his youth, and befits a life failing to bits with old age and failure. In place of young man's vision, he reports a bleaker, deprived reality: "What's a year now? The sour cud and the iron stool." He now lives a life of total obscurity. Only seventeen copies of his book, his "opus magnum", have been sold and he scarcely leaves his darkened room. As for his love-life, an old sweet-heart did come in a couple of times but he could not do, much. His only comfort is to lie in bed and dream about his remote past.

Beckett makes use of the tape-recorder to show the elusiveness of the human personality. Krapp is a very old man who throughout his adult life has annually recorded an account of the past year's impressions and events on a tape. We see him old, decrepit, and a failure as a writer, listening to his own voice recorded thirty years earlier. But his voice has become the voice of a stranger to him. Through the brilliant device of the autobiographical library of annual recorded statements, Beckett has found a graphic expression for the problem of the ever-changing identity of the self, which he had already described in his essay on Proust. In *Krapp's Last Tape*, The self at one moment in time is confronted with its earlier incarnation only to find it utterly strange.

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**CHICK LIT - AN OVERVIEW**

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**Abstract:**

*The present research paper is an attempt to contemplate the meaning, nature and range of Chick Lit as a genre of literature in English. The species is being examined in relation to selected chicks of American literature. The study also aims to focus on the chick lit in the Indian writing in English, with particular emphasis on selected chicks lit novels written by Indian writers in English. 'Chick' is an American slang for a young woman, and 'lit' is a short form of literature. The chick is a literary genre that addresses the issues of contemporary femininity, often humorously and carelessly. This species became popular in the late 90s of the twentieth century, when the chicks illuminated the titles on the bestsellers lists and the prints were entirely devoted to the chicks. Although it sometimes contains romantic elements, the chick is usually not considered a direct subcategory of the romantic novel genre, because the relationship between the heroine and family or friends is often just as important as her romantic relationships. Chick Lit as a genre of literature has been neglected by critics so far, calling it a frivolous literature, written by young female students or unmarried working women about their limited world. But because they are an equally important part of our civilized society, one should respect their feelings, thoughts and reflections of life perceived by them. Chick Lit as a genre of literature should also be studied as a record of sensitive reflections of young minds and their fantastic world. Chick Lit is probably the best medium for understanding how young people react to the rapidly changing world and its consequences for their mind. Since most of the Indian population is now young, we must read in their minds that are reflected in the Chicks. The "Chick Lit" study is perhaps the virgin subject of research in English literature with a great opportunity for new discoveries and can potentially contribute to the study of English literature and English criticism. Chick Lit is a new and important emerging genre of English literature. It is a reflection of the feelings, thoughts and reactions of young girls or unmarried women working on their own world.*

**Key Words:** *Virgin subject, discoveries, unmarried women, fantastic world.*

Study of Chick Lit is perhaps the virgin subject of research in English literature with a great opportunity for new discoveries and can potentially contribute to the study of English literature and British critics. The chick is a literary genre that addresses the issues of contemporary femininity, often humorously and carelessly. This species became popular in the late 90s of the twentieth century, when the chicks illuminated the titles on the bestsellers lists and the prints were entirely devoted to the chicks. Although it sometimes contains romantic elements, the chick is usually not considered a direct subcategory of the romantic novel genre, because the relationship between the heroine and family or friends is often just as important as her romantic relationships. Chick lit usually presents the heroine, whose femininity is strongly varied in the story. Although most often embedded in the modern world, for example in *Waiting for an Exhale*, there is also a historical staff. The issues we deal with are often more serious than consumerism. For example, the *Watermelon of Marian Keyes* presents a heroine who struggles with how to be a mother in the modern world and grows the market of a religious chick lit. As with other genres, authors



and publishers target many niche markets. Protagonists differ greatly in terms of ethnicity, age, social status, marital status, career and religion. "Chick" is an American slang for a young woman, and "lit" is a short form of literature.

The term appeared in print as early as 1988 as university slang for a course entitled "Feminine literary tradition." In 1995, CrisMazza and Jeffrey DeShell used this term as an ironic title to their edited anthology "Chick Lit: Postfeminist Fiction." The genre has been defined as a kind of feminist feminism or a second wave that goes beyond the victim woman and contains fiction covering a wide range of women's experiences, including love, courtship and gender. The collection emphasized experimental work, including violence, perversion and sexual themes. James Wolcott's 1996 article in *The New Yorker*, "Hear Me Purr," co-opted the term "chick lit" to ban what he called the trend of "girliness" seen in writing female journalists at the time. Works such as *Bridget Jones Diary* by Helen Fielding and Candace Bushnell's *Sex and the city* are examples of such works that helped establish the contemporary connotations of the term. The success of *Bridget Jones's Diary* and *Sex and the City* in book form confirmed the chick as an important trend in publishing. A girl's guide for hunting and fishing by Melissa Bank is considered one of the first novels created as a result of a chick lit (in fact a collection of short stories), although the term "chick lit" was widely used at the time of its creation (1999). *The Temp* by Serena Mackesy appeared in the same year.

The genre's literary conventions, not only its book covers, separate it from other types of female literature but using the genre's formulas, we get the definition conventions of a typical chick lit novel. In the years since the publication of *Bridget Jones's Diary*, chick lit has grown to include subcategories such as "hen lit," "bridal lit," and "Latina lit," but the most popular books continue to tell the story of the "traditional" chick lit heroine. She is a Caucasian, non-rural white-collar executive in her late twenties or early thirties. Her family lives somewhere in the suburbs, appear and leaves the novel as irritation in the heroine's life, and sometimes as an obstacle between her and the hero. Living in the city is about working in a little inspiring office work, with happy hours, co-workers, shopping and drinking with friends on a Saturday night (or any other night this week). Alcohol is an important part of the social life of most characters, while alcoholism is rarely discussed. At the beginning of the novel, the heroine realizes that she behaves like a college student at some point in her life, when she should be an experienced professional, happily married mother or both. After this epiphany, the heroine meets the hero, but with him an obstacle - sometimes in the form of an external factor, but often a personal barrier - it distinguishes them for most of history. When the couple unites in the last twenty pages of the novel, the heroine's life has somehow changed during her journey to him. She usually has a new job, better income, and sometimes even improved its relationships with family. Emma is changing not only in terms of personality; she also changes her material circumstances through her promotion from the marketing assistant to the marketing director. In list of Emma's secrets there is everything that is unsatisfying in her life from her relationship with her boyfriend to her unhappiness with her job. By the end, Emma's only secrets are how much she loves her job and dreams about having children with her new boyfriend. Flighty Emma Corrigan exemplifies the scatter brained and self-deprecating protagonist type that is the most popular in chick lit novels

Thus, we observe 'Chick lit' to be sexy, funny, and sharp and one of the fastest growing fiction genres today. Those of a certain age may not understand the appeal, but the mass of young women who may not have considered themselves as heavy readers are gathering in libraries to keep up with the latest trend.

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29  
INDIAN CHICK LIT

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**Abstract:**

*Single career women filling reams with the sardonic and witty prose about the angst of their lives, loves and non-loves, create a space for female readers who are tired of romances that talk about the exotically beautiful and the perfectly endowed. Increasingly, women writers are willing to pen the trials of the real woman in a real world where Mr. Right may not exist. Chick lit romance is contemporary and true, with a sense of humour that stands the test of modern roles and expectations. The present research article attempts to unravel the attraction of this feel-good genre.*

**Key Words:** *Sardonic, witty prose, exotic, trials.*

Women in a career, penning down the realm of sarcastic and brilliant prose with respect to the anxiety of their lives, loves and non-loves, develops a space for women who are exhausted of a romance that speaks of peculiarly winsome and flawlessly equipped. Progressively, women writers are willing to write the attempts of a real woman in a real world where Mr. Right may not exist. The chick's romance is modern and real, with a sense of humour that is a test of contemporary roles and hopefulness.

When cosmopolitan women choose martini for kesar-pista milk, the face of the modern Indian women changes as does writing to keep up with the new form of liberalization by the West. Smoking out a trivial niche between ideally true literature and quixotic ideal romance, books depicting the lives and loves of young professional women, aka chicks, come as a form of salvation for an average woman who wants reality on the rocks with a bit of humour. Evenly, unraveling out the hefty, dejected monotony of philosophy and sarcastically slackening the fluffy, perfect fantasy, international chick lit queens like Helen Fielding (*Bridget Jones's Diary*), Candace Bushnell (*Sex and the City*), Lauren Weisberger (*The Devil Wears Prada*), and Emma McLaughlin and Nicola Kraus (*The Nanny Diaries*) have set the standard for chick lit around the world.

Considering contemporary Indian women identifying themselves with these books, Indian writers habituated this space in the local context. Chick Lit writer, Kavita Daswani, hopes that a woman in whichever corner of the world is Bridget Jones, and her anxiety is not much different from the working middle class. Daswani indicates that today's woman anywhere in the world is probably looking for a boyfriend / husband, job satisfaction, good friends, pleasure; she has money problems, she is involved with the wrong men and can have conflicts in her family - all the things that every 20 or 30 women come across every day, in all the probabilities anywhere in the world.

Rajashree, a writer from Mumbai, is elated with the sameness. And that's how we find amused, unmarried women in a career, filling the pages with a sarcastic and brilliant fear of their lives, loves and non-loves, developing a space for an average woman who is tired of a romance that is exotically beautiful and well-endowed women and prepared to read about attempts of the real woman, in a realistic world wherein you will not find any sign of Mr. Right. Each feminine writer sells fantasy, can be more real in chick lit, where romance is modern and raw, with a humour that is a test of contemporary roles and

expectations, but no writer can finish the final chapter without the Mr. Right!

This person may be an unexpected springer from the side lines, obscuring the “perfect” man who most often turns out to be a bad guy, but the righteous person inevitably appears, satisfying every reader that although she is unhealthy, she can certainly hope that the man of her dreams would run by her street.

This is a real brand of hope for these Indian women who are struggling with the pressure of family expectations, arranged marriages and optimal working life, and are trying to find a way out of the clouded circles of society. Swati Kaushal, the author of the best-selling *Piece of Cake*, believes that the marital Indian scene is not so different from dating in western countries.

All said and done, arranged marriages (however similar to the Western dating culture) did not leave the lives of Indian women. It is hard to imagine that an Indian chick lit borne elements without the anxiety of arranged marriages in a tryst with the love lives of heroine. Rajashree believes that arranged marriages in Indian chick lit are equivalent to, what dating is to western chick lit - full of comic possibilities.

Although, *Piece of Cake* by Swati Kaushal supports the same topics in which the mother of the protagonist is constantly trying to get her marry a “right” man. *Piece of Cake* deals with this when Minal (the protagonist) appears on the pages as a character who avoids surrendering to infinitely great fears that she has no mind of her own.

Rajashree's *Trust Me* presents the subject of bad men, with a difference that she chooses the Indian film industry as a background to the subject, drawing on his own professional knowledge of Bollywood. In the end, we realize that despite the background of California, London or Bollywood - situations and themes are not very different, and men and women are the same everywhere. Now the writers want to create scenarios, characters and personalities that will stand out, if the chick lit, to be taken seriously.

Prof. Shefali Balsari Shah, head of the English Department of St. Xavier's College, Mumbai, held discussions with her students about chick lit as a form of popular culture. Considered as part of a study on romance genres or a feminist approach to popular culture, she warns against using simplified criteria to place a woman's novel, just like a chick. She, however, believes that the chick lit might lose energy and interest as it goes into repetitive and self-plagiarising mode. Where wit and humour work, she wonders if the writing will be able to survive.

Many writers on chick lit are not traditional writers by profession - they often come from different backgrounds and are inspired by stories or incidents from their personal life, they write successful chick lit novels. Because the chick lits are about professional women in the mid-20s or 30s who juggle a career, love life and social duties, it is not surprising that writers use empirical techniques in the form of a novel. Swati Kaushal, she herself has an MBA degree from IIM Kolkata and for many years has been working with MNC like Nestle and Nokia. Becoming acquainted with corporate culture has created her research and helped her thoroughly portray Minal's career in *Piece of Cake*. Rupa Gulab, the writer of the popular *Alone girl*, also draws on her own experience related to living in a hostel. Similarly, Rajashree, the author and director of films, decided to try her hand at the novels, placing her heroine within the domain of the Indian film industry. *Beyond Indigo* was practically an autobiographical novel for Preethi Nair, who experienced similar social and parental pressure to be in 'perfect' work culture and to find an 'ideal' man. She, like her heroine, Nina, managed to free herself from these commitments and managed to succeed in what she really wanted to do - take the less-traversed path.

Kaushal, reflecting on the influence of a chick lit, proposes that Indian society is changing quite fast when its economy is growing. Daswani, on the other hand, is more positive, claiming that the role of the chick lit is also inspiring, where many of these books are used for enlightenment, showing readers a life beyond what they know. Regardless of whether the life presented in these novels goes beyond reality, or fantasy, which is dressed in reality, books serve to brighten up the mood and temperament of professional women. Identification with real heroines brings empathy through pages, wit and humour to remind us to treat life not so seriously, the coming of age redefines our self-esteem, and more importantly, ending in the

book play their part in denying cynicism and shining with hope.

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**SIGNIFICANCE OF MOTIVATION IN TEACHING SECOND LANGUAGE**

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**Abstract:**

*It is obvious that anything can be learnt and done at any time can be possible only with motivation. Of course, a teacher can fill the brains of the students with a lot of information but if there is no ability to translate it into action, it has no sense. So, what basically requires a kind of stimulate to make it true, I mean in the form of action. This is what the motivation is. English language teaching does need effort to impart to the non-natives as it is a foreign language. Virtually, motivation is of two types. Internal and external. Internal motivation is an innate trait in certain learners, where as external motivation must be done through various sources. Teachers, parents, friends, technology etc. come under external motivation. However, in classroom situation in India particularly as most of the students are familiar with mother tongue, are unable to pay much attention to capture the spirit of second language. The reason being, disinterestedness or reluctance. Sometimes with fear the learners may not evince much interest. In such circumstances it is most essential for a teacher to employ the technique of motivation to induce the learners to equip themselves with the competence of speaking and writing in target language. The present paper throws a light on various factors that entail in motivating the stakeholders to master a second language with much agility and enthusiasm.*

**Key words:** *Information, stakeholders, external and internal, learners, competence, reluctance, technique, competence.*

Language is a human system of communication that arbitrary signals such as voice sounds, gestures or written symbols. Language is the dress of our thought. It is a communication coding system. Good communication is possible only with good number of words. A person who is a reservoir of vocabulary can express himself without groping for words. Using right word in the right context embellishes language. To be able to communicate oneself with ease and elegance one has to make conscious effort to learn four basic skills of language-LSRW. To acquire these four skills the learners are to be motivated by dispelling their phobia.

Motivation is the psychological quality that leads people to achieve a goal. For the learners of the second language, acquiring fluency and mastery over it may be a goal. The motivated person expends effort to learn the language. Self- improvement is the key element of motivation. Motivation performs two important functions: it firstly arouses interest and secondly helps people to sustain their enthusiasm. So motivation has been widely accepted as one of the key factors that influences the rate and success of language learning, especially a foreign language like English. Motivation provides impetus to initiate learning. Without sufficient motivation, even individuals with the most remarkable accomplishments cannot achieve long term goals. High motivation can make up for considerable deficiencies both in one's language aptitude and learning conditions. Motivation is inspiration. Motivation is ignition of interest. Motivation is instilling confidence. It is purely a psychological, multifaceted activity. It is responsible for human behavior by energizing it and giving it direction. Pintrich and schunk, the researchers opine that Motivation involves various mental processes that lead to the initiation and maintenance of action. They defined motivation as "the process whereby goal-oriented activity is instigated and sustained." The



internal factors that ignite self Motivation are

- 1: Curiosity to learn
- 2: Urge to withstand challenges
- 3: Personal relevance
- 4: Feeling of competence
- 5: Awareness of developing skills and mastery in a chosen area.
- 6: Awareness of personal strengths and weaknesses in skills required.
- 7: Personal judgments of success and failure.
- 8: Fixing target on learning.

The external factors that motivate the individuals towards learning a language may be listed as:

- 1: Parents teachers and colleagues.
- 2: Learning experiences, appropriate praise or punishments.
- 3: Learning environment such as facilities, resources available, time of the day, social relationships, curriculum etc.,

Internal motivation is everlasting and effective. Mere theoretical motivation may not yield expected results. Motivations whether internal or external is to be sustained in order to learn a language completely and thoroughly. The objectives of motivation can be achieved by active involvement of the teacher since 'example is better than a precept'. Hence the teacher cannot remain a mere instructor. Instead he has to act as a mentor, guide, friend and a beacon light in imparting language skills. Actions speak louder than words. It is not out of context to recall the famous conviction of Mahatma Gandhi. He used to say, "I have not asked anyone to do anything that I have not practiced myself." So the teacher is an eternal motivator. Pleasant and relaxed atmosphere in the classroom is another essential requirement for learners.

The learners can be drawn towards learning the second language by way of narrating interesting stories, anecdotes, fables, legends, jokes, quotations, axioms, historical events, inspiring lives of saints, sages, spiritual leaders and even personal experiences. The conversational technique of narration naturally draws the attention of learners. If the teacher makes the learners listen attentively, he may be called a successful motivator. Body language such as postures, gestures, eye contact also motivate the learners and keep their attention alive throughout the class. Use of simple and lucid language sustains the interest of the learners. Pronunciation of words with correct stress, intonation and proper pauses keep the class alive. Group discussions, role play, elocution and essay writing competitions keep the learners motivated. Spelling tests, dictation, assignments and seminars are part of motivational activities. Appreciation of the achievement of students keeps their zeal at the zenith.

The language tasks may be provided to students by preparing proper foreground. High priority may be given for the learner's linguistic self-confidence. When a student falters while speaking, his mistakes/errors may be pointed out after due acknowledgement of the merits of his language. Acquiring proficiency in language is a matter of experience. Hence motivation plays a pivotal role in promoting the skills of language. When the learning process is personalized, the students start thinking creatively. Influential motivation leads to independent thinking on the part of learners.

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## REGIONAL PORTRAYALS IN NON-NATIVE AND DIASPORIC LITERATURE: STUDIES IN K R MEERA AND JHUMPA LAHIRI

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### **Abstract:**

*The study entitled 'Regional Portrayals in Non-native and Diasporic Literature: Studies in K R Meera and JhumpaLahiri' is a study based on the regional literature from the perspective of an alienated culture. The non-native and diasporic communities are taken as the two different challenging fields in literature. This paper is based on two pieces of literature which are taken as representative writings of each field. The non-native literature is studied on the basis of the novel Hangwoman by K R Meera. And the book The Namesake by JhumpaLahiri is taken as the source material for the study of the diasporic literature. The research deals with the characteristic features of the regional literature, the icons of Indian regional literature, the historical reference of the authors and their works. And also draw a detailed comparison and an examination of the considered novels to the extent of regional literature. The thesis concluded that the non-native and diasporic writings are successfully gained the regional portrayal as the native writings.*

**Key Words:** *Regional literature, alienated culture, non-native, diasporic literature.*

Literature is a strong detergent that can cleanse the dry thoughts of human minds. Sometimes it acts as a reagent that helps to characterize the knowledge or the familiarity gained by experience. A text will always exhibit a reflection of author's life, especially in the branch of regional literature. The cultural familiarity of an author enhances his native identity. Cultural identity is not a fixed essence. It has its histories having their real, material and symbolic effects. And it is always constructed through memory, fantasy, narrative and myth. The architect of everyone's identity is the culture that we experienced in our life. These cultural identities reflect the common historical feelings and shared cultural codes from generation to generation. But there are some exceptional cases which go beyond these common shared feelings and codes. Non-natives and Diasporic communities are included in the exceptional cases. Non-native writers are the group of people which are born in a culture and intentionally write about another culture. They are not supposed to being owners of a native figure. Diaspora is a scattered population whose origin lies within a smaller geographical locale. They keep very strong attachment with their homeland and always have a desire to return. These two alien groups create a significant role in literature. They mostly write to make a native cultural identity as their own from the alienated culture. So their scripts always follow the genre of regional literature. But their works are not considered as pure regional works even now. The main intention of this study is a search about the power of non-native and diasporic writers to create a successful native identity in regional literature.

K R Meera is a prominent figure in Malayalam literature. Her epic novel *Hangwoman (Aarachar)* received a lot of prestigious prizes like Kerala Sahithya Academy award and Vayalar award. It is the story of a twenty two year old girl ChetnaGrudhaMullick, who takes up service as the first woman executioner in India. Meera sets the story in the background of Bengal. Completely non-native to Bengali culture, she tried her maximum to present the Bengal hanging family within the backdrop of her inborn Kerala culture.

The American Bengali writer JhumpaLahiri is considered as the diasporic writer. She was born in London to Bengali parents and grew up in Rhode Island. Her novel *The Namesake* is an actual portrayal of rootlessness and search for identity in the central character Gogol's life. Lahiri's strong desire to return to

her homeland is reflected in the character Ashima. She could not get any more chance to live in Bengal but she tries to absorb its essence to the possible maximum.

### **Regional Portrayal in Literature**

Literature is a signature of an author, his experience of life, both emotional and practical. We may survive in every place, but we can live only in our native land. A person has always an inherent attachment to his own culture and traditions. Always we cherish the memories of family, home, roads, childhood, surprising folktales and myths. According to Richard Brodhead, "Regionalism's representation of vernacular cultures as enclaves of tradition insulated from larger cultural contact are palpably a fiction... its public function was not just to mourn lost cultures but to purvey a certain story of contemporary cultures and of the relations among them." Regional literature or Local color is the fiction and poetry that focus on the characters, dialects, customs, topography and other features particular to a specific region. It particularizes each fact of the nature and human environment peculiar to the selected locale. Local color and dialects are the two significant features of regional literature. Regionalism grew during the late 1800's, after Civil War, when the United States expanded rapidly. A lot of immigrants entered the field of literature and the writers sought to record, celebrate and mythologize the diversity of landscape and people. A sense of vastness of the continent and of the cultural diversity gave impulse to the regional writings. Local color includes realistic delineation of all sensory perceptions of the geographic and social milieu including mores, folklore, and the economic life of the region. It also focuses on the modification of environment and the impact of the several classes of society upon each other. Dialect, a feature that varies from region to region becomes a linguistic determinant of regional idiosyncrasy.

Regional writings have a unique nature to create a native identity in literature. The regional novels emphasized not merely as local color, but as important conditions affecting the temperament of the characters and their ways of thinking, feeling and interacting. These stories tend to be concerned with the character of the district or region rather than with the individual: quaint or stereotypical. Old ways, dialects and particular personality traits central to the region are adored in them. Even though the characters are from a working or middle class origin, they are very adhering to traditional, gender, ethnic and socio-economic roles. But in some regional novels people of these classes may be absent, and it may focus on the family or lineage and its connection with landscape or history. The portrayal of settings in regional novels also tries to keep a variant in literature. The emphasis is frequently on nature and the limitations it imposes; settings are frequently remote and inaccessible. Sometimes it becomes a character in itself. Emily Bronte's novel *Wuthering Heights* set in the harsh and isolated Yorkshire moors in Northern England. It reflects the moods of major character and their actions, while contributing to its overall atmosphere. *Wuthering Heights* practically makes a character out of its geography. The American writer Frank Norris's *Octopus* and Booker T. Washington's *Up from Slavery* are the novels which discuss the economic and geographic relation between region and world. The plot in regional literature mainly includes a lot of story-telling revolving around the community and its rituals. The rich flavour of myths, folktales, and superstitions highlights the plot with powerful scenario. These elements appear in the stories as a piece of cultural identity. The famous Indian writer O.V. Vijayan is one of the best examples for story telling in this area. In his work *The Legends of Khasak*, he opens the windows into the mystic essence of existence through the myths of Khasak. It is a place where a separate village life is created with its own strange myths and legends to portray a wild collage of life in which everything falls apart. Regional literature has a special zone in the selection of theme too. Sometimes it deeply followed the nostalgia for an always past golden age. For instance, Afghan writer Khaleed Hosseini's novel *The Kite Runner* is the story of Amir, a Sunni Muslim, who struggles to find his place in the world because of the after effects and fallout from a series of traumatic childhood events. When he reached into his adulthood, the novel flashes back to Amir's childhood in Afghanistan. His close relationship with his father and other characters in the story evokes a nostalgic theme as usual. *Verukal* by Malayattoor Ramakrishnan tells the story of a Tamil speaking Iyers

who settled in Kerala. The central character Raghu returns to his native village after a long gap of years. In the village, he meets his sister and others among whom he grew up. Here a current flow of memories portrays the novel as nostalgic in its soul. Many poems also emerged in the field of regional literature, associated with the poet's intense love towards culture. Thomas Martin wrote the poem *Nancy* about the memories of a girl's childhood life. He tried to evoke a lost and nostalgic feeling in it. Barry Tebb's long Poem *Bridge over the aire book1* is also included in this literary category. The tension or conflict between urban ways and old fashioned rural values is often symbolized by the intrusion of an outsider or interloper who seeks something from the community.

In the regional novel, the protagonist lived in the village or factory in his own unique regional culture. He always tends to survive in the realistic background and not in the fictitious world. The dreams of a community or society are related to their homeland. The narrator and the techniques which he used also have a special significance in the portrayal of literature. The narrator seems to be an educated observer from the world beyond who learns something from the characters while preserving a sometimes sympathetic, sometimes ironic distance from them. He or she serves as mediator between the rural folk of the tale and the urban audience to whom the tale is directed. They used the dialect to establish credibility and authenticity of regional characters. Instead of giving a brief description, sometimes they give a detailed sketch especially of small, seemingly insignificant details central to an understanding of the region. And the frequent use of frame stories made the stuff more powerful. It will show the depth of the interrelation between the author and the region.

### **Icons of Indian Regional Literature**

India is one of the most linguistically diverse countries in the world. The eighth schedule of the Constitution of India recognizes eighteen regional languages in India with a developed script and literary tradition. This study considers some of the richest of such cultures in literature. Certain concepts can be very flexible in one language and rigid in another, but writers try to make sure that the sense of the original is retained even when translated. Indian regional literature offers plenty of collections to appeal to a world audience in a wide range through stories, poems, novels or folktales. A strong characteristic of Indian regional literature is the sublime influence of regional fables, stories and myths, which developed as a distinct genre and was termed as the regional literature. Bengali literature has followed in fast footsteps and in some instance, has even preceded the medieval Indian literary scenario into the ancient age. The prolific writer Mahasweta Devi tried to focus the poor social background of Bengal. It can be seen in the novel *Andharmanik (Jewel in darkness)*, which dealt with the upheaval in Bengal's social life caused by the Maratha cavalry raids during the mid-eighteenth century. Another renowned Bengali novelist Bibhutibhushan Bandopadhyay, author of *Pather Panchali*, also wrote most of his works about people belonging to rural Bengal. Vaikom Muhammad Bhasheer was one of the prominent figures who revolutionized Malayalam regional literature. He portrays exactly the Indian independence struggle, experience and conditions that existed in Kerala, particularly in the neighbourhood of his home and among the Muslim community. Also he tries to copy the cultural background and social problems in the society like dowry (*Balyakalasakhi*), superstitious practices (*Ntuppuppakoranendarnnu*), political issues (*Mathilukal*), religious conservatism (*Premalekhanam*) etc. M T Vasudevan Nair used the Valluvanadan dialect in most of his writings like *Nalukettu*, *Manju* etc. He traces all of the vernacular possibilities successfully in his writings. Another offspring of regional novel is the fantastic creation of Arundhati Roy, *The God of Small Things*. It deals with the disturbance of life and at the same time it discusses the nostalgia of past history. Other than novels, there are also many short stories that portray the cultural practices in literature. In the Punjabi short story of Amrita Pritam, *The Weed* she strongly questioned the patriarchal views that existed in Punjab. And the popular Assamese writer Atulananda Goswami's famous story *The Tiffin Box* also speaks about the familial attachment that focuses on parental grief.

In India, regional literatures are rich in producing great literature, beginning with creators like



Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, Rabindranath Tagore, Sarat Chandra Chattopadhyay, Munshi Premchand, Subramanian Bharathi, Sadat Hasan Manto etc. And even now it flourishes among the literature in the huge background of the richest regional creations, the *Ramayana* and *Mahabharatha*.

### **The writers and the works under consideration**

In literature, there are a lot of powerful women's voices that mark history. Once upon a time, the area of literature was banned for women. She has not a room or space of her own. She was free to imagine but she had not the right to express. If she gets a chance to express it, the society thought that it should be limited to the beautiful and softest things in the world like flowers, love and butterflies. But she never minds the contempt of the patriarchal world. She weaves stories around history, romance, politics, wars and all kinds of sensations in life.

K R Meera is one of the prominent writers in contemporary Malayalam literature. She was born in Sasthamkotta, Kollam district in Kerala. Her parents are K N Ramachandran Pillai and A G Amruthakumari. She did her graduation in the University of Kerala and post-graduation in Gandhigram Rural Institute. Meera started out as a journalist in 1998. She has since published short stories, novels, and essays, and has been recognized with some of the most prestigious prizes for literary writing in Malayalam including the Kerala Sahitya Academi Award (*Aave Maria*), Oodakuzhal Award, Geethahiran Award, Lalithambika Andharjanam Award, Anganam Award, Thoppil Ravi Smaraka Award, P. Padmarajan Smaraka Award, V.P. Sivakumar Smaraka Award, Nooranad Haneefa Award and Vayalar Award (*Aarachar*). She wrote many stories like *Mohamanja*, *Ormayudenjarambu* and *Kadhakal* and the novels are *Meerasadhu*, *Aa Maratheyum Marannu Marannu Njan*, *Maalagayude Marugu- Karineela*, *Aarachar* and *Meerayude Novellakal*. Her stories are translated to English and Tamil. Now she lives in Kottayam with her husband, Dileep and daughter Sruthy. Her novel *Aarachar* is translated by the bilingual feminist scholar J. Devika into English, under the title *Hangwoman*. All of the writings of Meera have emerged from a feministic perspective. Her novel *Meerasadhu* tells the story of an IIT graduate abandoned at a Krishna temple after going through some torrid times in her married life. And the short story *Ormayudenjarambukal* discuss about the miserable life of an old woman. The main issue that evokes in it is patriarchy and gender problem. In all these works, Meera tries to concentrate on the universal concerns faced by women.

*Hangwoman*, widely regarded as her master piece, was originally serialized in Madhyamam weekly and was published as a book by DC Books in 2012. The novel is set in Bengal. It tells the story of a family of executioners with a long lineage, beginning in the fourth century BC. The protagonist of the novel, twenty-two-year-old Chetna Grddha Mullick, is appointed as the first woman executioner in India, assistant and successor to her father, Phanibhushan Mullick. And she is committed through a tender contract with Sanjeev Kumar Mitra, representative of CNC Channel whereby all rights towards transmitting and publishing interviews related to an imminent execution is only with him. Until twenty fourth June, which is the date when Jatindranath Banerjee is to be executed as announced by the Government of India. Normally, her life explodes under the harsh lights of television cameras. Chetna is a strong and tenacious woman who struggles to inherit this profession. She is portrayed as a symbol of strength and self-respect for women, but in reality, she is just as a cog in the machinations of the men around her. In the sensational world, Chetna stared in front of her own awakening sexuality which is as same as a perfect noose. She flounders at first, but then slowly extricates herself; and takes charge of her own life, which finally leads to a perfectly executed conclusion. Meera tries to spin the culture of Bengal within her limited non-native context. She can absorb both the emotional and practical life of the Bengali culture in the scenario of Mullick family. In a sense, sometimes Meera used the central character Chetna to reveal herself. For instance, she says "Man's love is different from woman's. A man can love only the woman who gives him pleasure. But a woman is capable of loving even those who hurt her" (Meera 110). A woman alone can see another woman's heart. Even if she tries her maximum to be only a writer, sometimes



it naturally breaks from within her and she flowers herself as the character within her. In certain points she changes the moods of the novel into a philosophical level from the indoors of the story narration. She says “on this earth, only love is more uncertain than death” (Meera 11). Like these in many places she takes a shift into an actual philosopher within her mind. Here Meera puts her soul and body into ChetnaGrddhaMullick, the strong eyewitness figure of hanging that has shaped the history of the subcontinent. And she made Chetna into a meticulous character as ever in the literature.

JhumpaLahiri is another key figure of contemporary literature. Her actual name is NilanjanaSudeshnaLahiri. She was born in London of Bengali parents, and grew up in Rhode Island, USA. Her father Amar Lahiri works as a librarian. Her mother wanted her children to grow up knowing their Bengali heritage, and her family often visited relatives in Kolkata. Her stories have appeared in many American journals and her first collections, *Interpreter of Maladies*, won the Pulitzer Prize (2000) for fiction and the others are the New Yorker prize for best first book, the PEN/Hemingway Award, Addison Metcalf Award, Asian American literary Award, DSC Prize for South Asian Literature and National Humanities Medal. She graduated from Barnard College, then she received multiple degrees from Boston University. And Lahiri is currently a professor of creative writing at Princeton University. Her major works are *Interpreter of Maladies*, *Unaccustomed Earth*, and *The Lowland*. Now she lives with her husband Alberto Vourvoulis and her two sons Octavio and Noor.

Most of her writings tell the story of immigrants and their sufferings. The novel, *Interpreter of Maladies* deals with the sensitive dilemmas in the lives of Indians or Indian immigrants, with themes such as marital difficulties, miscarriages and the disconnection between first and second generation United States immigrants. Until *Unaccustomed Earth*, she focused mostly on the immigrants and their efforts to keep their children acquainted with Indian culture and traditions. Also they try to keep the children close even after they have grown up in order to hang on to the Indian tradition of a joint family, in which the parents, their children and the children's families live under the same roof. But *Unaccustomed Earth* departs from this earlier original ethos, as Lahiri's characters embark on new stages of development. These stories scrutinize the fate of the second and third generation. As succeeding generations become increasingly assimilated into American culture and are comfortable in constructing perspectives outside of their country of origin. Her fiction shifts to the needs of the individual. She shows how later generations depart from the constraints of their immigrant parents, who are often devoted to their community and their responsibility to their immigrants. Lahiri's another novel *The Lowland* is autobiographical and frequently draws upon her own experience as well as those of her parents, friends, acquaintances and others in the Bengali communities with which she is familiar. She examines her character's struggles, anxieties and biases to chronicle the nuances and details of immigrant psychology and behaviour.

*The Namesake* is an extraordinary story of a tiny ordinary family making the voyage between two worlds, Asia and America. This was first published in Great Britain in 2003 by Flamingo. After an arranged marriage, Ashoke and AshimaGanguli leave Kolkata to settle in Cambridge, Massachusetts. With extraordinary effective economy, the author analyses the conflicting attractions of the American way of life and tug of tradition. They named their son Gogol after Ashoke's favourite Russian author Nikolai Gogol. But growing up in an Indian background, the boy begins to hate his name Gogol and felt so embarrassed by it. To live far away from his parents, Gogol sets off on his own path only to discover that the search for identity depends on much more than a name. He had not a constant identity both in India and America. This novel explores the concepts of cultural identity, of rootlessness, of tradition and familial expectation. This identity crisis is not only the problem of Gogol but also all of the characters experienced in a way or other in the novel. The parents Ashima and Ashoke are very happy to visit Kolkata frequently. They want to imbibe the native cultures and values by their children. But Gogol and Sonia get reluctant to accept and enjoy the Indian backwater in the background of American Ocean. Exactly, Gogol is mixed with the Lahiri's blood because in Rhode Island her teacher calls her Jhumpa. It is easier to pronounce.

Lahiri recalled, "I always felt so embarrassed by name... you feel like you are causing someone pain just by being who you are." Lahiri's ambivalence over her identity was the inspiration for the ambivalence of Gogol. However, The Indian American Bengali author Jhumpa Lahiri powerfully reveals her vision and attitude towards the society as best of from her heart.

Both the writers K R Meera and Jhumpa Lahiri wrote the novels from a perspective of nationality. The only difference is the selection of the themes which they used to portray the novels. In the novel *Hangwoman* Meera explores the issues of woman's identity as a means of national concern. But in the novel *The Namesake* Lahiri focused on the regional identity as a universal means.

### **Portrayal of Regional in Meera and Lahiri**

According to the Oxford Companion to American Literature, "in local color literature one finds the dual influence of romanticism and realism, since the author frequently looks away from ordinary life to distant lands, strange customs or exotic scenes, but retains through minute detail a sense of fidelity and accuracy of description." Here, as non-native and diasporic writers, K R Meera and Jhumpa Lahiri tried to make sure the presence of greenery in their works as to produce a successful regional credibility.

Non-native is referred to a person who lives in a place that is not the region where he or she is originally born. As per this criterion, non-natives are supposed to face a lot of challenges in their lives. Culture, language, history and lineage are always a questionnaire in front of the non-natives. So normally their works are not considered as regional works, because they could not attain the physical or mental flexibility of an alienated culture. Diasporic writers are another group of people who felt the same identity crisis in literature. They regard their ancestral homeland as their true home to which they will eventually return. So even though they show a deep fondness to their native culture, they could not gain the full integrity of the homeland.

In *Hangwoman* K R Meera is completely shifted into a Bengali native both as a writer and a woman. She connects the novel with past and present events. We can see all of the aspects of the regional literature in it. The characters are very much adored with the old ways, customs and traditions. The central character Chetna is the only one who protests against the harassment made by the society. But the other female characters such as Ma, Thakuma and Kakima are the representatives of illiterates who keep a highly traditionalistic way of life. Thakuma acts as the thread which connected the old generation to the new generation by passing the long lineage stories of the Mullick family. Chetna grew up in the context of myths and folktales told by her grandma. Thakuma had given her the basic details of executions. For instance, she described the story of Kadhambari who was hanged by the grandfather Mosh (Meera 210). Here Meera tries to give the authentic historical evidences through these stories. So many myths and folktales enrich the novel as a means of attaining local knowledge. Meera weaves the novel with the historical references of Kolkata in a successful way.

Lahiri's *The Namesake* also followed the narration of past and present life which connects the novel. It is not in a path of chronological order and the novel started from Massachusetts then occasionally moved in to their homeland, Kolkata. Lahiri combines the scenes and portrays it in a very simple and informative manner. The characters Ashima Ganguli and Ashoke Ganguli are closely inherent to their native culture. They are strictly tied up with rituals, family and tradition. It is evidently clear in the beginning of the novel where Ashima prepared an Indian spicy dish mixed with rice krispies and planters peanuts, chopped red onion and adds some salt, lemon juice, thin slices of green chilli pepper, mustard oil etc. (Lahiri 1). This will show the Indianisms in the blood of the immigrants family. Ashima is always in an unhappy mood because of her homesickness. They constantly compare the life in America with India. So here, dissatisfaction comes as a main theme in the novel. All of the characters experienced the same situation in a way or other. Jhumpa Lahiri effectively portrays the struggles faced by her characters. In *Hangwoman* there are many subplots coming with different characters as heroines and heroes. But in the, *The Namesake* sometimes Ashima became the heroine of her own subplot and Ashoke became the hero of his own subplot. Both of them narrate their own past life.

Meera sees the novel as a means of realistic as well as romantic portrayals. She defines Chetna as a character of woman power. All of the members in the novel struggle to live in the harsh lights of the new world. In addition to this, the novel receives a sympathetic nature around the whole plot. The scene of the debate with Protima Ghosh, mother of Rameshchandra Ghosh, the last convict who was hanged at the gallows is a tragic sequence of sympathized narration (Meera 126). Sanjeev Kumar Mitra exploits her tears for the rating of the CNC channel. In a way all of the characters are responsible for the sympathy raised here. Here Meera portrays the realities of life through her creativity. Like these, Lahiri's characters are also highly sympathetic in nature. The central character Gogol has a problem regarding his identity. Gogol and his sister Sonia often feel foreign in both India and America. For the children of Indian parents, homeland often appears backward and unfamiliar. They feel like tourists, they have no chance of home coming. They are not fit in a constant identity. It starts from the cultural differences that set them apart from everybody else. All of the characters feels isolated and alienated from both Indian and mainstream American culture. Gogol had not only the problem of cultural identity but also he suffered by his strange name. Gogol is named after the Russian novelist Nikolai Gogol. Some call him as Nikhil and some as Gogol. At last Gogol feels comfortable with his Indian American identity when he reconnects with his long-time friend Moushumi Mazoomdar and marries her. But that relation carried him to a disappointed one. Because she has an affair with a guy named Dimitri Desjardins. And Gogol divorced Moushumi. Here Lahiri portrayed the Gogol's sympathetic psyche as usual in regional narration. The characters of Meera and Lahiri deserve the emotion of sympathy in a high altitude. And sometimes they are more palpable with the thematic references such as nostalgia also. K R Meera specified the nostalgic thoughts in *Hangwoman* through the portrayal of subplots. Kaku looked back in to his life and said with a sigh, "you don't know, chetu, those were strange times. Thinking back now, I don't know if it was really as who did all that..." (Meera 352) and he painfully recollects the story of Jyotirmayi in Terai village. Kaku ends up the story with tears in his right eye. Meera connects the nostalgia with romance and death. Chetna's romance with Sanjeev Kumar Mitra is not a sincere one at glance. Because many times, he tried to satisfy his sexual desire through Chetna. But even when she did not like him and his attitudes, her submission to him was a reflection of the awakening 'Id' in her. Gradually it turns into a revenge that finally brought the romance to death. After all Chetna changed to become the representative of woman power in India. The novel exactly explores the nostalgic path of pasts in the platform of long hierarchy. In the novel *The Namesake*, Lahiri vividly portrays the nostalgic theme as a whole in nature. It is mainly seen in the characters of Ashima and Ashoke Ganguli. They come from a middle class Bengali family. Their customs, traditions, family are all tightly connected with them. Even when they could follow a comfortable life in America, the memories of Indian life pull them back to the homeland. But she mostly feels the nostalgia through the letters which are sent by her grandmother. Lahiri says it very beautifully in the words that, "The letters are filled with every possible blessing and good wish, composed in an alphabet they have seen all around them for most of their lives, on billboards and newspapers and awnings, but which they see now only in these precious, pale blue missives" (Lahiri 36). Ashima always wait for the arrival of post man and she keep her ear trained for his footsteps on the porch, followed by the soft click of the mail slot in the door. She feels that it is a kind of satisfaction gained through a recall of nostalgic events.

Meera and Lahiri also make an attempt to use the vernacular possibilities in the novels. Meera confidently portrayed the Bengali language and dialects overall in the story. She is almost done with the local places in Kolkata like Kalighat, Alipore, Neemthalaghat, Daakurpadi etc. And she also used the narrative part occasionally in Bengali language. Chetna often hummed the song "Chhalanachaturiaashehridayebishaadobaashe" (Meera 314). It increases the originality of the character to reveal the intense feelings. And the character portrayal also maintains the native style through expressions like ma, sanjubabu, kakima, chetu di, phoni da, ramu da, protima di etc. Meera intensely defines the Bengali dialect in the *Hangwoman*. But Lahiri does not use the native language instead She just only mentions that the Bengal language is familiar for them by giving some clues. She says that, "Bengali

conversation fills the cabin.” (Lahiri 81), and adds that “To put him to sleep, she sings him the Bengali songs her mother had sung to her.” (Lahiri 35). But she refers the more specific terms of Bengali family that is mashi and pishi, mama and maima, kaku and jethu. Instances like these give credibility of vernacular quality in Lahiri's novel. The two novels clearly show that K R Meera and JhumpaLahiri have efficiently collected the minute details of an alienate culture such as myths, folktales, histories, localities, language, customs and tradition.

The novel *Hangwoman* and *The Namesake* are very much similar in nature. As a means of the non-native and diasporic, Meera and Lahiri can create a vibrant effect in the world of regional literature.

Regional literature always seeks for the odour of locality and the colour of familiarity. It tells about all of the smaller peculiarities of the local environment such as bird's arrival, seasonal changes, religious emotions, plants, flowers, tiny buds and so on. It means, regional literature requires that much of interaction with the selected locale. A typical regional writing needs some characteristic features in order to consider it in the regional category. The characters should be free of stereotyping, the plot should deal in-depth with individuals, and there should be some lessons of universal truth. If we compare these notions with the non-native novel *Hangwoman* and the diasporic novel *The Namesake*, there can be nothing to see that they are different from the regional novel. Both the novels acquire all of the aspects of regional portrayal as in all contexts like setting, characters, narrator, story elements, plot and theme. The description of minute details such as climatic changes, the long history, special recipes and vernacular narrations strongly support the credibility of the regional characteristics in the novels. Meera and Lahiri completely shifted into the local native individuals through this works. Non-native and diasporic writers are grouped in a special category of literature. They always show the local colour and are not considered as an alienate group. The identity crisis felt by their characters are felt by themselves as well. Here K. R Meera and JhumpaLahiri attain all of the regional identity through their works, because they successfully explain even the dialects of the central and high lightened place Kolkata. This is one of the similarities of the *Hangwoman* and *The Namesake* that, both the authors try to acquire the native identity of Bengal. Through these novels we can get a clear cut image of Kolkata and its culture.

And it is very hard to write about a regional portrayal without knowing the specific details. Or in the other hand it is impossible to write a regional novel without living in the selected locale. But Meera and Lahiri never had a long exposure of Bengal. Even then they could successfully attain a unique place in regional literature. K R Meera and JhumpaLahiri successfully possess the realm of regional literature and cultural identity. So, here we can evidently say that non-native and diasporic writers are not inferior to native writers in successfully rendering regional portraits.

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**THE PROTEAN WOMAN AS THE PRODUCT OF CULTURE WAR:  
A STUDY OF TRUMAN CAPOTE'S *BREAKFAST AT TIFFANY'S***

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**Abstract:**

*As the world changes in unprecedented pace and unanticipated ways, individuals find it challenging to sustain a single identity as they traverse the complex life situations. The identity of an individual is in constant state of flux. Many feminist psychologists eschew the identity of women as monolithic, rather they endorse the idea that women's identity emanates in relationship with others. An individual becomes pluralistic in a postmodern world. If playing a particular role leads to real changes in one's identity, then one should learn to play many roles, to adapt to any role that is in demand. The paper analyses the potential of an individual to carry many selves in the postmodern era of culture war. In the novella of study, it is the culture that requires a person to adopt the pluralistic self. The central character assumes superficial transformations for social acceptance. The need for a Protean self arises out of the wish for social acceptance. The rigid societal norms chains the individuals in such a way that they can pursue their desires so long as they look and behave according to the accepted social standards. Lulamea becomes Holly in Truman Capote's *Breakfast at Tiffany's* to liberate herself from the rigid hierarchical constraints in the society that limits personal and social freedom to those who do not conform. Holly Golightly epitomizes the postmodern self-constructed identity that is in a state of flux.*

**Keywords:** *Postmodernism, culture war, protean self, identity diffusion, sexuality, plurality*

**Postmodernism**

As Walter Truett Anderson points out, "Postmodernity brings changing ideas, changing styles, changing behaviours...it brings above all, a change of mind."(123) Hence Postmodernism ushers in a deep and unsettling shift. Linda Hutcheon in *A Poetics to Postmodernism* posits that, "postmodernism is a contradictory phenomenon, one that uses and abuses, installs and then subverts, the very concepts it challenges". (3) Postmodernism subverts the accepted notions of existence and reality, celebrates fragmentation and plurality, and questions the superiority of order. Coherence and rationality are no longer important or possible. As M.H Abrams observes, "Postmodernism . . . show that all forms of cultural discourse are manifestations of the reigning ideology, or of the relations and constructions of power, in contemporary society". (177)

**The Cultural Background**

At a conference during Cannes film festival in 2004, the film producer Lawrence Bender made a biting response to the question about media censorship in the United States: "I feel like I'm going back to the fifties here. . .the conservatives are taking over the country." Bender's reference is to the 1950s America, a decade remembered for its conservatism. The 1950s culture was deeply influenced by the cold war ideology, and the unprecedented prosperity of America at that time plunged the consumers into enjoying the material comforts brought about by the international prestige. The middle class America was very complacent with the emerging prosperity manifested in the form of ". . . new houses, fine schools, neighborhood parks and safe communities" (Clinton 1) that no questions were raised as to how the nation rose to the global eminence. But the decade also reveals a number of parallel emergences that cannot be pigeonholed into the cold war ideology. The 1950s culture was a matrix of dualities, tensions and



contradictions. The diverse cultural expressions of the time negate any kind of generalization. J. Ronald Oakley described the 1950s as:

... a period of puzzling paradoxes ... an age of great optimism along with the gnawing fear of doomsday bombs, of great poverty in the midst of unprecedented prosperity, and of flowery rhetoric about equality along with the practice of rampant racism and sexism.(x)

Halliwell says in *American Culture of 1950s*:

the decade was vilified in the 1960s for its conservatism, particularly by those who saw themselves as its victims: the young, black, female and gay all found collective voices to denounce a decade that promised so much, but delivered little to those on the margins.(4)

As elucidated in books such as Douglas Field's collection *American Cold War Culture* (2005), Martin Halliwell explains that a closer inspection of the decade reveals another aspect of the cold war culture. "In popular memory the decade gave rise to Elvis, high school romances, Tupperware, the *Peanuts* comic strip, Hollywood blondes, 3-D cinema, and black baseball star Jackie Robinson helping the Brooklyn Dodgers to six World Series finals".(3)The American collective identity was constructed in line with the popular myth of the American dream, which emphasized social recognition and wealth. The central character of the novella for study, Holly Golightly, is an epitome of the American dream seeker, the one who traverses from rags to riches.

The decade also witnessed the standardization of gender roles, which has been mocked by Betty Friedan in *The Feminine Mystique* as, "... the long commute to work in the city for the 'organization man' and a day perfecting the home for house wives 'smiling as they ran the new electric waxer over the spotless kitchen floor'. (16) As Halliwell puts it:

... there was some unrest in the mid-1950s as can be gauged by uneasy representations of gender roles in film and fiction: in Jack Arnold's film *The Incredible Shrinking Man*(1957) domesticity becomes an oppressive prison for the shrinking white-collar protagonist Scott Carey, while in Sloan Wilson's novel *The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit*(1955) the organization man, Tom Rath, feels uncomfortably caught between the demands of work and the home; he cannot ever fully settle down to suburban life, with memories of active combat and a wartime affair dragging him back into the past. (40)

The films of the times tried to reassert the masculine identity by displaying manliness through the figures like William Holden and Rock Hudson. Nonetheless all these representations of masculinity were not what it purported to be when the reality dawned. All the artists who were the epitome of masculinity proved out to have homosexual inclinations.

The status of the American women then was even worse. As observed by Halliwell, "... the fact that the phrase 'public woman' in the 1950s was more likely to be associated with prostitution than intellect is one marker that the home became the naturalized habitat for many women". (41) Alfred Kinsey's *Report on Sexual Behavior in the Human Female* (1953) effected a huge outcry as it confronted the purity and sanctity associated with femininity. Kinsey observed that sexual relationships outside were more prevalent than what was perceived. Till the ground breaking publication of Kinsey, sex was understood to be a private, domestic affair, which exclusively happened in the domain of marital relationships.

Accordingly, the era witnessed two contrasted images of women- the devoted stylish domestic housewife and the glamorous diva, the paragon of ostentatious sexuality. This paradoxical situation was exemplified in films like *Niagra*(1953), in which the hyper-sexualized character of Munroe is contrasted to the modest, sensible and the morally complying character of Jean Peters. Consequently, the insistence on the morally pure womanhood socially disenfranchised the uncontained women like unwed mothers, abortionists and lesbians. (Halliwell 42). The findings of Kinsley that infers increased illegal abortions, pre-marital and extramarital sex, and experience of eroticism between the women that resulted in orgasm

raised questions about the morality of American culture. The evolving behaviour of women thus parried the national morality that positioned women as the guardians of a conservative, moral, domestic ideology.

Certainly the decade witnessed apprehensions about female sexuality. There was a stark contrast between the women's prescribed social and sexual roles and their actual desires and behaviours. This finding of Kinsley shook the conservative morality of the time. Holly Golightly is the true representative of this shift in morality. Capote's novel subtly addresses these moral concerns of the decade through its depiction of the dynamic single life of an American geisha who is a staunch proponent of progressive sexuality.

### **Breakfast at Tiffany's**

The narrator in *Breakfast at Tiffany's* tells a retrospective story of an enigmatic, sensuous, morally problematic figure named Holly Golightly who is a representative of the "narcissistic youth culture that rejects middle-class values through late-night parties, drinking, and sexual freedom" (Fahy 175). The card on her mailbox which reads "Holly Golightly, Travelling" exemplifies her unrestrained identity that values social and personal freedom. Golightly is the incarnation of the seeker of the 'American dream' who is enchanted by the material comforts of the newly aroused middle class bourgeois culture of the postwar era. Holly earns money as a geisha girl, an escort for wealthy men. She also amasses wealth as the messenger for the mobster Sally Tomato. Sally manages his narcotic business through the seemingly innocuous messages he transfers through Holly. When the identity of the geisha girl is revealed, one is flabbergasted to know the transformation she has acquired to access the high-end life of New York. In order to reconstruct her identity, she abandoned her husband and his children, skillfully masked her southern accent, changed her name from Lulamae to Holly, and lost weight considerably.

Eventually Holly gets romantically involved with Jose Ybarra Jaegar, a South American diplomat who aspires to become the president of Brazil, which Holly describes as her first "non-rat romance" (82). The news of the death of Fred, Holly's brother, devastates her and transforms her into a recluse. Her prospects as the wife of the future president is shattered following her arrest due to the involvement with Sally Tomato. The sudden turn of events forces her to leave the country, leaving behind her cat in Spanish Harlem-never to be seen by the narrator again. Holly recognizes the complexity of human sexuality and embraces the notion that an individual should be natural and not normal.

Holly discards the cultural significances accumulated to the notion of sexuality and transcends the oppressive presence of it. Her liberal outlook on sexuality is expressed in, "a person ought to be able to marry men or women or- listen, if you came to me and said you wanted to hitch up with Man o' War, I'd respect your feeling. No I'm serious. Love should be allowed"(83). Golightly defies the supposed moral values of the decade and repudiates the standardized notion of gender roles and sexuality. One of the central aspects of the novella is the ambiguity revolving around the sexual orientation of the different characters that apparently lead a conventional existence. As Mastilo notes, "the exploration of sexual identity is presented as a fluid process that avoids labelling"(3). The intriguing Golightly herself raises question about her sexual inclination when she remarks, ". . . people couldn't help but think I must be a bit of a dyke myself. And of course I am. Everyone is a bit. So what? That never discouraged a man yet, in fact it seems to goad them on" (25). A succinct analysis of the character of Holly Golightly is expressed by Lulee Aberra as:

. . . an unconventional, eccentric young woman who subverts the matrix of power that regulates female sexuality and whose identity is performative, fluid and in a constant state of flux, lending her easily to a post-modern interpretation. . .(4)

Despite her goal of acquiring the social status aspired to in the post war materialist culture, by becoming the wife of a wealthy man, Golightly defies many notions associated with traditional femininity. Her relationship with the major characters of the novella reveals her progressive view on sexuality. Holly subverts the ideology of the time which predominantly endorsed femininity in terms of mothers, house

wives or virgins, by indulging in licentious activities and leading a high-class, fashionable, opulent, promiscuous life. She partied all night with umpteen men who lacked any commonality. The narrator observes that all of the party men in her apartment seemed disappointed:

Except for a lack of youth, the guests had no common theme, they seemed strangers among strangers; indeed, each face, on entering, had struggled to conceal dismay at seeing others there. It was as if the hostess had distributed her invitations while zigzagging through various bars . . . (35)

This illustrates her openness about sexuality that was largely uncommon in American Culture. Holly celebrates the fluidity of sexuality and is a hard core non-conformist. For Holly, there are no fixed values when it comes to relationships. Holly is very much a product of the American Culture of the 1950s.

In a postmodern context, the identity is constantly in a state of flux. As Pointed out in *The Saturated Self*, "Identities are highly complex, tension filled, contradictory, and inconsistent entities. . ." (Gregen 147). According to the postmodern psychologists, a replacement of identity is inevitable in a decade of cultural conflict. The various self-concepts are replaced by a sense of identity based on "a reality of immersed independence, in which it is relationship that constitutes the self"(Gregen 147). Holly epitomizes this replaceable identity that is subject to constant change. Golightly is flighty, unstable and unsettled throughout the novella. The narrator meets Golightly as the geisha girl, the socialite who is a companion to various wealthy and important men. The narrator's encounter with Doc Golightly, Holly's husband, throws light on the earlier life of Holly Golightly as Lulamae Barnes. The glimpse of Holly as Lulamae re-asserts her inherently untamable nature. It is her essential nature to run away from everything that "cages" her. Her untamable nature is not compatible with Doc Golightly's obsession of nurturing and nursing the wild things. Holly says, "That was Doc's mistake. He was always lugging home wild things. . . But you can't give your heart to a wild thing: the more you do, the stronger they get. Until they are strong enough to run into the woods. Or fly into a tree. Then a taller tree. Then the sky". (74) When Holly finds that her nature is not in accordance with her status as Doc Golightly's wife, she flees to freedom. Her mailbox card inscription, "Holly Golightly Travelling" suggests her insistence on freedom and her resistance to belong to somewhere or somebody. "I don't want to own anything until I know I've found the place where me and things belong together. I'm not quite sure where that is just yet. But I know what it's like". (39). Naming is also problematical throughout the novella. Naming symbolizes defining and fixity for Holly Golightly. It explains her refusal to name the cat, her naming of narrator as Fred, and her insistence on a pseudonym for herself. ". . . poor slob without a name. It's a little inconvenient, his not having a name. But I haven't any right to give him one: he'll have to wait until he belongs to somebody . . . we don't belong to each other: he's an independent, and so am I. (39)

Nonetheless Holly ardently tries to resolve the problem of being a domestic housewife when she is in a relation with Jose. While the instability aroused from the identity as Golightly's wife is unresolved, the new identity as a future President's wife is ardently looked forward to. As the fiancée of Jose, Holly becomes a typical housewife who is content learning to furnish her house, speak Portuguese and cook meals for Jose and the narrator. Holly seems to be happy though she admits that Jose is not her ideal man. She is more than happy to leave behind her glamorous chic life as she feels immense satisfaction in loving and caring for Jose. Holly confesses to the narrator, ". . . I do love Jose I'd stop smoking if he asked me to. He's friendly, he can laugh me out of the mean reds, only I don't have them much anymore . . . I take his suit to the cleaner, or stuff some mushrooms, and I feel fine, just great". (83) Holly finds it obligatory to "settle down" despite her wish to transcend the societal limitations.

This sharp deviation in the character of Holly Golightly from the nonchalant, fickle-minded woman to the apparently stable, conventional figure is highly representative of a postmodern subject position that is constantly shifting with a "replaced identity". As Anderson observes, "The postmodern person is a multi-community person, and his or her life as a social being is based on adjusting to shifting

contexts and being true to divergent and occasionally conflicting commitments.”(124)Holly Golightly is a true representative of this makeshift identity where the transformation is often appalling to the readers. Her transition from a married woman who “didn't have to lift a finger, 'cept to eat a piece of pie. 'cept to comb her hair and send away for all magazines”(69) to a socialite with “ragbag coloured boy's hair”(12) and “chic thinness”(12), and finally to carelessly dressed, content with domesticity kind of home maker. The character of Holly is continually made and re-made in collaboration with others. At the end of the novella, the postcard that narrator receives from Holly, informs that she has returned to her older promiscuous life using men for their money, unable and unwilling to find a stable home. Throughout the novella, Holly make choices about the role that she must take up or adapt to, and how much and when.

Holly can be compared to the figure from the Greek mythology, Proteus, who was able to change his shape to whatever he wished, from wild boar to lion to dragon to fire to flood. Proteus found it impossible to be in a single form, unless seized and chained. In this context, Holly is a modern Protean who defies a static, stable identity. This Protean style is characterized by different kinds of identity, some shallow, some profound meeting the demands of the situation. These Protean transformations could be abandoned anytime in favour of something new. This pattern is what Erik Erikson calls, “identity diffusion” or “identity confusion”. This Protean style is an indispensable aspect of Holly's character, the functional patterns necessary for her existence. In fact, the Protean people cannot belong to a place, and they cannot have a home, which is very much true in the case of Holly Golightly. Though Holly claims that she loves to belong to a place like she Triffany's, she makes no genuine attempts to root herself to that place.

The Protean person has a particular kind of relationship with the ideologies propagated during his time. Robert Jay Lifton observes that:

Protean man has a particular relationship to the holding of ideas, which I think has great significance for the politics, religion, and general intellectual life of the future. Just as elements of the self can be experimented with and readily altered, so can idea systems and ideologies be embraced, modified, let go of and reembraced. . .(127-128)

Though Holly transcended the rigid sexual boundaries, she was forced to succumb to the prevailing ideology that demanded of a domestic house wife. The transformation that Holly undergoes is appalling when she yields to the approved societal behaviour expected of a woman of the decade. She acquiesces to the prevalent notion of “settling down” though she was a kind of person who always tried to escape the conventional existence. The ideological manifestation seems to be oscillating as far as Holly is concerned. Holly alters her idea systems when she embraces the dominant ideology by deciding to be a typical housewife of the era, while disregards the same when she transgresses the moral authority.

Holly is caught in a tug of war wherein she is drawn by both “the impulse toward orthodoxy and the impulse toward progressivism”. (Hunter 92) According to James Davison Hunter, an orthodoxy approach is characterized by “. . . the commitment on the part of adherents to an external, definable, and transcendent authority. . . it tells us what is good, what is true, how we should live, and who we are.”(93) Such an authority is the propagator of personal and collective value, goodness and identity. However, for progressivism, the defining factors of morality include subjectivism, rationalism and the *zeitgeist*. Hunter says, “What all progressivist world views share in common is the tendency to resymbolize historic faiths according to the prevailing assumptions of contemporary life”. (92) In the novella, we see Golightly waging war against the conventional notions and morality. Besides, she tries to inculcate her progressive attitude, particularly her attitude of liberal sexuality, to her fellow beings. On the contrary, in the latter part of the novella, Holly Golightly transforms herself into a domestic housewife, to fit into the society. The narrator elucidates this transformation as “un-Holly-like enthusiasm”. “A keen sudden un-Holly-like enthusiasm for homemaking resulted in several un-Holly-like purchases. . .” (80) And narrator observes that Golightly was happy at the new prospects of life.

Inferentially, Holly Golightly is part of a postmodern cultural conflict wherein the people or



organizations oscillate in their allegiances to conservatism and progressivism. As Hunter observes, "At the heart of the new cultural realignment are the pragmatic alliances being formed across faith traditions." (95) In a decade of culture war, the people tend to take conservative stand on some issues and liberal positions on others. The sexually progressive attitude that Golightly displays in the first half of the novella is in stark contrast to the conservative role that she takes upon at the prospect of her marriage to Jose. When Holly allows Jose to move into her apartment, she "cages" herself, something she claimed she wouldn't ever do to herself or to others. The narrator says that "she hibernated like a winter animal who did not know spring had come and gone. Her hair darkened leaving into memories her signature multi-coloured hair." (80) The narrator observes that, despite her consistent efforts, she doesn't really fit into her new attire of domestic wife. Unlike her role as a geisha, the glamorous socialite, the new role of dutiful wife fits badly on her. But she seems to be content and happy about the turn of events. Golightly is the classic example of Erikson's description of identity diffusion, which lacks a firm sense of the self. Holly Golightly is a person who moulds herself into the "made identity" rather than fitting herself into the "found identity" fixed by the social role or tradition. Golightly deviated from the "found morality" of the culture she belonged to, and revelled in the "made morality" of her choice.

### Conclusion

As Fahy says, "For Capote, Holly symbolized the growing number of young women seeking social and sexual autonomy". Holly pursues after wealthy men to gain financial security, which is an essential ingredient to lead an autonomous single life. But the cultural and historical significances and privileges attributed to marriage, and the conception of marriage as the sole private place of sexual behaviour, forces the impulsive, flighty Holly to succumb to the ideology of domesticity in America.

Holly is invariably a Proteus who thrives by replaceable identity or "identity diffusion" as Erikson puts it. However, the Protean self of Holly Golightly is seized and chained when she struggle to adapt to the role as the dutiful, domestic housewife. But Holly fails desperately in her Protean guises and she is compelled to leave the country. She confesses to the narrator that, "Even if a jury gave me the Purple Heart, this neighbourhood holds no future. . ." (103)

The cold war era with its rigid cultural significances deny a lasting place for people who reject or resist the ideology. Holly's progressive sexual attitude tampered with the traditional restricted gender roles of wives and mothers who acquiesces domesticity to ward off extended bachelorhood, homosexuality and sex outside marriage. Holly Golightly is a modern Proteus who transforms inevitably according to the prevailing circumstances. She decides what and how she should be at any particular point of time. Fahy rightly deduces that, "Her last name (Golightly) further implies the ease with which she moves from one identity (one place) to another. As suggested by her unfurnished apartment and the word "travelling" on her Tiffany cards, she defines herself by movement, particularly the ability to pack up and go at a moment's notice". (190)

For Holly, freedom encapsulates her choices to alter the identity whenever she desires for. This fluid identity manifests in many ways as: she seeks domestic stability but constantly eludes from it, she yearns to find a place like Tiffany's but never really tries to find one. Holly's Protean self suggests that transformation is imperative as far as a postmodern culture war scenario is concerned. Holly's notion of sexuality as a natural and indispensable part of human identity voices the need for a pluralistic culture that cultivates an attitude of inclusiveness and acceptance. As Aberra argues Holly is a "floating signifier" (6) and "she is capable of representing anything" (Aberra 6).

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## HISTORICITY OF OPIUM CULTIVATION, TRADE AND WAR IN AMITAV GHOSH'S *IBIS* TRILOGY

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### **Abstract:**

The acclaimed Indian novelist Amitav Ghosh novels tend to be transnational. He has written many novels in the historical fiction genre. His *Ibis* trilogy comprises three voluminous novels, *Sea of Poppies*, *River of Smoke* and *Flood of Fire* (SOP, ROS, and FOF) which runs about 1,700 lines focusing Opium war history. The study analyzes the trilogy, focusing on its historicity and provides a comprehensive understanding of the texts. In general, historicity is the historical actuality of persons and events. It focuses on the truth value of knowledge and claims about the past denoting historical actuality. Historical evidences authenticate the facts and help to prove the historicity of the text. The trilogy depicts the cultivation of poppies, transportation of opium from India to China, and Opium War respectively. Apart from opium trade and war, British imperialism, policies of British over China, Commissioner Lien's measures to stop opium in China have been written in detail in the trilogy. Though trilogy is produced in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the story is about British colonization and particularly narrates pre-Opium War situations and Opium War. Therefore, analysis of the *Ibis* trilogy in its historical context can disclose the relationship between the text and its historicity.

**Key words:** *Opium trade, imperialism, ibis trilogy, opium war, commissioner lin.*

Opium was well known in Chinese antiquity. The wide spread use of opium in China dates to 17<sup>th</sup> century. As opium induced gentle, subtle, dream-like hallucinations, it was heavily used in China as a recreational drug. By offering a merciful relief from dirty and backbreaking works, opium-smoking, became an integral part of Chinese culture. Chinese officials were alarmed at the increase in number of opium addicts. In 1839, the Qing Emperor, Tao Kwang, ordered his minister Lin Tse-hsu to take action and abolish the trade. Lin's petition to Queen Victoria was ignored. In reaction, the Emperor instructed the confiscation of 20,000 barrels of opium and detained some foreign traders. The British retaliated by attacking the port-city of Canton. The First Opium War was thus launched and the most aggressive drug cartel, the British Empire, defeated the Chinese. Chinese were forced to sign the Treaty of Nanjing in 1842. The British wished to continue opium trade and large settlement was expected by the British. Chinese were asked to open five new ports to foreign trade and that China ceded Hong Kong to Britain.

The pervasive historicity makes the trilogy highly readable. Ghosh presents copious details about the pre history of opium war. After Walter publication of Scott's *Waverley*, historical fiction is noted not just for the escape from present but for the instruction from the past. Ghosh successfully dramatized the history behind opium war. The cultivation of poppies in Bihar and Bengal for Chinese market was dealt in depth. As a trained anthropologist, Ghosh's fiction is generously layered with facts. *Ibis* trilogy focuses on the Opium War history. *Sea of Poppies* focuses on the cultivation, production and trade of opium. *River of Smoke* indulges in the sea voyage of opium transportation from India to China. *Flood of Fire* highlights the circumstances that led to First Opium War and war craft used by the British. The paper highlights

historical depiction of opium cultivation, trade and war.

*Sea of Poppies* the first volume of the epic saga narrates in detail about the poppies cultivation, opium production, opium factory, and opium trade and addiction. Characters had been spun around poppies. The monopolistic East India Company did not allow the farmers to grow food for their own consumption. The British appetite for tea compelled the peasants to grow opium and havocked the Gangetic plains. Under a contract, a large scale of enforced farming of opium took place. The British Sahibs offered low returns for the poppy crops. Bengal poppies were sold by East India Company to China. In China, opium addicted great number of Chinese and a huge profit was enjoyed by the tradesmen. Deeti, a prime character of *Sea of Poppies* indulged in poppies cultivation. She lived on the outskirts of the town of Ghazipur, some fifty miles east of Banaras. Poppies were cultivated in her land, because of East India Company. The novel highlighted the vast poppy plantation and its usage in the day today activities. Deeti used poppy petals and poppy seed paste in cooking. "Dish of stale alu-posth, potatoes cooked in poppy-seed paste." (SOP 7) She also used poppy seed oil to massage her daughter Kabutri's hair and packed wheat flour rotis to her husband using poppies petal wrappers. After her marriage, she found her husband Hukam Singh to be an opium addict. She was given opium in the first day of her marital life. Thus, Poppies played a vital role in her life.

Opium cultivation is dealt in detail in the chapters of *Sea of Poppies*. Growing poppies is a tedious process, "fifteen ploughings of the land and every remaining clod to be broken by hand, with a dantoli: fences and bunds to be built; purchases of manure and constant watering; and after all that, the frenzy of the harvest, each bulb having to be individually nicked, drained and scraped." (SOP 29) Hence, farmers preferred growing more useful crops like wheat, dal and vegetables to avoid the multiply of labor in poppies cultivation. But, British Sahibs did not allow farmers to grow other crops because their appetite for opium seemed never to be sated. As the Sahibs gave cash advances, poor Indian farmers were forced to cultivate poppies. It became impossible for the farmers to say no to the silver thrown through their windows. If the farmers refused, British sahibs would punish them with their forged thumbprint. Unable to stand against the government farmers cultivated poppies and sold it to Patna merchants. The white magistrates gained commissions on the opium and the farmers were made to sign in contracts to cultivate poppies. "Making them signasami contracts" (SOP 30). At the end of the harvest the peasants got only a small amount which was insufficient to meet their needs. Deeti had planned to repair the roof after the harvest. She received a rude surprise when her proceeds were enough to cover only the debt. She was given only six dams which were not enough to feed her child. When she worried, she was advised to go to a moneylender. Deeti thumb printed in Seth's account book and bought provisions for the home. The rate of interest was high and she understood that the land would be forfeited within few years. "His rates were such that her debt would double every six year". (SOP 156) Farmers could earn profit if they cultivated some other crops but the British made it could not happen. Poor farmers were thus penalized by the British policies of growing opium. Thus, the fertile lands of Bengal and Bihar were forced fully to grow poppy. The cotton fields of India were transformed into poppy fields. Gangetic plains in which the poppies were cultivated appeared like poppies' sea. Thus, the title *Sea of Poppies* could be justified.

The poppies traded by the Bengal peasants were taken to the opium factories like Sudder Opium Factory, Ghazipur, and Patna Factory where opium is manufactured. Processing of opium in India began with the setting up of the opium factory in 1820 in Ghazipur. Named after Saiyyed Masood Ghazi of Tughlaq dynasty in 1330 AD, Ghazipur is a small town on the banks of river Ganga and it is in the eastern part of Uttarpradesh. World's largest Ghazipur opium factory, with a rich historical background, has been narrated in detail in *Sea of Poppies*. The factory had financed British Raj in India as the single largest opium producers in the world. On the banks of holy Ganga the factory at present has a workforce of about 900 staff members. The factory still carries red brick, thick walled structures, unique shaped water tank and solar watch installed by opium agent Hopkins Eson.

The 43- acre Ghazipur opium factory continues to be a major source of opium production in India till now. It was established by the British in 1820 and still stands largest in the country, indeed in the world. East India Company ran the factory during opium wars. Narcotics Drugs and Psychotropic Substance Act and Rules legally control it now and Ministry of Finance administrates it. In 1888, Rudyard Kipling, visited the Ghazipur factory and published a description of its working in the newspaper *Pioneer* published on 16<sup>th</sup> April 1888. Since the day of establishment the factory has been a profitable one. *Sea of Poppies* describes the factory in detail. The huge process involved in the transformation of poppies to opium is narrated by describing various rooms like drying room, assembly room and weighing sheds of the factory.

Deeti's visit to the Ghazipur opium factory clearly had pictured the process involved in opium production. She went to the factory to bring home her ill husband Hukam Singh with the help of Kalua, a cart-man. "The factory was immense: Its premises covered forty-five acres and sprawled over two adjoining compounds, each with numerous courtyards, water tanks and iron roofed sheds"(SOP 90). Taken aback by the vastness of factory's dimensions, Deeti went inside the iron roofed structure which was bigger than the weighing shed. She saw a tunnel lit only by a few small holes in the wall. She smelled the liquid opium. While entering the mixing room Deeti witnessed the hard work of the workers. "They were bare-bodied men, sunk waist deep in tanks of opium tramping round and round to soften the sludge. Their eyes were vacant, glazed, and yet somehow they managed to keep moving as slow as ants in honey, tramping, treading"(SOP 95). At the wetting shed, poppy leaf wrappers were dampened before being sent into the assembly room. Deeti wondered at the hugeness of weighing room. She saw English overseers all over in the factory ordering the laborers. Following the orders the boys tossed spheres of opium to each other. The offenders who missed to catch the sphere, was punished terribly by the cane wielding overseers. Deeti was haunted by such scenes portraying British imperialism. An article published in Bihar times, titled '*A visit to Gazipur factories ...Sea of Surprises*' digs deep into the footnotes and supports the historicity of the factory. The article highlights that the trilogy has made the readers aware of the fact that it was Ghazipur opium factory which had financed British Raj.

Opium was then transferred from the factories to Calcutta by the river Ganga. The East India Company auctioned it off to the English and Indian merchants. They then shipped the opium to China and made huge profit by selling them. Not only the English Merchants but also the Parsi business community of India heavily engaged in the trade. Parsi merchants monopolized the opium trade to and around the first opium war. They forged ahead establishing their businesses in India and overseas as favored Indian citizens of British. Author Dosabhai Framji Karaka, in his 1884 book 'History of the Parsis' mentioned that it was the eastern trade which brought the Parsis a mine of wealth. According to Karaka, every business community tried, but the Parsis cracked the opium trade. Businessman like JamsetjeeJejeebjoy was a Parsi-Indian merchant. He was more historically notable for making a huge fortune on the opium trade. Central Municipal Library and David Sasson Library in Mumbai were financed by such philanthropic businessmen engaged in opium trade. Opium traders amassed huge wealth.

Along with the traders the Zamindars also took part in opium trade. They invested their money in the trade and made an indirect participation. In *Sea of Poppies* Neel Ratan Halder's father, the old Raja of Raskhali gave money to Mr. Burnham, a British trader. He had a headquarters in Kolkata, to augment the consignments of his agency. Every year the Raja got back a large sum as a profit. Raja would refer to these profits as his tribute from the "Faghfoor of Maha-Chin-the Emperor of Greater China". (SOP 85) The opium market got expanded and the Raja made handsome profits on their investments. Then, Raja decided to venture for one lakh sicca rupees since the trade seemed to be hugely profitable. He borrowed money from Burnham as an advance and invested in the trade. "in the past two decades there had never been a single year when their money had not come back with a large increase" (SOP 86). The profit attracted friends and relatives of the Raja and they showed their interest in investing their money in opium trade. A large numbers of usage of opium resulted profit for both Indian and European traders.



Opium was widely used in 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries in Britain. Hawkers sold opium freely in towns and markets. “Until 1868, the sale of drugs was practically unrestricted, and they could be bought like any other commodity”. (Mitchell 228) Victorian and pre-Victorian artists and writers used opium for recreational purpose. It also has its literary legacy. Thomas De Quincy has described the non-medical use of opiates in his book *Confessions of an Opium-Eater* written in the year 1834. The most popular opium derivative was laudanum, a tincture of opium mixed with wine or water. Laudanum was used in Victorian households as a painkiller. Notable Victorians, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Charles Dickens, George Eliot, Gabriel Dante Rossetti, Willkie Collins had used it. It is also believed that Coleridge composed his famous poem 'Kubla Khan' in a dream induced by laudanum. Opium and its derivatives were marketed as a medicine and recreational drug throughout Asia. Women made a substantial part of the addiction. A number of drugs containing opium or its derivatives cured female troubles associated with menstruation and childbirth. Female maladies like depression and mood swings were also cured by such drugs. The derivatives were used to calm the children. Cocaine, another derivative of opium had its own therapeutic effects. It was used as an anesthetic and treatments of indigestion. In Britain, the effects of this coca wine were praised, amongst others, by Queen Victoria, Rudyard Kipling, and Edward Elgar. Mr. Burnham stated about the usage of opium to Neel.

“It would be well nigh impossible to practice modern medicine or surgery without such chemicals as morphine, codeine and narcotine -and these are but a few of the blessings derived from opium. In the absence of gripe water our children would not sleep. And what would our ladies-why, our beloved Queen herself do without laudanum?”(SOP 116)

Because of its wide usage, Portuguese started the trade to China but the British had become the major opium trafficker in the world. H. B. Morse's *Chronicles of the East India Company trading to China, 1635-1834* published by Clarendon in the year 1926 and M. Greemberg's *British Trade and the opening of China 1800-42* published by Cambridge University Press in 1951 pictured the pre opium war histories. Chinese officials abetted the trade by taking their own cut. Consumption of opium in China skyrocketed such as profits. The Chinese Emperor got alarmed by the millions of drug addicts. He appointed imperial commissioner Lien Zexu. Lin started instituting laws to ban opium throughout China. His measures made Mr. Burnham, an opium trader to fail to generate profits for his clients. He lamented that the opium trade had met resistance from the authorities as trafficking in opium considered illegal. Hence, he asked Neel Ratan Halder, son of old raja of Raskhali to repay the debts. Neel did not accept the idea of selling the Raskhali lands, so he was arrested for his forgery and penalized to go to Mauritius as a laborer.

Free trade was a policy followed by international markets in which countries did not restrict imports from, or exports to, other countries. The free trade notion was originated in Spain. However, the modern form was developed by British economists Adam Smith and David Ricardo. In Britain, free trade had been practiced in 1840s. Under the Treaty of Nanking, China opened five ports to world trade in 1843. Britain waged two Opium Wars to force China to legalize the opium trade and to open all of China to British merchants. During pre opium war scenario, it was predicted that war would take place emphasizing free trade. Ghosh portrayed the condition through the words of Mr. Burnham when predictions about the war were done among Mr. Burnham, Mr. Justice Kendalbushe and Captain Chilling worth in Mr. Burnham's house.

“The war, when it comes, will not be for opium. It will be for a principle: for freedom-for the freedom of trade and for the freedom of the Chinese people. Free trade is a right conferred on Man by God, and its principles apply as much to opium as to any other article of trade”. (SOP 115)

*River of Smoke* describes the forgotten histories of the people who were affected by the opium trade. The trilogy effortlessly moved from India- the country of opium production, to China-the centre of its trade. The storm-tossed characters were followed to the crowded harbors of China. Ships from Europe

and India exchanged their cargoes of opium for boxes of tea, silk and porcelain despite efforts of the Chinese emperor. Among them, Seth BahramModi was the Parsi opium trader from Bombay, whose story of opium trade was the primary focus of the novel. He was married into the Mistrrie family of Bombay. He tried to persuade his wealthy father-in-law who could help him to get into the opium trade with China. He explained how the greatest profits in business come from selling useless things. Eventually, his Sassraji-Seth Rustamjee agreed and financed his trip to Canton where he became a leading player in the opium trade.

“Today the biggest profits don't come from selling useful things: quite the opposite. The profits come from selling things that are not of any real use. Look at this new kind of white sugar that people are bringing from China-this thing they call 'cheeni'. Is it any sweeter than honey or palm-jaggery? No, but people pay twice as much for it or even more. Look at all the money that people are making from selling rum and gin. Are these any better than our own toddy and wine and sharaab? No, but people want them. Opium is just like that. It is completely useless unless you're sick, but still people want it. And it is such a thing that once people start using it they can't stop; the market just gets larger and larger. That is why the British are trying to take over the trade” (ROS 51)

By exporting opium, Bahram amassed huge wealth. Once, his in laws wanted to sell the export division as they had learnt about the total ban on opium imports. They considered it was the period of prolonged uncertainty, of which many Bombay businessmen were washing their hands of the China trade. But Bahram believed that the situation would offer an unmatched commercial opportunity. He had doubled and tripled his investments to China. He bought *Anahita*, a trading ship from his brothers-in-law and planned to ship an unusually large consignment of opium and expected a great deal of money. Bahram learnt that a group of senior mandarins had recommended the legalization of the opium trade. He believed that the demand of opium would get increased if it acted upon. Hence, he stocked his entire life's work into a final shipment of opium even after the Chinese government banned opium trade. Unfortunately, the pre-war situation affected the life of Bahram.

Though Bahram was intelligent, capable and a gifted entrepreneur, he fell into to the mercy of forces of politics and history. Canton opium traders were prevented from disposing of their cargo. The traders were forced to await developments in the stand-off between the Chinese authorities and the forces of free trade. Bahram suffered as a disadvantaged person. Bahram assigned the job to his new Munshi Neel to know the decisions of Chinese and British governments. “What you have to do is to read two English journals that are published in Canton. One is called the Canton Register and another is the Chinese Repository.” (ROS 132)

Ghosh pays attention in drafting even the minute details of historical saga like the names of the newspapers prevailed during pre war time at China. The evidences document the facts. Ghosh has acknowledged such documents at the end of the book. Historicity of the text is emphasized all over. The *Canton Register* was an English language newspaper founded by Scottish merchants James Matheson and his nephew Alexander. “First published in Canton on November 8, 1827 and printed every two weeks, it was one of the China's first English newspapers”.( Pichon 67) *The Chinese Repository* was a periodical published in Canton between May 1832 and 1851 to inform Protestant missionaries working in Asia about the history and culture of China, of current events, and documents. (Micahel 199) The *Canton Register* was both newsy and polemical and was therefore of more interest to Bahram. The ill effects of the opium were brought out to the public in the news excerpts.

“Opium is a poisonous drug, brought from foreign countries. To the question, what are its virtues, the answer is: it raises the animal spirits and prevents lassitude. Hence the Chinese continually run into its toils. At first they merely strive to follow the fashion of the day; but in the sequel the poison takes effect, the habit becomes fixed, and the sleeping smokers are

like corpses-lean and haggard as demons....There cannot be a greater evil than this. In comparison with arsenic I pronounce it tenfold the greater poison.” (ROS 133)

Well known opium trading companies had been discussed in *River of Smoke*. In 1844, Jardine Matheson &co was established to trade opium in Canton. It had become the largest foreign trading companies. Jardine pushed aggressively to expand Chinese opium market and played a leading role in the Canton trade. William Jardine was a merchant who co-founded Jardine Matheson and Company. Through his success, as a commercial agent for the opium merchants he controlled the firm. When the imperial Chinese Commissioner Lin Zexu destroyed 20,000 cases of British-owned opium in 1839, Jardine arrived in London to make a forceful response. Ghosh mentioned about Jardine through MrKarabedian. “MrKarabedian says he came to Canton as a doctor but tired of medicine and went into the Trade instead. He has made millions through it, mainly by selling opium.” (ROS 213) Thus, Jardine had become the uncrowned King of opium trade. Details of the trading companies support the historicity of the text.

China had experimented with cruel and unusual punishments. Han Fei's legalism dominated Chinese law. Its punishments for crimes would be harsh. Petty Crimes like minor theft was punished by public whipping. China is famous for its varieties and use of wooden collars and cages called *Cangue*. It was a device that was used for public humiliation and corporal punishment. People wearing cangues starve to death as they were unable to feed themselves. Duhaime's *China- a Legal History* describes the different types of punishments practiced in China. Ghosh had mentioned about persons tied at *Cangue* as they indulged in opium trading. Democratic societies later banned such practices. In *River of Smoke* Punhyqua, an opium tradesman was punished. “A cangue on Punhyqua! Bahram shook his head in disbelief. A man worth at least ten million silver dollars ? The world has gone mad. Mad.” (ROS 334) Bahram had a vision of himself, in Punhyqua's place. Bahram's heart almost seized up. He could not imagine a public humiliation for himself when he remembered his daughters and his wife Shireenbai.

Commissioner Lin's opposition to the opium trade became the primary catalyst for the First Opium War. As a bureaucrat he was known for his high moral standards. He was appointed as a Commissioner by the Daoguang Emperor to halt the illegal importation of opium. “In March 1839, Lin arrived on Guangdong Province to take measure that would eliminate the opium trade.” (Lovell 53) He arrested more than thousand Chinese Opium dealers. 26<sup>th</sup> June is now the International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit trafficking in honour of Lin's work. He argued in his letter to the Queen that Britain was sending only poison in return to the valuable commodities such as tea, porcelain, spices and silk. He accused the barbarians who had the objective of coveting profit. Every day the traders experienced an edict to add their uncertainty. There was confusion everywhere. Captain Elliot openly spoke against the Chinese government. He pointed that rules were so hard and it made the river transport highly impossible. It had also encouraged the smuggling of opium. Captain Elliot also dispatched a petition to the Governor of Canton.

Lin was an important historical character narrated in the trilogy. His remedial measures were much discussed amidst the public. Commissioner Lin took his second post in Hukwang and he launched a massive campaign to eradicate opium. He had become an expert on opium trafficking. His report on opium to the emperor was quite comprehensive. Compton, the owner of the print shop of *Register* discussed about Lin to Neel.

“Lin Zexu not likes other mandarin. He is a good man, honest man- best officer in country. Wherever there is trouble, there he is sent. He never takes cumshaw, nothing-jan-hai! He becomes Governor of Kiangsi while he is still very young. In two years he stops all opium trade in that province. People there call him Lin Ch'ing-t'ien-that means “Lin the Clear Sky” (ROS 267).

Chinese Emperor Dao Guang of Qing Dynasty outlawed the possession, use and trade of the opium in order to decrease the number of addicts. He ordered to close the Guangdong (canton) port to close to all

opium traffic. Bahram observed that things had changed in China from the moment he entered the Pearl River. He used to leave *Anahita* at Lintin Island on making the voyage from India. Because of the emperor's preventive measures he could not witness a single ship at the Island. In years past, opium was spirited away by fast crabs from the decks of those masts less vessels. To watch those slim, powerful boats shooting through the water had once been one of the most thrilling sights of the Pearl River. Since the pre war scenario was discussed in the new papers Bahram had left *Anahita* at Hong Kong. Both British and Indian traders waited for the opportunity to sell their cargo. Bahram wrote a letter to his investors expressing prevailing situation in China. "Canton markets had been very dull because of certain policies pursued by the present Governor". (ROS 257)

The chamber discussed the situations that prevailed in China. Millions of people including monks, generals, housewives, soldiers, mandarins and students had become slaves to opium. Corruption also went with the addiction. Hundreds of officials were paid bribes in order to continue the trade. It had been found that China increased the export of opium to tenfold over thirty years. The increase of opium alarmed the government. The Emperor made rigorous steps to eradicate the addiction. Hundreds of opium-dealers were arrested. Some had been thrown in prison and some were executed. During the raid, the tradesmen would be expelled from China if the Chinese official confiscated opium inside the boat. The Chinese Commissioner Lin's measures to get rid of opium started to create fear about their investments among the traders. A letter to Queen Victoria was sent by Commissioner Lin.

*Flood of Fire*, the third volume of *Ibis* trilogy depicts the tragic end of Seth Bahram who was tormented by the Chinese measures to stop the opium trade. His cargoes worth millions of dollars were destructed. He would be declared as bankrupt as his Bombay creditors were still unpaid. "Bahram was among the biggest losers; his entire cargo had been seized and destroyed-a consignment that he had bought mostly with borrowed money." (FOF 41) Hence, he committed suicide by falling from the deck of *Anahita*. Pre-war scenario was brought out through the discussion of the characters. Bahram had left nothing but debts. His flagship, *Anahita* had been sold off to Benjamin Burnham, an English businessman, for a price far below the vessel's value. Shireenbai, Seth Bahram's wife tried to recover her husband's investments. Several British men's goods were seized by Commissioner Lin. Bahram was the only Indian merchant stood in the same queue. Vico, Bahram's assistant, told Shireen that the British had planned to send a military expedition to China to demand reparations. Bahram's money would be returned if the Chinese lost in the war. Mr. Jardine already represented the situation to the British government. "It was rumored that on Jardine's advice the British government was preparing to send an expeditionary force to China. The seizure of the opium was to be their reason for declaring war so it was quite certain that they would demand reparations". (FOF 77) Rumors about British military expedition to China started spreading. It was believed that the military troop would include Indian sepoy. British already used Indian sepoy for their previous expeditions. "Captain Elliot had written to the British Governor-General in Calcutta, in April this year asking for an armed force to be assembled for an expedition to China." (FOF 45)

*Flood of fire* links many characters as it is the end volume of *Ibis* trilogy. Kesri Singh- brother of Deeti, Zachery Reid who was blamed for the *Ibis* mutiny, Shireenbai wife of Seth Bahram, Mrs. Burnham were the prime characters around which the novel revolves. Shireen meets her husband's illegal son Ah Fatt, Neel meets his wife and son Raju, Seran Ali meets Zachery, Paulette- meets Jodu. But, the historical context still focuses on the opium war.

Mr. Burnham and Zachery discussed about the expedition. Mr. Burnham believed that the new port would soon waylay the trade. "Reid: although this expedition is trifling in size, it will create a revolution". (FOF 283) Neel had learnt the status of British through newspapers. *Singapore Chronicle* announced that a British fleet had arrived to Singapore from Calcutta. "There are six warships including one that is very big, armed with seventy-four guns. There are also two steamers and twenty transport ships, carrying soldiers and stores. Many of the soldiers are Indians" (FOF 331). The news had come to a great shock to



Commissioner Lin who did not expect a war. He believed that British opium merchants would not get the government support. It became unimaginable as the British country sending an army to force to China to buy opium. More than three thousand soldiers reached Singapore. British relied heavily on Indian sepoys in their Asian expeditions. It was proved in the British campaigns of Arakan and Burma. Chinese forces to resist the English fleet would be hard as the British had huge war ships. Chinese would be taught a lesson at the end of the war. The British soldiers conducted many drills on land as well as water and got ready to attack China.

British fleet decided to use a weapon called 'Congreve rocket'. Though Chinese had rockets for centuries, they had used them as fireworks, not for military purposes. Rockets were first used by Sultan Haider Ali and his son Tipu Sultan of Mysore during their wars with the East India Company. To cause panic in Chinese province more than dozens of ships were anchored around the Pearl River. Chinese found their war-junks would not be able to oppose the British on water. Fighting on the land also became tough as they had only few thousand soldiers. Commissioner Lin decided to use the ordinary people in the war. He distributed spears, swords and other weapons among them. Even the boatmen were recruited to serve for the country. He announced rewards for enemy ships, officers and soldiers. "For the top British officer the reward will be five thousand silver dollars if taken alive; one-third if dead" (FOF 344) Captain Elliot rendezvoused with Commodore Bremer. They have followed a strategy and split the expeditionary force into two wings. The first wing blocked the Pearl River whereas the other large wing tried to seize the Chusan Island. The fleet looked impressive with its masts, flags and pennants. The fleet appeared like a great fortress which had arisen out of the water. On the southern side the fleet was guarded by twenty-eight-gun frigate, *Alligator*.

"Twenty warships were at anchor there, including three seventy-four-gun men-o'-war, *Wellesley*, *Melville* and *Blenheim*; two forty-four gun frigates, *Druid* and *Blonde*, and no fewer than four steamers. Clustered around them were twenty-six transport and supply vessels with names like *Futty Salaam*, *Hooghly*, *Rahmany*, *Sulimany*, *Rustomjee Cowasjee* and *Nazareth Shah*". (FOF 353)

Though the Plenipotentiaries had tried to persuade the local men to surrender without fight, Chinese declared to resist. The British warships opened fire and within ten minutes they had seized the capital Ting-hae of Chusan Island. Ghosh had made a meticulous study of history of opium war. The warship *Enterprize* and its attack were described. The emperor learnt the real condition of Chinese. Captain Elliot delivered the letter to the emperor. The contents of the letter expected six million Spanish dollars and an Island in compensation for the opium that Commissioner Lin had confiscated. "In addition they had demanded an island be ceded to them, as a trading base" (FOF 398).

Common people started to feel the effects of war. They talked about traitors, rebels, and merchants. Two months after the battle at Macau, Commissioner Lin had been removed from his post without any forewarning or notification. The emperor sent a letter to Lin's deputy stating him as Lin's successor. Qishan replaced him. British fleet decided to negotiate with Qishan, the new viceroy of Guangdong. Meanwhile, the more warships joined the British fleet. *Nemesis* the ironclad steamer, stroke terror into the Chinese. She was the first British ocean-going iron warship, used to great effect in the First Opium War. The Chinese referred to her as the "devil ship" (Lincoln 115).

The outbreaks of the war resulted in the sickness and disease among the soldiers. "Epidemics of fevers and other diseases had broken out; hundreds of sepoys and soldiers had been struck down by chronic, uncontrollable dysentery". (FOF 404) The aftermath of war was so cruel some. The sight of the war sickened Kesri. He had seen many battles in his service of soldiering. The war appeared more crucial. He saw ample evidences of the massacre.

"Bodies lay in piles around the craters where heavy shells had exploded; along the bottom of the ramparts lay the corpses of Chinese soldiers who had been felled by crumbling

masonry... Here and there splattered brains could be seen dribbling down like smashed egg-yolks” (FOF 471).

The massive attack of warships, explosions and the massacres made the new Governor-General Qishan capitulated. He had consent to the demands of the British, a sum of six million silver dollars, as compensation for the confiscated opium by Lin. The island of Hong Kong which was known as 'Red Incense Burner Hill' in the official document of Chinese was given to the British. Ghosh has successfully narrated the story of opium war in his *Ibis* trilogy. History got evenly blended with the fiction. Ghosh has acknowledged the archives, books and journals which he had meticulously researched for producing these great pieces of art. Ghazipur opium factory, Allipore jail, Zemindary system, trade ships, Parsi opium traders, Chinese opium addiction, Commissioner Lin's measures to abolish opium, Indian sepoy's participation in the war, warships, and first opium war described were the real historical situations prevailed. Captain Elliot, Commissioner Lin Zexu, Jardine, Lancelot, were some of the real characters dealt in *Ibis* trilogy. Neel's Archives which are documented in the epilogue of the trilogy, evidences the historicity of the text. The study has analysed the historical context of *Ibis* trilogy and the evidences support the historicity of the text. Thus, the study concludes that Opium war history has been detailed in Amitav Ghosh's *Ibis* trilogy.

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## THE QUEST FOR AFRICAN RENAISSANCE IN JOHN HENRIK CLARK'S *THE BOY WHO PAINTED CHRIST BLACK*

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### **Abstract:**

*Exceptionally brilliant in exposing the ethnocentrism of White colonizers who forced their ideology via culture onto the colonized land, the short story by John Henrik Clark opens the window to wide range of possibilities in the Ethnic studies of African-Americans and their quest for a self-reliant identity. An aesthetic attempt which seeks to maintain and highlight traditional African culture and sensibilities is seen in the short story in the way of representing the painting of Jesus Christ in an African ethnic cultural pattern. Traditional White ideology in focusing on a specific Western model is rejected by substituting it with an African model of Christ which provokes the ethnocentric hierarchy. This paper attempts to showcase ethnocentrism, the White ideology against the African-Americans that is expressed in the short story, and the counter reaction utilizing the attitude of countering for an identity on the backdrop of movements like Harlem Renaissance and Négritude. Cultural relativism explains why and how the Christ figure had a different identity to the African Americans. Adjusting and blindly accepting a dominant culture without projecting a self-reliant identity does not help in the progress of any ethnic community, rather the difference has to be sorted out to express their way of representation which helps to find a space among the divergent ideological identities.*

**Keywords:** *Ethnic studies, ethnocentrism, cultural relativism, negritude, harlem renaissance.*

Of historically been descended from African roots for slavery from 1619 onwards, the race of African Americans had been subjected to intense racial discrimination and subjugation for satisfying the American Dream of wealth for the settlers. Ships from different parts of Africa loaded with an incessant number of African slaves reached the ports of America. The highest number of manpower was dealt with west central Africa. As the northern states of America empowered themselves through urbanization and industrialization, the southern states relied on agriculture which demanded the rise in slavery. The American Civil war from 1861 to 1865 marked the full-fledged fight in the name of slaves and slavery. Though the rights and freedom were granted to the black African-Americans, recognizing them as equal citizens with equal priority along with the White settlers of America, the group of black African Americans is still under threat of racial and ethnic attacks related to their colour and origin. Despite been recognized as equal citizens, the black citizens face discrimination. John Henrik Clark's '*The Boy Who Painted Christ Black*' doesn't end its discussion into its aesthetic pleasure of reading. It points out the past, and the present of a community haunted by their historical background of ethnic origin. Aaron Crawford, the only black-skinned student of Muskogee County School represented as "school-for coloured children. Everybody even remotely connected with the school knew this" (Clark). An informal separation in the difference of skin colour itself initiates the clue for a discrimination hidden in the memory of their past. Published in 1948, John Clark would have not thought out of the box to imagine an African American President for the United States of America that got accomplished with Barack Obama in 2009. If so, "Once I heard her say: If he were white he might, someday, become President" (Clark) reference could have been omitted. These two references show how discriminated was the life of a black skinned African American to live his life

among the dominant White. There are references to his physique to show that it differed entirely from the majority Whites. A 'Centrality' towards the dominant and powerful part of the binary contrast in case of white/black difference existed in the community and culture in where Aaron studied.

Though black skinned, Aaron was accepted among them for his variety of talent in drawing and painting. The hardworking nature of the African American community for which they were appreciated and had demands reflects in the talent of Aaron who was unique from the other white-skinned students. The community of African Americans had demand for their unique talents which itself ended up in the fate of being a slave in the same way how Aaron, whose talent was appreciated got into troubles with the authorities on the same matter. While presenting the controversial painting of the Christ in black, the teacher asks Aaron about the inspiring history behind the painting. The innocent artist speaks the truth that his uncle who lives in New York who teaches classes in Negro History at the Y.M.C.A, while visiting his home told about many great black folks who have made history. Aaron continued:

“He said black folks were once the most powerful people on earth. When I asked him about Christ, he said no one ever proved whether he was black or white. Somehow a feeling came over me that he was a black man because he was so kind and forgiving, kinder than I have ever seen white people be. So, when I painted his picture I couldn't help but paint it as I thought it was” (Clark).

The narrator says he noticed the picture close and found it different from the one which hung in the wall where he studied his Sunday school. He details much more relatively that the eyes of Christ closely resembled the eyes of Aaron's father, the deacon of the local Baptist Church who had deep-set and sad eyes. It was more like a helpless Negro, pleading silently for mercy. Every emotion of an African American is exposed through the writing, referring to the painting drawn by Aaron. The painting of Aaron was different from the usual and widely accepted paintings of Jesus Christ, the white and fair skinned man for the white people. Aaron had painted the figure of Christ with a dark complexion, which he could relate to his culture and people that he believed through the words of his Uncle. His uncle related Christ to a black man who is kind and forgiving, unlike the Whites who torture them. Aaron related his culture of living and ethnic complexion into the Christ figure finding those identities more suitable to the figure in Christ in black than for the white Christ of the white people. Moreover, he even related the eyes of the Christ to that of his fathers, which certainly ended up being a Negro pleading silently for mercy. The picture of Christ in black reflected the life situation of the black community that Aaron saw around him. He could not relate the kind-hearted Jesus Christ to the White people as they differed entirely according to his experience.

This lack of kindness and forgiving was true according to him when he dealt the issue of the painting of the Christ in black with Professor Daniel, the White supervisor who visited the school. Seeing the painting, Professor Daniel demanded sharply “Who painted this sacrilegious nonsense” (Clark). Efforts to establish an African stand was taken by Aaron and the black Principal of the school, George Du Vault who boldly tried to convince the Professor about the essence of the painting. A space to find their identity before the White Professor was done by the black Principal when he said:

“I encouraged the boy in painting that picture,” he said firmly. “And it was with my permission that he brought the picture into this school. I don't think the boy is so far wrong in painting Christ black. The artists of all other races have painted whatsoever God they worship to resemble themselves. I see no reason why we should be immune from that privilege. After all, Christ was born in that part of the world that had always been predominantly populated by coloured people. There is a strong possibility that he could have been a Negro” (Clark).

The Principal seeks to maintain and uphold traditional African culture and sensibilities like how the writers after 1930s through the Négritude movement tried to highlight the aesthetic importance of the African culture through their works. Négritude is a term coined by AimeCesaire, a French poet and



dramatist from Martinique and the Senegalese poet and politician, L. S Senghor (Cuddon 464). Négritude also claimed a distinctive African view of timespace relationships, ethics, metaphysics, and an aesthetics which separated itself from the supposedly 'universal' values of European taste and style. Wole Soyinka makes precisely this point in his analysis of Négritude in *Myth, Literature and the African World*:

Négritude, having laid its cornerstone on a European intellectual tradition, however bravely it tried to reverse its concepts (leaving its tenets untouched), was a foundling deserving to be drawn into, nay, even considered a case for benign adoption by European ideological interests (qtd. Ashcroft et. al).

A form of Négritude is expressed in the story in explaining to convince the White Professor about the richness and importance of black culture and blacks which has equal or more significance with other cultures in the world. The right of a black boy to represent Christ in black is supported by the black Principal.

Harlem Renaissance has to be remembered along with the Négritude movement as it was the corner stone for generating a conscious need for a recognizable identity for the community. It is the literary and cultural movement among black Americans which flourished from early in the 1920s to the 1930s. It was also called the 'New Negro Movement' or 'Negro Renaissance'. It emphasised the African culture and heritage of American blacks (Cuddon 325). The Black Arts Movement that came in the mid-1960s to the mid-1970s aimed of helping forge an independent black identity of their own distinct from the White model (80).

“Have you been teaching these children things like that?” he asked the Negro principal sternly (Clark). Ethnocentrism of a White colonial master is expressed through the words of the White Professor. Coined by the American political scientist William G Summer in 1906, the word denotes the centrality of one's nation or ethnic group to the world by being culturally superior about one self-exhibiting stereotypes, prejudice and hostile attitude towards other nations or ethnic groups (Cuddon 256). The White as well as the European colonial giants has always been ethnocentric in their attitude towards other nations, especially to the ethnic groups they colonize. Forced imposition of western/ White ideologies into a different identity helped them to colonize the “other” culture. Euro centrism is not so far from Ethnocentrism. The assumption that Europe constitutes the centre of the world has played a major role in the perception and construction of other cultures. Edward Said, in his *Orientalism* explains:

European culture could manage and even produce the Orient politically, sociologically, militarily, ideologically, scientifically, and imaginatively during the post enlightenment period. In the case of Asia,

Orientalism can be discussed and analysed as the corporate institution for dealing with the Orient- dealing with it by making statements about it, authorizing views of it, describing it, by teaching it, settling it, ruling over it; in short, Orientalism as a western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient (Said 11).

The Ethnocentric approach in dealing with other cultures is also utilized in valuing the painting of the Christ in black. According to the White Professor, the figure of the Christ must satisfy to the aesthetic pleasure accepted to his culture and representation. To his culture, Christ has to be represented in white and not in black as Aaron represented. He felt it as a blasphemous act of being against the rule of the Church, indirectly the rule of the White dominant society. Though there is no specific picture of Jesus Christ, different ethnic societies represent the figure adaptable to their cultural acceptance. In the story, Cultural relativism is provided as a whole in the case of the picture. Cultural relativism, the principle that a person's beliefs, values, customs, and world view do not possess absolute or universal validity but are shaped by her particular cultural circumstances (Cuddon 175) can be discerned. What is considered morally good and accepted in one culture might be assessed quite differently in another. Implications of cultural relativism may extend into the spheres of epistemology, ethics, morality, linguistics, literature and politics. The

cultural difference influences the emotional and personal beliefs of a person in formulating his view on anything, including interpreting and finding the truth. As no culture can avail what is exactly the truth, every cultural interpretation has to be accepted to be multiple truth of the same. A forced imposition of a foreign culture onto one may harm the repressed in its development. In cultural imperialism, a ruling state or ethnic group will often impose its political ideals, cultural values, and often its own language, upon a subject group. It is not 'the White Man's Burden' (Kipling) to enlighten the black African Americans by forcefully imposing their culture on to the subjects, but it is their right to choose what fits to their culture and how to project it as their own.

“I have been teaching them that their race has produced great kings and queens as well as slaves and serfs,” the principal said. “The time is long overdue when we should let the world know that we erected and enjoyed the benefits of a splendid civilization long before the people of Europe had a written language” (Clark).

Words of the Principal reflect how ancient and significant is the culture of Africa and its people who later was captured by the Whites for their benefit. He spoke back to the power centres about his culture. The after effects of his words were severe. He resigned to join a small school as an art instructor and took Aaron along with him. Was the adamant stand for an identity of their own, a failure? No. It was a success as they had no broken heart when they stepped out. In the last lines of the short story, the narrator says:

I watched them until they were so far down the street that their forms had begun to blur. Even from this distance I could see they were still walking in brisk, dignified strides, like two people who had won some sort of victory (Clark).

The victory of having represented something significant in an African way was seen in their smile. Being an African origin has to be seen as a proud moment and finding relativity to one's own culture than of others has to be the primary step towards enlightenment. Cultural relativism as a whole engulfs the ethnocentric pattern in which the Négritude and counter reactions to represent own identity becomes the primary concern of a culture. Thus, an African model of Renaissance takes birth in the story with the Principal, George Du Vul and Aaron who leaves the colonial imprisonment of their culture by the Whites. They set out to find new space for them to express their thoughts and ideas in their own culture rather than being half-heartedly pointing on to the White ideology.

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## THE OBSESSION OF WASTELAND AND ABSURDITY AFTER WW2

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### **Abstract:**

*The World War II has caused a lot of panic and depress after the nuclear explosion. However, writers of post-apocalyptic fiction were obsessed with this type of genre. Their obsession led them to imagine this world as an empty meaningless world. The purpose of this study is to focus and analyze some works of fiction that have to do with the absurdity after the WW2. It will also bring out the obsession of post-apocalyptic writers with the wasteland and desert. It will focus on the nostalgia for the ruins of the previous civilization. The study will show how man is passionate and regret his destroyed world. Some post-war texts will be adapted to disclose the obsession of writing about the absurdity and wasteland after the nuclear explosion. The study will find out the plenty of obsession in the portrayal of the absurd world and the empty landscape. This creativity of such image came only after the witnessing of the nuclear world. The image of such absurd world and vast wasteland is bleak and horrible, yet it remains a jaw-dropping sort of portrayal.*

**Keywords:** *Wasteland, absurdity, post-apocalypse, ruins.*

### **Introduction**

This topic has come to me when I remembered myself in some mountain of my country when I was a little boy. I was a shepherd and I used to love climbing the mountain near to my village. Of course, I had no idea at all that one day I could be writing some research about some topic of the destroyed nature. It came to my mind when I studied American literature, especially science fiction (SF) and its sub-genre of post-apocalyptic fiction. I happened to know the pastoral life in American literature after some apocalypse targets some part of America or any other part of the world.

As a little shepherd, the view in that mountain looked to me sort of there was some life of a previous civilization established on that mountain. Still, nobody knows how that civilization got destroyed or it just collapsed by itself. Some ruins of that city remain until today and it shows some of the hard life that those people lived. It vanished and no one cares about what sort of life those people had. The history of that city on that mountain remains mysterious and the only thing that we got was a myth. The myth says that the people there got perished because of their filthy deeds. When those people realized that they were a small community, they decided to increase their number to face the huge number of wild animals. They committed obscenity in the dark and had what was called a night of a love fair. They spent that night until almost dawn. Thus, the myth says that God causes them to perish by sending small bugs to where they lived. Therefore, their history was buried.

### **The Obsession of the Perishing after the Nuclear WW2**

After the world war 2, and after witnessing the nuclear explosion, the world was obsessed with the ghost of a third nuclear war. There was kind of a bleak mood and melancholic atmosphere spread out and made everybody dream of the perishing of this world. The life then became absurd and of no meaning. A huge explosion of post-apocalyptic literature emerged and gave a dark picture of the world if something

targeted the world on a large scale. There is also a kind of fascination of the ruined cities or countries and this is something that humankind, by nature, is contemplating. It is also fabulous to know that there are some natural phenomenons and we take it like a great event. Wars, earthquakes, floods, cyclones, storms, volcanic explosions, wood fires, etc. are things that we want to imagine life in such state after any of these things may occur on a large scale. The cosmic phenomenon is also another kind of man's passion to discover the universe, although these things are scary and could be the reason for the man's extermination.

After the world war2, novelists focused on the absurdity of life after some apocalypse hits the earth. Things would definitely change in a way that people believe that life of this world has no meaning because a huge part of it has become something from the past and it is too difficult for human kind to reestablish what has been destroyed. We can also find the Theater of Absurd which came with an absent story and a random plot. *“There is an absence of story, organized plot, and characterization”* (Bennett, 2011). But this study is concerning the novel that came after the World War 2. The absurdity of the novels and the plays in that period were dominating the years after the war. The movement of the Theater of the Absurd continued for some time, but absurdity and wasteland continued in novels. There is some dissimilarity in concerning the absurdity in the Theatre of the Absurd and the absurdity in the novels. The first is concerning the plot and the dialogue between the characters. Beckett for example *“proposed a reflection on the form of drama, drawing the audience's attention to the artificiality of speech, plot and characters on the stage”* (Alegre, 1995, p 23). However, the second refers to the details of the life which has become absurd because the world has become empty. This emptiness is due to the apocalypse that targeted the whole world and annihilated its population. Yet, Theater of the Absurd was also a fiction that showed the horrible life in a wasteland world. *“The horrible picture they paint of our world should be surveyed and judgement formed to see if America has really become a barren, sterile, wasteland which is devoid of morality, religion, and love”* (Bennett, 2011, p 103)

### **Wasteland after the Nuclear Explosion**

The element of the ruins in post-apocalyptic fiction is not enough to capture the mind of the reader, moreover, post-apocalyptic fiction is rich with images of the barren landscape. The fabulous appearance of the blank world is a striking portrayal of the author's creativity. In postmodern literature where post-apocalyptic fiction was the dominant genre in that period, the image of the world appears horrifying and appalling. The authors would show the world as an endless desert after the vanishing of human most likely due to a nuclear holocaust that might have wiped out the entire world. But as mentioned earlier some pockets of survivors are scattered here and there to start their spiritual journey. This journey is indeed fateful for their existence in a world the life in it became nihilistic and the earth turned out to a wasteland. Slocombe depicts the pervasion of the desert and the disappearance of man:

“The image of the blank desert pervades most of the postmodern 'literature of the end' in a number of different ways, from the desert that is created as a result of nuclear holocaust or pollution, to the desert that appears in conjunction with the disappearance of the human and the destruction of meaning. The 'meaning' of the desert has thus shifted from the benign image of a place of introspection towards a more malign environment in which the apocalypse has already happened” (Slocombe, 2006, 186).

As a matter of fact, in postmodern fiction, genres like post-apocalyptic, post-holocaust appeared after the nuclear explosion in 1945 and these genres depicted astonishing images on how the world turned into a silent and a hollow planet after some apocalypse hit the earth. The life that exists there is the life after the apocalyptic catastrophe which leaves nothing behind. This nothingness dominates the whole world and shows the nihilistic landscape. The world becomes absurd and the life in it becomes meaningless. There is some relation to the significance of the wasteland in post-apocalyptic fiction. When life becomes of no meaning, it is obvious to see a nihilistic world where nothing exists but a large yellow desert and the world becomes absurd because the life of this world is not precious anymore. The reason is that the future is



already gone and there are no more signs of living in a world of nothingness. All forms of life are absurd and do not promise any hope of rising civilization and the ruins are a picture of that destroyed society. However, the obsession of showing these ruins in such society is an esthetic portrayal.

The ruins of contemporary society, latent on the urban landscape, are privileged spaces, which simultaneously invoke reactions of repulsion and sublimity. Temporarily, intimate with our own age, they have yet to submit to simple aestheticism, which annihilates their potential to disrupt convention. Instead, these ruins are close enough to the present to mirror an alternative past/present/future (Trigg, 2006, p xxvi).

As mentioned earlier, post-apocalyptic world is a world of nothingness, in other words, the nihilistic state of the world resulted in a life of meaninglessness which shows the absurdity of this world. The journey of living in a post-apocalyptic world is one that someone finds himself wandering aimlessly through a huge wasteland of emptiness and the entire life is of no significance. But the human keeps searching for a trace of hope to establish himself and make a new history. His passion for living and hatred of demise gives him power and hope to move forward. Carter's *The Passion of New Eve* (quoted in Slocombe, 2006, 186) gives a fabulous depiction of the permanent attempts of searching in the vast desert:

I would go to the desert, to the waste heart of that vast country, the desert on which they turned their backs for fear it would remind them of emptiness the desert, the arid zone, there to find, chimera of chimeras, there, in the ocean of sand, among the bleached rocks of the untenanted part of the world, I thought I might find that most elusive of all chimeras, myself" (Carter, 1996 p. 38.).

The description of Carter of the blank world is so terrifying and it reveals the atrocity and hideousness of the imagined scene when the human race is wiped out and only some remaining pockets are scattered in the vast wasteland. This obsession of portrayal actually, has come from the deep contemplation of the nuclear future of the world. The nuclear explosion was some helpful element of post-apocalyptic fiction to make its appearance after the nuclear war. The last man or the end of the world kind of depiction came earlier in some novels before the nuclear world war. But what comes after the end of the world was the ultimate logic question in post-apocalyptic fiction. In fact, the notion of the end of the world in literature was not as important as the aftermath of the end of the world and here the authors show a lot of creativity in presenting bleak and gloomy images of the life after the world is devastated. The image came into a plenty of fascination and fantasy, but there is more tendency towards a mythical type of portrayal which had its plausibility from science fiction. Moreover, the depiction of the wasteland in the distant future is really an image full of suspense throughout the whole novel. The horrifying portrayal in the blank planet is full of excitement and feeling arousing. Thus, the ugly and awful desert is actually more exciting and sort of feeling stirring in a fictional world. In his *Earth Abides*, Stewart depicts the state of despair to cross the desert wasteland:

To cross those two hundred miles of desert, men had carried water in their cars even in the Old Times. There were stretches where one might have to walk for a full day to reach even a roadside stand if the car went bad. He could take no chances now, when no one would be coming to help him" (Stewart, 1980, 41).

Novels like Ballard's *The Drought* (1965), and Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale* are a fascinating work of showing man's hand in nature and how the science is turning the earth into a vast desert. The barren land in the play of *Waiting for Godot* (1956) by Samuel Becket is the best portrayal of absurdity. Becket gave a clear demonstration of how the world is a trivial place when there is nothing to live for. The nihilism in the story is the author's device of fixation of nothingness which came after the apocalypse. The Theater of the Absurd came at that time after some years of the nuclear explosion namely in the 1950s, when the world still did not wake up from the nightmare of the nuclear war. The Theater of the Absurd is a different type of fiction, but the desert and the wasteland were the main elements in showing how the world was

living a meaningless life after the catastrophe of the nuclear war. The years after the nuclear world war were the hardest and most difficult bearing ones in the entire history and the world witnessed the premature demise of its existence. The state of horror in that period stripped people away from spirituality and implanted infertility in their hearts so people found the world barren and desert. Slocombe puts the absurd world in a logical significance.

Here, the nihilism of human society the 'state of nihilism' is shifted to the blank desert of nihilism, in which we scratch our ciphers over nothingness. This is essentially an absurd world, in which language no longer functions. Thus, although the desert holds a key role in the determination of nihilism within postmodern fiction, as the desertion of meaning, it also evokes absurdity. For this reason, this thesis shall now turn to study the form of the absurd within postmodern literature (Slocombe, 2006, 197).

So there is some relation in the sense that the desert is a evoke of absurdity in a post-apocalyptic world where life there became irrational. To live in a world where devastation turned the landscape into an arid wasteland is an absurd decision, but authors leave no options for survivors who must go through this cataclysmic event. This choice of the desert as the permanent settings of the novel reflects the disappearance of emotionality from people's hearts. The vast wilderness of the landscape is a true matching of the stiffness of hearts which became empty of faith and mercy. So in any portrayal of the absence of meaning of life, writers tend to create such huge, absurd world where the pervasiveness of desert is the dominant scene. Graulund depicts the desert setting in McCarthy's novels as the underlain message of the futile endeavor to restore the past, or establish a new meaningful living:

Now Cormac McCarthy has never been willing to offer his readers the meaning of his books on a silver platter. As some of his critics have suggested, it may even be that the central meaning of McCarthy's authorship, the central message, is that there is no meaning to be found. In this sense, the desert seems the perfect setting, the ultimate scenery for a writer who seemingly adheres fully to Abbey's creed that the desert simply is: 'What does it mean? It means nothing. It is as it is and has no need for meaning' (Abbey 1971, 244). The all-consuming desert travelled by the man and his son means absolutely nothing but that it is omnipresent and that 'it is as it is'. This lack of meaning, then, must necessarily remain the central conundrum posed by *The Road*" (Graulund, 2010, 69).

### **Absurdity after the Nuclear Explosion**

There is much presence of absurdity in the 1950s work of fiction and the reason was in the wallow between absolutism and relativism of religion in the western culture. This blur of vision into the future was an essential motive towards more pessimistic and somber kind of envisage. On witnessing the global catastrophe of the nuclear explosion, there was some mental and psyche collapse and the world went through a fateful crisis of faith. This gave rise to different genres of literature to appear and dominate the stylistic type of writing postmodern literature. Post-apocalyptic, post-holocaust or the Theater of the Absurd all pictured the life in an absurd world where living had become meaningless and of no purpose. These genres also showed the state of despair and hopelessness in a consumed world where skepticism of faith was the predominant attribute of the remaining survivors. Craig depicts the decline into the absurdity because of the denial of the absolute existence of God and this denial would lead humanity to live a worthless life:

This denial of absolutes has gradually made its way through Western culture. In each case, it results in despair, because without absolutes man's endeavors degenerate into absurdity. Schaeffer believes that the Theater of the Absurd, abstract modern art, and modern music such as compositions by John Cage are all indications of what happens below the line of despair. Only by reaffirming belief in the absolute God of Christianity can man and his culture avoid inevitable degeneracy, meaninglessness, and despair" (Craig, 2008, 70).

The life in the absurd world does not end by feeling alienated in the huge wasteful landscape but the end is the advent thing that all remaining survivors are waiting for. There is no redemption or sign of any outright rescue and the life does not basically go to the primitive age as per some critics' but the matter is far beyond any kind of escape or salvation. Death is the only salvation of the lifeless world and it becomes the easy way out. In *The Road* (2006) by McCarthy, the mother contemplated suicide and finally decided to leave that world because there wasn't any hope of salvation and if she remained alive she could get killed or raped by the cannibals. Finally, she committed suicide and left behind her son and her husband suffering the hardship of living in a merciless world. The following dialogue between the man and his wife is depicting the state of the hopelessness of the wife to have decided to die and taken the death as a lover and salvation of her misery thus she is beyond any listening of advice to drop the idea of killing herself:

I dont know.

It's because it's here. There's nothing left to talk about.

I wouldnt leave you.

I dont care. It's meaningless. You can think of me as a faithless slut if you like.

I've taken a new lover. He can give me what you cannot.

Death is not a lover.

Oh yes he is.

Please dont do this.

I'm sorry.

Most people contemplate how they are going to die and aggrieve for they'll become non-being but they prefer to die and rest in peace. When their life is full of bestowal and bounty, they wish to die for a purpose and be remembered for their life before death, but when their life turns into a pandemonium, they just want to die and nothing but dying. The post-apocalyptic world is one full of absurdity and meaninglessness. The wasteland and the barren vast landscape that the man is encountering in such annihilated world is the inevitable death in advance and the individuals after a long fight for establishing a new life become submissive and willing to take death as their final destination. So in the absurd world death becomes inescapable and finally becomes a destination towards which the inhabitants are heading. Bowden (quoted in Graulund 2010, 70) is commenting on his novel *Blue Desert* (1986) and magnifies the sureness of death in a world turned into a wild desert.

I have walked hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of miles in the desert and yet my thoughts about it are very few and I spend very little time thinking these thoughts. [Yet] here I know this fact: the desert is where I want to die, where I do not fear death, do not even consider it. Here death is like breathing. Here death simply is (Bowden 1997, 143).

The absurdity of living in a wilderness is the passing way to the end of life and the authors certainly giving these images of death as the unwelcome visitor to these remaining survivors but in a slow motion. Writers of the post-apocalyptic fiction do not usually show their readers how the vast majority of the world got annihilated rather they are interested in how to give a visible image on the lifelessness after the apocalypse. The imagination of the world after an end is a challenging sort of speculative creativity, however, the genre came in different forms of fictions. The most incredible kind of novels are those which depict the life of individuals in a vast blank world which brought devastation on a large scale and the few remaining survivors are the ones on whom the authors tell their stories. Because without these survivors it is impossible to tell the story after the end of the world and these handful individuals are the remaining ones around which the rising actions are getting intensified and reaching its climax of the conflict.

There is, in fact, some sort of resurrection of life early in the novels and this resurrection is the keynote element on which the author starts his story. The resurrection after the end of the world is an essential part of the story. It is turning around the survivors and is allegorically a performance of the

spiritual journey which is full of the surrounding death. The emptiness of the landscape is the symbolism of the soullessness and the world becomes no longer an inhabitable place. Christian writers are affected by the life after death so resurrection came to compensate the lifeless world with a new life. Such life is fragile and easy to go but it spiritualizes the dead earth with a struggling spirit. According to the Christian world view, God does exist, and man's life does not end at the grave. In the resurrection, the man may enjoy an eternal life and fellowship with God. (Craig, 1994,p72).

This portrayal of resurrection for this type of fiction is like a relief and taking another chance to put together oneself and start again. The people after the apocalypse realize the hardship of living in an empty world and yet they continue searching for salvation. The author puts the individuals in a decaying world to increase the amount of suffering before death. He could have finished them earlier in the event of the apocalypse, but it is important in such type of fiction to show the life after the occurrence of the tremendous event so the resurrection of some individuals is a major aspect of showing the absurd life in the wilderness. The temporal life in a such consumed world is an incarnation of the frailty of living where death became the king of the vast wilderness. Graulund commenting on Bowden's remarks of travel in the *Blue Desert* (1986) and refers that to the travel of the boy and his father in their travel across the wilderness in McCarthy's *The Road* (2006)

The problem of all wildernesses, and in particular wildernesses as impoverished as those of the desert, is that if death is forced upon you, if you find yourself in a space where death is indeed 'like breathing' (Bowden), the charm of dying wears off rather quickly. This is precisely the problem faced by the man and the boy as they find themselves in a space where they have to 'inhale' death every year, every day and every hour, a presence they have as little hope of escaping as the necessity to take another breath. Consequently, they find themselves in a state in which it is very difficult to appreciate anything, even survival itself (Graulund, 2010, 70).

The Theater of the Absurd and the post-apocalyptic fiction are the best genres to show the absurdity of living in a lifeless world. Also, the essence of the lifelessness in such a world is the absence of God and such absence of God does not genuinely occurred in the series of actions but it occurred in the minds of the individuals. The state of misery and waiting for a redemption to save them out of this predicament is the major factor that the individuals, in such tremendous despair, undergo a collapse of faith and an increase of disbelief. The more the despair in such terminated world the more the atheism. Yet some individuals remain theistic and prefer to continue as such in the world of nothingness. Because deep inside them, there is a tremendous faith and the nihilistic life in the outside world does not thrill their feelings to go blind in faith. They still believe in some redemption from God to come and lift up the calamity of their existence. In *Waiting for Godot* by Samuel Becket, two persons spend their time waiting for Godot to come and save them. They are in a miserable predicament and they have a hope that Godot will come so they decide to wait up until Godot (God, maybe) bestow on them with salvation thus, they continue their trivial conversation until he may come. Craig discloses that man is always seeking refuge and help from God, his Redeemer:

His Apology (referring to Blaise Pascal was evidently to comprise two divisions: in the first part he would display the misery of man without God (that man's nature is corrupt) and in the second part the happiness of man with God (that there is a Redeemer). With regard to the latter, Pascal appeals to the evidences of miracle and especially fulfilled prophecy. In confirming the truth of man's wretchedness Pascal seeks to unfold the human predicament (Craig, 2008, 66).

To put this into some philosophical argument, the happiness of man is confined to his self-consciousness to seeing or contemplating the universe around him. If he gets the satisfaction of his own being, he could reach the ultimate happiness and bliss which both necessitate a struggle and mental



reconciliation altogether. Naturally, man is content to live a normal life, but deep inside him, there is a spiritual impetus urging him to search for his being and how he came into existence. When life is normal there is neither harm nor any skeptical thoughts occupying his mind, but when life is uneasy and full of atrocities and unjust, a man becomes confined to his scruples and uncertainty in terms of his being and the existence of God. The non-stop travel into the wasteland for a comfort of living is a fabulous personification of the tedious search for God's redemption and assistance. There is a return to God in the state of helplessness and powerlessness when the plight of man becomes superior and transcending his capability and capacity of response. The amounts of the predicament in the wasteland grow immensely so much so it leaves no option for the individuals to go for any confrontational attempts. The state of the survivors is beyond any restore and the only solution in such peculiar placement is to seek salvation from God. The post-apocalypse strips away human and consumes all his skills and ingenuities to go for any attempts of reestablishing a new civilization or rebuilding their society. But if these survivors work on this issue they will end up cast in a horrific solitude and they will realize that what they will do is a futile and wasteful kind of effort.

### **Disintegration and Wilderness**

The state of disorder and lawlessness is the main hindrance in a such desolated world where the survivors suffering the scarcity of food and water, not to mention the other deadly reasons that will certainly exterminate the remaining survivors such as the infections, the burning sun which can cause cancer or any sort of encountering with bestial animals. There is a sort of inclination towards savagery and the pre-catastrophe civilization will degenerate. The disintegration of humanity is the most prevailing feature in the post-apocalyptic world, thus the scenario after the apocalypse will be wilderness versus urbanization and civilization versus savagery. The only outlet of this predicament is to establish law or even sovereignty so as to impose control and order. But the nature of the wildlife will be the main reason toward the tendency of dehumanization and there will be also some proclivity for more savagery and brutality.

William Golding's novel *The Lord of the Flies* (1954) is a novel which is explicitly not an open post-apocalyptic kind of fiction rather it is termed as a "proto-apocalyptic" one. These types of novels "*do not explicitly rehearse end-of-the-world scenarios, they nevertheless provide an influential discursive template which is recuperated into post-apocalyptic imaginaries*" (Power, 25). The novel presents a detailed depiction of the life in disorder and inhumanity. The setting of the story takes place on an isolated island where some schoolchildren inhabit that island after their arrival on an evacuating plane from England. The reason was the outbreak of the World War II and their government ordered for their evacuation. The plane falls and crashes before its safe landing on the island, but fortunately, the boys come out unscathed. After their settlement in this desolate island, they decide to establish order and law to ease their stay in this spot of the world. Golding masterly exposes his survived individuals to their nature where they become responsible for their behavior with one another. He displays the boys in a state where they have to establish their own community or they fall into degeneracy. Their civilization gradually gives away and they slowly become uncivil and savage. They dispute over sovereignty and who is worthy of ruling over their small society.

This kind of novels set in post-apocalyptic world depicts the loss of order and the slow inclination toward more savage behavior. The erosion of law is the outcome of the inner nature of the civilized man if existing in a boundless and uncontrollable vacuum. The vast wasteland is the desolate nature that man turns to be a beast-like in treating with his kind being. In fact, the wilderness in the *Lord of the Flies* is basically an allegorical portrayal of the children psyche in such desolated part of the world and the aspect of turning into animalism is part of the bleak physical wilderness.

The atrocities of the Second World War were a shocking impression that Golding and other writers had at that time. Golding pessimistically depicted the inner savagery of the social man if drifted out of his regular world. He unfolds his dudgeon:

Before the Second World War I believed in the perfectibility of social man; that a correct structure of society would produce goodwill; and that therefore you could remove all social ills by a reorganization of society ... but after the war I was unable to. I had discovered what one man could do to another ... under-standing that man produces evil as a bee produces honey ... I believed that the condition of man was to be a morally diseased creation (Power, 27).

In a post-apocalyptic world, where life is sort of degenerated, there is a dominant conflict between urbanization and wilderness which the nature of the landscape is too hard to endure. The survivors struggle to restore their lost civilization and nature is beyond any reform. The essence of evil and destruction of nature is a phenomenal event if not belonging to the interference of man. The worst thing that could result from the interference of man could be a mass destruction of the whole world due to some nuclear warfare. However, the demolishment of mankind from the surface of the earth could also come from a natural phenomenon such as a comet collision, flood or some destructive earthquake. The pre-catastrophe civilization does not exist after the apocalypse, but the remaining survivors who exemplify the lost civilization are in face with the altered nature to keep their entity away from the impact of wilderness. The *Lord of Flies* presented the essential conflict between savagery and civilization. The nature of alienation from the familiar world stripped the survived boys away from their civilized nature and drives them off their social manners and traditions. The new nature of living in the wilderness is a new altering kind of environment and the boys slowly becoming slaves and followers of their driving mood. The boys are not able to live in peace and harmony, though they are only a group of survivors in an attempt to establish their small community. Their small age is not basically the main hindrance to organize themselves and work under some absolute sovereign, but the inner beast of human comes out and panic for the lust of killing and ruling.

### Conclusion

Thus the desolate landscape of the bestial nature is the main reason why human is turning from a peaceful, civilized kind of being into one whose quest is mainly to survive over other inferior ones. His return to the harsh nature as his home of living dehumanizes him and shapes his way of behaving with others under some critical situations of some post-apocalyptic life. It also shapes his trend toward violence and bestiality. The surrounding environment is the most influential part of his psyche transformation into a beast-like being.

In conclusion, the writers who came after the nuclear explosion have insisted on creating their own world. This world is the outcome of their an involuntary obsession with the state of absurdity and wasteland after some nuclear war or any other apocalypse. The passion of crying for the previous life is something natural. It proves that man is always clinging to nature and any disturbance of this nature is also a disturbing factor of mind. Thus the stability of mind will change automatically with the change of environment.

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36

TRANSGRESSION OF SOUL

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As soul transgresses from previous birth to this one;  
It speaks in volume the dictum: *soul transgresses embodying values & virtues.*

New people and environs add color to its vision.  
Inner windows open to new challenges and situations;  
Soul speaks and keeps the record: *playing the songs of previous recording.*  
As my intellect plays on & turns to watchful play;  
Mind turns around and peeks the soul stirring thoughts;  
*Moulds, renews & provokes.*

Soul at the playback and intellectual mental faculties taking the centre stage.  
My heart still believe in soul consciousness;  
*Values, imprints, willful thoughts;*  
*Visionary ideas, intuitive insights;*  
envisaging and bringing radical patterns of new outlook.

As soul transgresses & looks back it sees the *transgression.*