



ISSN 0976-299X

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ISSN 0976-299X

# LITERARY ENDEAVOUR

UGC Approved Quarterly International Refereed Journal of  
English Language, Literature and Criticism

UGC Approved Under Arts and Humanities Journal No. 44728

Print ISSN: 0976-299X

Online ISSN: 0976-299X

Vol. IX

Special Issue. 2

August 2018

Chief Editors

■ Dr. Ramesh Chougule ■ Dr. S. Subbiah

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**AUGUST 2018**

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## **EDITORIAL**

The contemporary era is marked by globalization of new order, communication and technology, high speed internet surfing, transnational life and hybrid culture. Fixity of geographical boundaries, constancy of culture and essentialist notion of identity have turned out to be a myth. Stuart Hall remarks everything is fluid, constantly changing. Singular perception has eroded and multidimensional perception has altered the understanding of life and cosmos. Such renewed thinking is represented in today's literary writings. Especially, the postcolonial writers, in an effort to revive the indigeneity, altered the worldview besides innovating theories and canons for writing.

Obviously, those writings are to be studied, analyzed, interpreted and researched not only to gain better understanding of the themes explored and narrative techniques employed but also to make individuals instruments of social change and happiness.

This special issue carries articles focusing on postcolonial themes. The contributors have tried to throw light on the literatures of postcolonial time and after from different perspectives.

Wish you happy reading!

### **Editor and Publisher**

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Literary Endeavour

**An International Peer Reviewed, Refereed & Quarterly Journal**

Special Issue on **Beyond the Postcolonial: Reimagining Humanism**

August 2018

Print ISSN: 0976-299X

Online ISSN: 0976-299X

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## **Vision**

The untiring effort of the Faculty, Research Scholars, Students in and around India made the multidisciplinary approach in a real sense the multidisciplinary. The contribution of articles really prove erudition. The feedback of the participants reflect the necessity of multidisciplinary approach and dire need of this topic in current academic scenario.

## **Disclaimer**

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## Special Issue Editorial

This special issue of *Literary Endeavour* has been developed out of “Beyond the Postcolonial: Reimagining Humanism” a One Day UGC Sponsored National Level Seminar held at Arul Anandar College, Karumathur – 625 514, Madurai District, Tamil Nadu on February 28, 2018. The postcolonial literary writings of the recent times are not confined to the narrow framework of postcolonial resistance. They do not merely record the pain and suffering of the past anymore; instead the writers move beyond to analyze the contemporary events. They have shifted their concerns to building human relationships between individuals and global community. This has inspired me to organize the seminar of this kind.

I register my deep sense of gratitude to the Resource Persons, Dr. T. Marx, Associate Professor of English, Pondicherry University, Pudhucherry, Dr. S. Armstrong, Head and Professor of English, Madras University, Chennai, Dr. S.Kanitha, Former Head and Associate Professor of English, APA College, Palani, Dr. S. Seshuraja, Head and Associate Professor of Philosophy, Arul Anandar College, Karumathur.

I wholeheartedly thank Rev. Dr. K. Amal, SJ. Rector, Rev. Dr. S. Mani Valan, SJ., Secretary and Rev. Dr. S. Basil Xavier, SJ., Principal for their constant encouragement in all the efforts of the department.

I sincerely thank all the participants and the members of the audience who contributed to the theme of the seminar through paper presentations, interrogations, and clarifications on the day of the seminar.

I am particularly grateful to the University Grants Commission and the Jesuit Management of the college for financial resources and to the Faculty of English for programmatic and logistical services. I thank Dr. P. Veerasamy for technical assistance in compiling and editing the articles.

**Co-Editor (Special Issue)**

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Literary Endeavour (ISSN 0976-299X): Vol. IX: Special Issue: 2 (August 2018)

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## Postcolonial Literature and Theory – A Humanistic Critique

**Dr. S Armstrong,**

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Department of English & Chair,  
School of English & Foreign Languages,  
University of Madras, Chennai.

Postcolonial criticism questions the role of the Western literary canon and Western history as dominant forms of knowledge-making - visibilized and invisibilized. The terms "First World," "Second World," "Third World" and "Fourth World" nations are critiqued by postcolonial critics because they reinforce the dominant positions of Western cultures populating First World status and this process resulted in "colonizing the mind and/or knowledge". The process of cognitive imperialism assumes different forms in the contemporary world too.

The Native intellectuals and the marginalized sections of the world feel that they are still colonized and postcolonial corpus of knowledge production never helped them to shatter the inhuman marginalization/colonization. Will the postcolonial studies and the recolonizing agencies make the marginalized and the subalternized in the world free? This critique includes the literary canon, hegemonic discourses and histories written from the perspective of First World cultures.

## Postcolonial Feminism

**Dr. S. Kanitha,**

Former Head and Associate Professor of English,  
Arulmigu Palaniandavar Arts College for Women,  
Palani

Postcolonial feminism emerged as a critique of Post colonialism and Western feminism. Though both the theories spoke about suppression and oppression, the issues of the women of the Third World or the Subaltern were neglected. The Post colonialism was male-centered and feminism was in the hands of the White Women. Though the postcolonial women accepted the intellectual and political debt to these theories, they recognized that their problems were not addressed. This led the postcolonial women to evolve a theory of postcolonial feminism to speak about the issues and problems of the Third World women.

Postcolonialism is a literary discourse which studies the aftermath of Colonialism and the anguish of the colonized people struggling to liberate from the residual, political, socio-economic and psychological effects of colonial history. This theory is used to explore how the postcolonial writers depict the deconstruction of the perceptions and attitudes of power and oppression adopted during colonization, how there are power struggles between the two cultures and, how there are forms of resistance to the impact of colonialism on the psyche of the colonized. In the same way the feminist theories study how women were oppressed by the gender discrimination and how they try to free themselves from oppression. Post colonialism can be understood by reading Franz Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952) and *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961), Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1978) and *Culture and Imperialism* (1993), Gayatri Spivak's "Can the Subaltern Speak? In *Critique of Postcolonial Reason* (1999), and Homi K. Bhabha's *Nation and Narration* (1990), *Imperialism and its Resistance*, and *Imagined Communities* (1991) and Bill Ashcroft et al's *The Empire Writes Back* (1989). The Western Feminism has been extended into a philosophical, intellectual, literary and a theoretical discourse treating all women as one universal group having problems arising out of gender issues.

Feminist theories from the West helped to explore gender discrimination, sexual

objectification, patriarchal oppression and stereotyping. The Western feminist theories can be understood by reading Mary Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* (1792), Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own* (1929) Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* (1949), Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* (1963) Kate Millett's *Sexual Politics* (1970) and Elaine Showalter's *Towards a Feminist Poetics* (1979). The Western Feminist theories presume that what the White women advocate for the fight against the oppression should be equally applicable to all women. The Western Feminists are from the countries of the colonizers and they imposed silence on racial, socio-cultural political specificities of the Third World women of the colonized. The misrepresentation of the postcolonial women became oppression for them.

Postcolonial feminism originated in 1980s. It is not imported from the West. Postcolonial feminism emerged in an attempt to address the experiences of women born and raised in the former colonies of the Western Imperial Powers. It studies the suppression of women in the light of geographical, historical racial and cultural factors. It has evolved from the internal ideologies and socio-cultural factors of the location. Postcolonial Feminism argues that women cannot be defined only by their gender and treated as one homogeneous society as has been done by the Western feminists. The issues and problems of women have to be understood in the context of the social class, race, and ethnicity, political and socio-cultural aspects. Black feminism is closely affiliated to Post Colonial Feminism because the Western feminism failed to show how the black women were doubly colonized by the Imperialism of the colonizer and by the patriarchy of the black man and how they suffered as the slaves of the slaves. Postcolonial Feminist theory can be understood by reading Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's article "Can the Subaltern Speak? In the *Critique of Postcolonial Reason* (1999), Chandra Talpade Mohanty's *Feminism Without Borders: Decolonizing Theory, Practising Solidarity*

(2003), and her essay “Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses” (1984), Barbara Smith’s *The Truth that Never Hurts: Writings on Race, Gender and Freedom* (1998) and Bell Hook’s *Ain’t I a Woman? Black Women and Feminism* (1981).

The reimagining of the postcolonial theories has paved the way for coalition between Post colonialism and Feminism. The Postcolonial Feminists accept their intellectual, political and theoretical indebtedness to them. Black Feminism is closely affiliated to postcolonial Feminism. The White Women struggle for equal rights and

opportunities, the Black women are doubly colonized by the Patriarchy of the native black men and by the Imperialism of the White men. The Postcolonial women are thrice colonized by the White man, the Black man and also the White Feminists. It helps to study the experiences of women in the context of geographical, historical, political and socio-cultural factors. Postcolonial Feminists accept the views of hybridity and multiplicity of culture by keeping in mind that there are differences and diversities among them. The novels of African American novelist Toni Morrison and the Indian writer Jhumpa Lahiri can be explored in the light of Postcolonial Feminism.

## An Epistemological Journey into the Metaphysics of Being Human

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### Abstract

The search for the meaning of human life is perennial. As the evolution progresses exponentially and strikes a milestone, the shift in the paradigm of perspective is unavoidable, mandatory and needed for newer meanings. Now, the hour is come at the advent of quantum mechanics to change one's perspective about oneself and about Nature. As the title of the paper suggests, it is **an** epistemological journey into the metaphysical understanding of Nature treading the path of quantum physics and going beyond, putting aside the classical science and its implications in the spheres of human life. The newer understanding is the epiphany of new portals of human life which helps us to be in touch with **being** human and thus it paves way for evolving, lowering the entropy - in alignment with the Grand Design/the Consciousness/The Divine Matrix. In this paper an attempt is made to describe the background for the Newer Understanding and the gray areas to be unlearned in order to let the fresh air to come in and make known the implications of the shift in paradigm in human life.

\*\*\*\*\*

When a scientist states that something is possible, he is almost certainly right; when he states that something is impossible, he is very probably wrong.

– Arthur C. Clarke.

### Introduction

In the evolutionary ladder, human beings, as understood, accepted and promulgated by many scientists, philosophers and religious authorities, are said to be the apex or crown of creation and possess the distinguishing feature, self-consciousness. When other living beings behave in accordance with their instincts, humans conduct themselves in a self-conscious manner. Put differently, other living beings know and they do

not know that they know, but humans know and they know that they know. The self-knowledge of humans is both boon and bane. Humans are expected to be more responsible to grow in knowledge and wisdom; otherwise it will lead them to a destructive trail and fatal fall - devolving. In today's digital world, the technological advancements, sans ethics, have become unprecedented and at the same time unbridled. Gregg Braden, a great Geologist says, "Future generations will study the 20<sup>th</sup> Century as the single most violent century in recorded history. In the first years of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, much of the thinking responsible for such a grim characterization appears to remain. With the renewed escalation of nuclear weapons programs in countries such as India, Pakistan, Iran, and North Korea, the stage is set in the new millennium for arms races similar to last century's Cold War between the U.S. and the Soviet Union. The threat for terrorism, civil war and religious differences leaves little doubt that the violence and suffering that marred the last century will be the legacy of the new millennium's early years." (1)

Human beings, unmindful of their cut-throat competitive nature – a token of consumeristic culture, individualistic and fragmented thinking - caused the chasm between the poor and the rich – as the sociologists uproar; estranged themselves from nature – as the spiritualists complain, ruptured the equilibrium of Nature irretrievably – as the ecologists cry out and live with others as if 'The other is hell' (John Paul Sartre) – as the philosophers clamor.

Hence, the hour is come to reexamine how human beings understand themselves and Reality in order to realize the meaning of human life in today's context and mend ways that are detrimental to lead a harmonious life and evolve progressively. That is why this paper is titled as, "An Epistemological Journey into the Metaphysics of Being Human".

This paper attempts to unravel the milieu of being human, which is otherwise called the metaphysics of their physical existence in the physical world so that new ways and means may be discovered for being human. The reason for this re-discovering the Reality is that, in the near past, it was proved in different disciplines that the old ways of understanding Reality from the point of view of Newtonian Physics (Classical Science) failed to explain many grey areas in the scientific arena.

The structure of this paper is divided into four parts. The first part elucidates the background for the study of the topic, "An Epistemological Journey into the Metaphysics of Being Human". The second part attempts to unlearn what was acquired in the past which is, in a way, obsolete and unhelpful today. The third part brings out a new way of understanding the Microcosm and the Macrocosm in a nut-shell which, in turn, will pave the way for 'Being Human' with its implication in today's milieu, the fourth part.

## The Background

### The Development of Human Knowledge

Since an attempt is made, in this paper, to delve into the episteme (principled system of knowing) of humans, it is necessary to have, at least, a cursory look at the development of human knowledge in order to apprehend the stages of self-consciousness in understanding the reality today from a different vantage point.

Duane Elgin states, "the first transformation in our view of reality and identity occurred when humanity 'awakened; roughly 35,000 years ago. The archeological record shows that the beginnings of a reflective consciousness emerged decisively at this time as numerous developments were occurring in stone tools, burial sites, cave art, and migration patterns. Because we were just awakening to our capacity for 'knowing that we know', we were surrounded by mystery at every turn. Nonetheless, human culture was born in these first glimmerings of personal and shared awareness." (2) In the first stage it is clear that the humans, though a long way in the evolutionary process, have come to the level of acquiring self-consciousness."

He also says, "The second time our view of reality and human identity changed dramatically was roughly 10,000 years ago when humanity

shifted from a nomadic life to a more settled existence in villages and farms. It was mid-way during the agrarian period, roughly 5,000 years ago, that we see the rise of city-states and life beginnings of civilization." (3) The first stage development took place in the biological evolution and the second stage points towards the development of the social life of humans.

In the ancient times the pre-Socratic philosophers were concerned about 'arche' (the stuff with which the universe is made of). In one of the pre-Socratic schools, "the Ionian idea that the universe is not human-centered was milestone in our understanding of the cosmos. But it was dropped for about twenty centuries till Galileo...there was no clear distinction between human and physical laws."(4) (Incidentally, even before Copernicus and Galileo one of the Ionian scientists, Aristarchus (c 310 BC – 230 BC), "became the first person to argue that the earth is not the centre of our planetary system, but rather it and the other planets orbit the much larger sun."(5)

The way humans understood reality, in fact, was very gradual with trial and error methods. In fact, "several hundred years later, Stoics, the school of Greek philosophers that arose in the third century BC, did make a distinction between human statutes and natural laws, but they included rules of human conduct they considered universal – such as veneration of God and obedience to parents – in the category of natural laws. Conversely, they often described physical processes in legal terms and believed them to be in need of enforcement, even though the objects required to 'obey' the laws were inanimate." (6)

Only in the seventeenth century, the modern concepts of laws of nature emerged and it seems Johannes Kepler (1571 -1630) was the first scientist to understand the laws of nature in the sense of modern science. Surprisingly, "Galileo (1504 – 1642) did not use the term 'law' in most of his scientific works. He advocated the important principles that observation is the basis of science and that the purpose of science is to research the quantitative relationships that exist between physical phenomena." (7)

Rene Descartes (1596 -1650), the father of Modernism, "first formulated the concept of laws of nature. He believed that all physical phenomena must be explained in terms of the collisions of moving masses, which were governed by three

laws. The laws of nature are valid in all places and at all times. The moving bodies obey the laws do not mean that they have ‘minds.’ With a given set of ‘initial conditions’ the laws of nature determine how a system will evolve over time, but without a specific set of initial conditions, the evolution cannot be specified.” (8)

Hence, one can easily conclude that “it was around 300 to 400 years ago, when the stability of agrarian society gave way to the radical dynamism and materialism of the scientific-industrial era, another radical perpetual change took place.” It is necessary to understand at this juncture that science is very young compared to the existence of human race on the planet Earth. The third stage emerged at the advent of scientific advancements which was definitely a milestone in the history of humans. In each stage the way humans looked at reality changed and all aspects of life also changed with it, “including the work that people do, the ways they live together, how they relate to one another, and how they see their role in society and place in the universe.” (10)

The change in the paradigm shift was not adequately noticeable in the first two stages as the adverse effects of those periods had not become conspicuous to the extent of the threat of the annihilation of human lives on the face of the earth, as it is mentioned elsewhere in this paper. “The paradigm of the scientific-industrial era, while it has afforded great benefits, is now generating far more problems than it is solving.” (11) In fact, some kinds of problems are catalysts for a paradigm shift, but when they extend and expand to the level of the life-threat of humans and nature, they must be attended to from the root level. Albert Einstein has clearly stated that we cannot solve our problems at the same level at which they are created. A new perspective is mandatory.

Hence, this paper aims at bringing out the new paradigm, a new way of looking at the reality. It is **an** epistemological journey into the metaphysics of being human. Studying the metaphysics of science is important to get in touch with the new of understanding as “metaphysical assumptions often go unexamined. Most of the time these assumptions work perfectly fine, so, it doesn’t matter if they are taken for granted.” (12)

Only after the advent of scientific developments, a new way of understanding the world, in fact, developed. Till them, to be precise,

in the medieval period, especially in the West, “all knowledge all knowledge about nature was revealed solely through the literal word of theological scripture. The world was intensely personal, organic, capricious, meaningful, and teeming with supernatural causes. People found themselves buffeted by unknown, unseen causes attributed to disembodied spirits, or to divine agencies or to God.” (13)

### **The Mind-set**

From the time of Sir Isaac Newton classical science came to stay and what gained momentum was determinism and materialism. “It was accepted in the scientific arena that the universe, which is composed of material objects, operates according to a uniform of set of impersonal rules of cause and effect. It was later denounced as reductionism, the assumption that physical objects and systems could be understood in terms of their parts.” (14) From the classical scientific way of understanding, the universe began with many assumptions such as the real is measurable, called positivism. It was stated that the universe exists completely independent of the observer, called atomism and “particles interact like colliding billiard balls, or like gears in a clock, called mechanism, once little particles are set on their way, we can in principle predict what they are going to do indefinitely in the future, called determinism; and everything interacts only with its closest neighbours, and there is no action at a distance, called localism.” (15) This kind of worldview proved to be extremely influential in all the spheres of life. It reshaped the understanding of people about themselves, society, art, music and everything else. “The profound impact of the new secular view of nature was captured by the nineteenth-century. German philosopher Nietzsche in his famous phrase: “God is dead.” (16) As the reason reigned in understand the reality in the modern period, as God reigned in understanding the reality earlier, atheism gained momentum. Sheldrake says, “The materialistic philosophy achieved its dominance within institutional science in the second half of the nineteenth century, and was closely linked to the rise of atheism in Europe.” (17)

### **To learn to unlearn**

As change is only permanent, nothing remained changeless. The classical science was questioned. Materialism was questioned by

Einstein's equivalence of matter and energy. Einstein's general theory of relativity and special theory of relativity, chaos theory, systems theory, Heisenberg's uncertainty principle criticized materialism, determinism, and positivism. Classical scientific explanations were not able to solve many questions that were raised by others. But, "our mind has a natural tendency to reject the things that do not fit into the frame of the scientific or philosophical beliefs of our time."(18) Here are some points to ponder over to rethink the so called indelible and blind faith one has in science:

1. In the background of human society, which may be approximately 6000 years old, minimum to say the least, the advent of science is nascent – just for 300 to 400 years old and therefore, very young.
2. "The sciences of inert matter have made immense progress, while those of the living beings remain in a rudimentary state."(19)
3. "Human beings are not good subjects for scientific investigation. One does not easily find people with identical characteristics. It is almost impossible to verify the results of an experiment by referring the subject to a sufficiently similar control."(20)
4. Science is basically value-free, purposeless and highly materialistic in its approach which is indeed a handicap to study human beings scientifically.
5. Science cannot be said to be systematic in the sense that the discoveries do not follow any systematic pattern either to understand the microcosm or the macrocosm. Most of the scientific discoveries are born mainly because of the different types of interests of the scientists and their social, economic, political and religious backgrounds. So, the scientific discoveries are not without hidden agendas.
6. Science has assumed that there is empty space between things.
7. It has almost always segregated the observer and the observed in order to be objective and measurable.
8. Hence, materialism, determinism, positivism, atomism, realism and localism of science have paved way for the mechanistic world view which became inert, lifeless, valueless and purposeless.

The following are a few examples from our experience of the physical universe to ascertain that not all things can be established from the classical science point of view:

1. Here is an example from biology that cannot be sufficiently answered by classical science. In human body "the average neuron consists of about 80 percent water and about 1, 00,000 molecules. The brain contains about 10 billion cells, hence about 10 to the power of 15 molecules. Each nerve cell in the brain receives an average of 10,000 connections from other brain cells, and the molecules within each cell are renewed about 10,000 times in a lifetime. We lose about 1,000 cells a day, so the total brain cell population is decimated by about 10 million cells, losing in the process some 100 billion cross-linkages. And yet, as P.A. Weiss writes, "despite that ceaseless change of detail in that vast population of elements, our basic patterns of behavior, our memories, our sense of integral existence as an individual, have retained their unitary continuity pattern. All of the material used to express that pattern has disappeared, and yet the pattern still exists. What holds the pattern...?" (21) This question is not easily answered by the assumptions of a mechanistic and purely materialistic science.
2. The British philosopher and mathematician Alfred North Whitehead argued that even evolutionary philosophy, itself founded on classical principles, is inconsistent with the assumption of materialism: "The aboriginal stuff or material from which a materialistic philosophy starts, is incapable of evolution. This material is in itself the ultimate substance. Evolution, on the materialistic theory, is reduced to the role of being another word for the description of changes of the external relations between portions of matter. There is nothing to evolve, because one set of external relations is as good as any other set of external relations. There can be merely only change, purposeless and unprogressive... the doctrine thus cries aloud for a conception of organism as fundamental to nature." (22)
3. According to Roger Sperry, a Nobel laureate, we cannot predict all known chemical properties based on what is known about physics and we cannot predict all biological properties based upon chemistry and so on. "According to Sperry, science cannot claim to be complete until it recognizes

“inner conscious awareness as a causal reality.” (23)

4. Also, there are some quotes by very famous scientists which disturb the classical science.

a. Erwin Schrodinger, a Nobel laureate, says, “I have... no hesitation in declaring quite bluntly that the acceptance of a really existing material world, as the explanation of the fact that we all find in the end that we are empirically in the same environment, is mystical and metaphysical.” (24)

b. Albert Einstein has said, “The most beautiful and most profound emotion we can experience is the sensation of the mystical. It is the sower of all true science. He to whom this emotion is a stranger, who can no longer wonder and stand rapt in awe, is as good as dead.” (25)

c. Renee Weber, a philosopher at Rutgers University, “It is mysticism, not science, which pursues the Grand Unified Theory with ruthless logic – the one that includes the questioner within its answer. Although the scientist wants to unify everything in one ultimate equation, he does not want to unify consistently, since he wants to leave himself outside that equation. Of course, with the advent of quantum mechanics, that is far less possible than it was in classical physics. Now observer and observed are admitted to constitute a unit. But the full meaning of this has not yet caught up with most of the community of scientists who, despite quantum mechanics, believe they can stand aloof from what they work on.” (26)

d. In physics, Bell’s theorem shows, “The world’s deep reality is maintained by an invisible quantum connection whose ubiquitous influence is unmediated, unmitigated, and immediate.” (27)

These statements have nothing to do with the religious doctrines. But, they talk about the nature and experience of interconnectedness. Fritjof Capra in his book “The Web of life – a new scientific understanding of new systems” speaks about this kind of interconnectedness. He opines that the subatomic particles should not be understood as merely ‘things’ but they must be recognized as interconnections among many things. This interconnection is again not limited to particular things, but connected to many other things and the interconnections of other things mingle with other connections. So, in quantum theory we cannot conclude that we are dealing with ‘things’ independently and separately but we

always dealwith interconnections and interconnections of interconnections holistically.” (28) Therefore, now is the need of understanding the reality from a different, quantum physics, point of view

### The New Metaphysics anticipated

“To help clarify the differences between the classical and the newly evolving assumption in science, philosopher of science Willis Harman proposed the comparisons shown in the following figure.” (29)

S.No.	Orthodox ‘separateness’ science(Basic Assumption)	Proposed ‘wholeness’ science (Basic Assumption)
1	The universe is made up of fundamental particles and quanta that are separate from one another except for certain connections made through fields.	The universe is a single whole within which every part is intimately connected to every other part.
2.	The universe is scientifically understood to be ultimately deterministic.	A deterministic universe stems from the assumption of ‘separateness; there is no reason to expect it to be borne out in experience.
3.	Nonnormal states of consciousness, dissociation, and so on, are to be studied in the context of the pathological. Consciousness is a by-product of material evolution and is an epiphenomenon with no intrinsic meaning or purpose.	The entire spectrum of states consciousness, including religious experiences and mystical states, has been at the heart of all cultures. These states of consciousness may be an important investigative too, a ‘window’ to other dimensions of reality.
4.	Commonly reported experiences known as ‘meaning coincidences’, synchronistic, and psychic, must ultimately have a physical or psychological explanation or be merely coincidence or fraud.	The question is not ‘how can we explain telepathy?’ but rather, ‘how can we explain why our minds are not cluttered by all that information in other minds?’ Not ‘how can we explain psychokinesis?, but rather, ‘how can we understand why our minds have such a limited effect in the physical world?’
5.	There is no evidence for ‘drives’ or ‘purposes’ in evolution. What	Human beings are part of the whole and there is no justification for assuming that ‘drives’

	appears as a survival instinct is merely the result of natural selection; any organisms that did not have such a drive were selected out. There is no scientific evidence for anything in the universe resembling ‘purpose’ or ‘design’. The biological sciences use the term ‘teleology’ for convenience, but what it really means is that those structures and behaviours were ones that contributed to survival.	such as survival, belongingness, achievement, and self-actualization are not also characteristics of the whole. Similarly, since we experience ‘purpose’ and ‘values’ there is no justification for assuming these are not also characteristics of the whole. The universe may be genuinely, and not just apparently, purposeful and goal-oriented.
6.	A scientific explanation of a phenomenon consists in relating the phenomenon consists in relating the phenomenon to increasingly general, fundamental, and invariant scientific laws. Ultimate scientific explanations are in terms of the motions and interactions of fundamental particles and forces.	There is no reason to assume that scientific laws are invariant; it seems more plausible that they too evolve. Hence, extrapolation to the big bang may be suspect. Evidence points to consciousness either evolving along with, or being prior to, the material world.
7.	The truest information about objective reality is obtained through the observer being as detached as possible. A clear separation can be maintained between the subjective and objective knowledge.	There is an ultimate limit to objectivity, in that some ‘observer effect’ is inevitable in any observation. Understanding comes not from detachment, objectivity, and analysis but from identifying with the observed, becoming one with it.
8.	All scientific knowledge is ultimately based on data obtained through the physical senses. Such information is ultimately quantifiable.	Reality is contacted through physical sense data through inner, deep intuitive knowing. Our encounter with reality is not limited to being aware of messages from our physical senses, but includes aesthetic, spiritual, and mystical senses.

Some of the important concepts that need to be unlearned for understanding the reality from a new vantage point are taken from the book called ‘The Science Delusion. Dr. Rupert Sheldrake, a biologist, in his book titles, “The Science Delusion – Freeing the spirit of inquiry” states the following ten dogmas as the scientific creed: He says,

**“Here are the ten core beliefs that most scientists take for granted...**

1. Everything is essentially mechanical.
2. All matter is unconscious. It has no inner life or subjectivity or point of view. Even human consciousness is an illusion produced by the material activities of brains.
3. The total amount of matter and energy is always the same (with the exception of the Big Bang, when all the matter and energy of the universe suddenly appeared)
4. The Laws of nature is fixed.
5. Nature is purposeless, and evolution has no goal or direction.
6. All biological inheritance is material, carried in the genetic material, DNA, and in material structures.
7. Minds are inside heads and are nothing but the activities of brains. When you look at the tree, the image of the tree you are seeing is not ‘out there’, where it seems to be, but inside your brain.
8. Memories are stored as material traces in brains and are wiped out at death.
9. Unexplained phenomena like telepathy are illusory.”
10. Mechanistic medicine is the only kind that really works.” (30)

(Apart from what Dr. Sheldrake said there is also the preconceived idea that our feelings, thoughts and beliefs have no effect on the universe.)

Dr. Sheldrake goes on to say that “the founders of mechanistic science in the seventeenth century, including Johannes Kepler, Galileo Galilee, Rene Descartes, Francis Bacon, Robert Boyle and Isaac Newton, were all practicing Christians. Kepler, Galileo and Descartes were Roman Catholics; Bacon, Boyle and Newton Protestants. Boyle, a wealthy aristocrat, was exceptionally devout, and spent large amounts of his own money to promote

missionary activity in India. Newton devoted much time and energy to biblical scholarship, with a particular interest in the dating of prophecies. He calculated that the Day of Judgment would occur between the years 2060 and 2344 and set out the details in his book *Observations on the Prophecies of Daniel and the Apocalypse of St. John*" (31)

Also, he says, "Seventeenth-century science created a vision of the universe as a machine intelligently designed and started off by God. Everything was governed by eternal mathematical laws, which are ideas in the mind of God." (32) Mechanistic science rejected the doctrines and expelled all souls from nature. The material world became literally inanimate, a soulless machine. Matter was purposeless and unconscious; the planets and stars were dead. "In the entire physical universe, the only non-mechanical entities were human minds, which were immaterial, and part of spiritual realm that included angels and God. No one could explain how mind related to the machinery of human bodies, but Rene Descartes speculated that they interacted in the pineal gland, the small pine-cone-shaped organ nestled between the right and left hemispheres near the centre of the brain". (33)

### **Quantum Physics changes the understanding of reality**

To unlearn what was learnt from the classical science is mandatory in today's digital world and for which one must turn to quantum physics. It is not possible to discuss all the contentious concepts advocated by science in a short span of this paper. So a general itinerary of the new way understanding is sketched here.

So far it is discussed in this paper that the "classical science is based on the belief that there exists a real external world whose properties are definite and independent of the observer who perceives them... Both observer and observed are parts of a world that has an objective science, and any distinction between them has no meaningful significance. In philosophy this belief is called realism." (34) Now, it is time to turn to quantum physics. Stephen Hawking says, "According to the principles of quantum physics, which is an accurate description of nature, a particle has neither a definite position nor a definite velocity unless and until those quantities are measured by an observer." (35) In some cases individual objects don't even

have an independent existence but rather exist only as part of an ensemble of many.

"Quantum physics is a new model of reality that gives us a picture of the universe." (36) Quantum physics brings out the wave/particle duality. A French aristocrat named de Broglie "postulated the wave nature of particles such as electrons and suggested that all matter has wave properties... In physics, every wave is described in what experts call a wave equation...The wave equation was named for the man who discovered it: The Schrodinger Equation." (37) Erwin Schrodinger said that "the square of the wave function...indicates a probability...that is not actually real . . ." (38)

The famous double-slit experiment (39) also explains waves as probabilistic distributions till it is perceived. Werner Heisenberg came out with the uncertainty principle which "tells us that there are limits to our ability to simultaneously measure certain data, such as position and velocity of a particle... The more precisely you measure speed, the less precisely you measure position and vice versa." (40) From his uncertainty principle it is established that "nothing is ever located at a definite point because if it were, the uncertainty in momentum would have to be infinite. According to it, each particle has some probability of being found anywhere in the universe." (41) Therefore, Feynman exclaimed, "I think I can safely say that nobody understands quantum mechanics." (42)

So, "according to quantum model the particle is said to have no definite position during the time it is between the starting point and the endpoint. It does not mean that particles take no path as they travel between source and screen. It could mean that particles take every possible path connecting those points. Rather than following a single definite path, particles take every path, and they take them all simultaneously." (43)

### **Past is affected by the present**

Quantum physics tells us that "no matter how thorough our observation of the present, the (unobserved) past, like the future, is indefinite and exists only as a spectrum of possibilities." (44) The fact here is that the past takes no definite form means that observations you make on a system in the present affect its past. Though it seems that it is not comprehensible, it becomes comprehensible if one knows quantum physics. Albert Einstein once

said that the most incomprehensible thing about the universe is that it is comprehensible.

At the advent of quantum physics the distinction between the observer and the observed is blurred. John Wheeler, a Princeton physicist and colleague of Einstein, offers a radically different view of our role in creation. In terms that are bold, clear and graphic. Wheeler says, "We had this old idea, that there was a universe out there, and here is man, the observer, safely protected from the universe by a six-inch slab of plate glass." (45) Wheeler continues, "Now we learn from the quantum world that even to observe so minuscule an object as an electron we have to shatter that plate glass; we have to reach in there... So the old word observer simply has to be crossed off the books, and we must put in the new word participator." (46)

#### **Non-locality in space and time**

From the above-mentioned analysis, it is understood that there is non-locality of space and time which means that the physical objects in fact appear to be separate but they are connected in such ways that they transcend the limitations of space and time. This may seem to be an anomaly for the classical science but this is what the experiments in quantum physics show. "Scientific experiments show that things that seem to be separate are actually connected in fundamental ways that transcend the limitations of ordinary space and time. Described as 'non-locality' this is one of the most stunning insights from modern science." (47)

#### **Freedom is the hall mark of the universe**

"Another shift in the scientific view of the universe has to do with views about the existence of freedom. Whereas the traditional physicists have seen the cosmos as being like a clockwork mechanism that is locked into predetermined patterns of development, the new physics sees it as a living organism that has the freedom and spontaneity to grow in unexpected ways. Freedom is at the very foundation of our cosmos. Uncertainty (and thus freedom) is so fundamental that quantum physics describes reality in terms of probabilities, not certainties. No one part of the cosmos determines the functioning of the whole; rather, everything seems to be connected with everything else, weaving the cosmos into one vast interacting system." (48)

Fritof Capra also speaks about the interconnections that exist in the universe. "In the 1920s, however, quantum theory forced them (the scientists) to accept the fact that solid material objects of classical physics dissolve at the subatomic level into wavelike patterns of probabilities. These patterns moreover do not represent probabilities of things, but rather probabilities of interconnections. The subatomic particles have no meaning as isolated entities but can be understood only as interconnections, or correlations, among various processes of observation and measurement." (49) The universe is a recreating and regenerating one. It provides the human beings with an opportunity to exercise their freedom to do the same.

#### **The Universe is Conscious/Consciousness**

When the universe is understood as recreating and regenerating, then it implies that it has the capacity for knowing. If the universe is alive, then, evidences must be found in the universe. The respected physicist Freeman Dyson writes this about consciousness at the quantum level: "Matter in quantum mechanics is not an inert substance but an active agent, constantly making choices between alternative possibilities. . . . It appears that mind, as manifested by the capacity to make choices, is to some extent inherent in every electron." This does not mean that an atom has the same consciousness as a human being, but rather that an atom has a reflective capacity appropriate to its form and function."(50)

#### **The implications**

Like any paradigm shift, the shift to "a living universe paradigm is transformative. In addition to changing our view of the universe, it can alter our sense of identity, our sense of purpose, how we relate with others, and much more. Let's consider a few of its many implications." (51) In the industrial era paradigm, we are no more than biological beings, ultimately separate from others and the rest of the universe. "The new findings from physics, however, reveal that we are intimately connected with the entire cosmos." (52)

The human beings have self-consciousness. In fact, all living creatures are also conscious, at least, in a dormant level. That is, "animals "know," humans have the capacity to "know that we know." In this new paradigm, our

sense of identity takes on a paradoxical and mysterious quality: we are both observer and observed, knower and that which is known. We are each completely unique yet completely connected with the entire universe.” (53)

### **Our universe is alive, purposeful and cooperative**

From the analysis of many experiments, it is established that the universe is consciousness and alive. A caution is worth mentioning here that ‘life’ is not to be understood as humans have life. The universe is active and it has a purpose and it changes when the humans change their observations about the universe. The universe is evolving and it is not evolving in an isolated manner. Its evolving also depends upon the progress and evolving of the humans.

The purpose of human life is to evolve with the nature says Tom Campbell(54), a NASA Physicist and a Consciousness Researcher in his book, ‘My Big TOE’ and all his video speeches. Evolving means lowering entropy. Entropy is a word in physics which can be understood as ‘measurement of ordering’. If the entropy is low, then, ordering in the universe takes place and if the entropy is high, then there is devolving – disordering takes place. If there is lowering of entropy, then the Nature also evolves.

Therefore, the nature is always ready to cooperate with all living beings and especially with humans. The lowering of entropy is nothing but love according to Tom Campbell. He says that one has to love to lower the entropy and to be in alignment with nature. If one does not, he or she devolves due to the higher entropy. Hence, the world is not a place to mourn or a battle-ground to struggle for life. It is place to enjoy life and progress. Everyone is to be excited to be alive. Life is worth-living and in fact, easy. The complications, struggles and sufferings come because humans are not in alignment with the Nature.

### **Living ethically is mandatory**

Generally speaking, ethics is understood as relative. Ethics is relative in the sense of doing. But in the sense of being, it is absolute. It means that all are to be in alignment with the Nature and that is, to lower the entropy – to love and care for others. But the actions of the humans depend upon the situations. The actions are understood as

culpable or non-culpable depending upon the intentions of the doers. So, what decides the culpability of the actions are their intentions? Intention is the expression of one’s Being. So, one has to concentrate on being. To be human one must be ethical, in the sense of lowering entropy, in the sense of loving others. Love is, in fact, one-way traffic. It is not a two-way process. One has to love another and love only, expecting no response whatsoever from the other person, whoever she or he may be. In that sense, love – lowering entropy – is absolute. One is expected to be in touch with his or **being human**, which is far more important than anything else. This is how the new humanism is understood in this paper.

### **Conclusion**

This paper attempts to elucidate the new way of understanding the Reality from the point of view of Quantum Physics, which is a recent science. Newtonian physics understood the Universe as a grand machine, which is assembled of many different parts. That paved way for a mechanical and deterministic understanding of Nature. Till now, the classical science has reigned high.

After the advent of quantum physics, the reality is understood as probabilistic distributions and the observer’s observation is necessary for deriving any meaning from the reality. It opened new portals of science. The particles are ultimately waves and they are probabilistic distributions. They do not fit in any space and time. Till they are observed they remain as probabilistic distributions only. This has helped the humans understand themselves not as by-standers or spectators of the universe, but as real participators in the universe. When the universe is participatory, then it is understood that living has a purpose and therefore cooperation is mandatory. Now, it is the responsibility of the self-conscious living beings, humans, to be in alignment with the Nature by lowering entropy that is expressing love and ensuring the participation in Nature positively. For which, humans have to be ethical and loving – to love is absolute necessity for evolving – for progressing or evolving with the nature. To be in touch with the being level, one must be absolutely loving. If one lingers on in the doing level, there are umpteen numbers of chances to err. If one is in the being level and loving, there will not be any room for any competitive nature for humans. There

will only be cooperation as the Nature does. Hence, the secret of human life is to be conscious of his or her being human.

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## Beyond the Postcolonial

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### Abstract

Postcolonial studies have been topical for over four decades and have been effective to bring the margins to the forefront. It is a non-mainstream theory that challenges the dominant Eurocentric critical thinking and theories. Its focus is not single but diverse issues: literature, art, music, linguistics, slavery, migration, discrimination, historiography and various kinds of subjugation like nationalism, racism, gender, and identity are explored. Presently, there is a tendency among the postcolonial scholars and critics to move beyond the originary source to re-interpreting it since the phenomenal growth in communication technologies has altered the notional understanding of cosmopolitanism, globalisation, and transnationalism. Subsequently new discourses have evolved. The ideas related to postcolonialism lend variety of analyses of politics and culture. Of course, culture is perceived not as static but as a dynamic system. It constructs and reconstructs itself and is seen as flowing and developing. This flow leads to global mixing and hybridisation of cultures. Through the continual interaction and exchange of cultural presentations, cultural identity is produced and reproduced leading to changing representations of cultural difference. Humanity which is bound together invisibly by multiple desires, fears, ambitions, and aspirations is destined to travel together despite the differences.

**Key words:** non-mainstream, discrimination, subjugation, hybridisation of cultures, cultural identity, and cultural difference

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Postcolonial has runs its course. Over a period of forty years, it has been effective in dismantling and altering Euro-centricism, binarism, occidental supremacy, canons and critical discourses of the West, and hierarchical social construct. The emergence of non-canonical literature severely altered the worldview of the West. The essentialist notions of identity,

ontological status of culture, and fixity of geographical boundaries have been questioned. Identity, culture, and geographical boundaries have been conceived as fluid and illusionary. Identity has been perceived not as product only process. Uniformity or standardization of culture has been rejected.

Some postcolonial theorists imagine that postcolonial has reached a saturation point. But others differ. The trending of global capitalism, the signs of corporate imperialism, ongoing colonisation of territories, racial hierarchies, gender dynamics, the struggle of people to protect biodiversity and livelihood indicate challenges. Social, economical and political landscapes have got altered. The indigenous peoples and societies suffer multiple kinds of oppression, injustice, inequality. Uniformity is imposed by human-made systems. Consequently, the concept of human freedom entails new thinking. At this critical juncture, the agendas and scope of postcolonial studies are re-conceptualised by the postcolonial scholars and critics to enhance the meaning of human life. They observe new directions in postcolonial studies since humanity faces environmental catastrophe.

An array of questions queued in the minds of readers of postcolonial studies when the phrase “beyond the postcolonial” was first articulated by the postcolonial scholars. It triggered new enthusiasm among the intellectuals. Does postcolonial theory cease to function? What could be the significance of this new expression? Does the term mean differently than postcolonial? Or do the scholars attempt to reiterate the functionality of postcolonial? Do “beyond the postcolonial” prompt new discussions and debates based on the tradition of postcolonial? When said beyond postcolonial, does it mean return to the theory for want innovation and exhaustion of critical thinking? Is postcolonial theory engaged with new orientation based on originary source or does it completely move away to construct new theory? Are the

existing theoretical areas crossed-over in order to provide space for contemporary art and fluid cultural practice? Are there subsequent discussions and interpretations on postcolonial?

The postcolonial writings of the present day expose newer concerns different from that of European colonisation. Arundhati Roy, in her controversial book *The Algebra of Infinite Justice* exposes the unprecedented rise of the USA as a global superpower. Monopolisation of American corporations and its capitalism across the world has irrevocably altered the global landscape and its economy, culture and politics. Thomas Friedman too claims that the phenomenon of globalisation has reached a newer height and has acquired changed meaning. He chronicles three phases of globalisation in his influential book *The World is Flat*. The current era starting from 2000 CE is labelled by him as “Globalization 3.0”. The first phase, “Globalization 1.0” began with Columbus’s discovery of the New World and ended with the Industrial Revolution in Europe in 1800 CE. The second phase, “Globalization 2.0” was between

1800 CE and 2000 CE. During this time, multinational companies had been started and expanded to countries across the world. Invention of technologies and internet facilities had been used in trading. In the third phase, the advancement in technologies, use of personal computers and high speed internet surfing have significantly impacted not only global economy but also the culture, the life style and politics of the people. In other words, through globalisation process the corporations have attempted imposition of uniform standards, homogenisation of local cultures. Thus, in the name of development, the creativity of the ‘other’ has been obscured and social relationship has been dehumanised. At this critical juncture, postcolonial theorizing needs to be extended beyond the routines in order to devise strategies to tackle neo challenges perpetrated by neo-colonialism.

Cultural, religious, ethnic, and racial differences are unavoidable. The global community has live up in harmony despite differences.

## Journey Towards Recognition as a Person: A Study of Margaret Laurence's *The Diviners*

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### Abstract

The first wave feminism in Canada focused on access to education and training and recognition of women as 'persons' under the law. It is largely based on 'maternal feminism' with the idea that women are natural care givers who should participate in public life. *The Diviners* by Margaret Laurence presents the condition of Morag who suffers the hegemony of the patriarch Brooke Skelton, her husband who controls everything about her and hampers her emergence as a writer. He does not allow her to have a child through him. But Morag who is orphaned at the age of five wants to have a child of her own. When Brooke is unwilling to have a child, Morag is unhappy about her legitimate desire being rejected. Brooke treats her like an object for his pleasures and not as a person whose wishes are to be honoured. She understands that nothing is possible beyond sterility. She happens to meet Jules Tonnerre, her childhood friend through whom she is able to have a child of her own. Brooke divorces her. The paper analyses a situation beyond the postcolonial and the kind of humanism attained through struggles and mental agony. Morag frees herself from the hegemony of Brooke; she overthrows a marriage and societal values to emerge as a person and as a mother. Later she finds acceptance as a writer and brings up her daughter amidst difficult circumstances.

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*The Diviners* portrays the subordination of Morag by Brooke Skelton. Morag, born of Scottish parents, orphaned at the age of five is adopted by Christie Logan, a town scavenger and his wife Prin who are childless. She is humiliated, suffers discrimination and mockery due to her foster father's profession. Manawaka is uncongenial for her growth and so she wants to leave the place, never to return. She goes to the university at Winnipeg to pursue her education. In the university, a professor of English, Brooke Skelton marries her. He considers his bride, a child and a princess. Morag accepts this initially as romantic. As days go by, Brooke comes upon her as a downright patriarch. He speaks to her cunningly, "you might feel a bit awkward about attending classes with your husband teaching there.... Well you won't need the degree... Education isn't getting a degree you know; it's learning, learning to think" (TD 220).

He discourages her from taking a degree. She leaves her formal education and tries to write. She has known her ability to write right from her childhood. She was encouraged by Melrose, one of her teachers in Manawaka. When she is the wife of Brooke, she tries to discuss her writings; but he fails to give any constructive criticism. The patriarchal mind set of Brooke pays least attention to her education and her talent to write. He wants her to be his wife above all. This means, she can neither be educated nor can she become a writer. Brooke looks at her only as an object ignoring all her attributes as a human being who can be educated and who can become a great writer.

Morag who has been an orphan wants a child of her own. When Morag needs a child, Brooke is reluctant to have one. He says, "what about seeing a doctor? I mean a diaphragm would be better. We don't want accidents. Accidents he means kids" (TD 220). Morag says, "But I want a child of yours Brooke". Even after eight years of married life, when Brooke is 39 and Morag is nearly 28, he does not allow her to have a child. Every time she expresses her desire to have a child, he manages to give some excuse or the other. He shows no change of mind. He is adamant and does not want to fulfil the aspiration of Morag to bear a child. He postpones her wish in order to avoid parenting. This denial of her legitimate wish is unbearable to Morag.

S.J. Woods says that Laurence was described by all who knew her as a good mother. Her decision to follow a vocation of writing at the price of her marriage amidst a family and community offering no support was a wrenching one. Despite such insecurity and indecision, she left her husband, her community and her extended family. But she took her children with her (76). In her memoirs, she says children are the core of our lives (DE 135). Karen Stein summarises the view of Nancy Chodorow that women seek emotional fulfilment through mothering because they do not find it in heterosexual relationship. This shows the importance of motherhood in the life of women. But Brooke does not understand the need of Morag.

Brooke spoils her formal education and does not appreciate her growth as a writer. He does not allow her to have a child. So, sterility in all aspects is the result of her marriage. He proves himself to be an insensitive and insensible chauvinist and an embodiment of patriarchal

hegemony. He is particular about treating her like an object, to be used for his pleasures. He fails to understand and accept Morag as a person or a human being like him, with emotions, likes and dislikes. For him woman is not a person but an object of pleasure. *A Margaret Laurence Reader* rightly observes, "Brooke strikes her as a downright patriarch for he confines her to a domestic schedule and attempts to govern all her activities, both physical and intellectual" (127). Further he is described as a dominant patriarch who becomes the authority on Morag's life and femininity under the guise of a well mannered professor of English Literature (175).

Brooke, as Patricia Morley views considers Morag as a child and a princess. This Princess has been trapped in the elegant apartment tower in Toronto after their marriage. (124). Clara Thomas brings out the fact that initially Brooke seems to stand for all that Morag has been searching for. Brooke has a great glamour for the young Morag. He seems to represent everything she wants; all the prestige, the security, the intellectual fulfilment and the glamour she left Manawaka to search for (Morley 15). As days go by, Morag feels blocked, hurt, frustrated and hampered by Brooke in both her potentialities for creativity and giving life. The need to survive and then to grow impels Morag to reject the cocoon of unreality that her marriage with Brooke has come to be (Morley 157).

To be the wife of Brooke means to be uneducated and sterile both as a writer and as a woman; she has to be an object for proclaiming his superiority over her. This patriarchal hegemony is unacceptable for Morag and she decides to leave him though the future is bleak. She makes no financial claims from him; such is her thirst for freedom, individuality and individuation. And such is her need to be recognised as a person. She leaves the suffocating experience under Brooke. Brooke's patriarchal attitude drives her away from him.

However, Brooke is shattered when no knows that Morag has left him for another man though he divorces her later. Truly speaking the desires of Morag are justifiable and they are natural and simple. Patriarchal hegemony takes away the freedom of women directly or indirectly and forces women to live in subordination to men. With the efforts of the feminist thinkers and women writers, women try to come off the fetters of patriarchal

hegemony. Laurence presents the gradual change of women in her protagonists of Manawaka fiction.

Morag's renewed relationship with Jules, a Metis proves to be a threshold to her creativity. Among her characters, Morag stands above all for she has managed to become a writer and a mother by using her mind. Though she has to struggle hard and disentangle the oppressive relationship with Brooke, she takes a bold decision to leave him without even making financial claims. With the revived relationship with Jules, she finds herself encouraged in creativity. They love each other deeply. When she begets a child, she names her after Jules's sister Piquette. Morag attains self fulfilment in her life. In *The Fire Dwellers*, Tess Fogler is compelled to live without children by her husband Jake Fogler. She attempts suicide later. But Morag begets Pique after severing her relationship with Brooke.

The path is not easy. She brings up Pique with a lot of difficulties faced by a single parent and manages to endure societal censure for Pique is called a 'half breed'. Whenever Pique is upset, Morag proves herself to be a strong moral support. In leaving Brooke and seeking a relationship with Jules, Morag has found a human companion who recognises and treats her as a person and allows her to bear his child if she likes it. He gives his Metis songs to be incorporated in her novels. Though not educated like Brooke, he values her skill as a writer.

Thus Morag's is a journey from her position as an object to the position of a person.

Though she has chosen the path that is not taken by many, she is able to fulfil her aspirations to become a writer and a mother.

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## Resistance against Stereotypical Imaging of Woman-A Study of Bapsi Sidhwa's *An American Brat*

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### Abstract

Bapsi Sidhwa's *An American Brat* published in 1993 foregrounds multiplicity of meanings. It delineates cross-culturalism, ethnic purity and image of women in general and traditional view about man-woman relationship, inter-community marriage, religious antagonisms, struggle for individual freedom and self-fulfillment in particular. The novel is set against the backdrop of political turmoil in Pakistan where Bhutto government has been removed from power and martial has been imposed. The first part of the novel tells the story of Feroza Ginwalla, a traditional-bound Pakistani-Parsee girl and her reluctance to change while the second part highlights her assimilation in American culture. Feroza's parents think that migration to America will broaden the outlook of Feroza and remove the "puritanical rubbish out of her head" (14). Though she goes there involuntarily, she is enthusiastic about visiting a developed country. Her journey from innocence to experience creates awareness in her and she starts liking the new environment, new culture and modern life of America. She nurtures new hopes and fresh thoughts and changes her way of life. She challenges the fundamental doctrines of religions and cultures. She discards the gender stereotypical signs from her mind when she falls in love with a Jewish American. This change in Feroza alarms her parents that they do not want her to marry a non-Parsee. Both the Islamic fundamentalism and the Parsee ethnicity cannot have their control over Feroza's new-fangled ideas about her future in America. Feroza strongly resists not only the Islamic conservative ideologies about woman but also her own ethnic milieu's paradigm on woman. Feroza who creates her own space in an alien society is the representative of the liberated and autonomous woman of postcolonial era.

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Bapsi Sidhwa a South Asian Pakistani woman novelist, entered into the orbit of Diaspora fiction in 1990s. She has written five internationally acclaimed novels, *The Pakistani Bride*, *Crow Eaters*, *Cracking India*, *An American Brat*, and *Water*. She deals her novels with certain postcolonial themes like partition, women's issues, multiculturalism and cultural clash. On the themes of women's issues she provides her women protagonists with the postcolonial concept of resistance in order to change their images from stereotypes. *An American Brat* speaks about the positive and negative sides of the multi religious and multicultural aspects through its outstanding woman character without any preconception. Feroza Ginwalla, a Pakistani Parsee girl of traditional bound starts her journey from Lahore to Denver to explore the modern ways of life. Her journey from innocence to experience creates awareness in her that she thinks of a different and modern life beyond religions and cultures. Feroza rises up with new hopes and fresh thoughts and changes her way of life. She challenges the fundamental doctrines of religions and cultures. She discards the gender stereotypical signs from her mind when she falls in love with a Jewish American. This change in Feroza alarms her parents that they do not want her to marry a non-Parsee. Both the Islamic fundamentalism and the Parsee ethnicity cannot have their control over Feroza's new-fangled ideas about her future in America. Feroza strongly resists not only the Islamic conservative ideologies for woman but also her own ethnic milieu's paradigm on woman. Feroza is a character depicted by the novelist has the postcolonial traits that as a woman she creates her own space in an alien society and she representative of the women of postcolonial era.

Since time immemorial, woman has been assigned with certain female stereotypic values such as to marry and have children. Woman is

conditioned not only to be docile and modest but also to be exposed as loving, caring, nurturing, and sympathetic in the familial set up. She has not been permitted to be an independent both in social and economical stature. Woman's biological difference is viewed as a weakness so that she is forced to obtain specific image. According to this a woman must possess delicate manners and behaviors throughout her life time. This approach has been in practice among the women, thinking that then only they can be in safe net. They were taught to believe if they possess the 'woman image' they will be regarded as "Goddesses". This ideology was reflected in the writings of the male writers of any literature in the global site. It also happened in the South Asian literature both male and female writers of pre independent era portrayed their women characters as dependent beings. They showed the women protagonists compulsorily dependents to their men. The women characters were glorified for they restrict themselves within the domestic sphere and play their roles as mothers, daughters and wives. They were portrayed as uneducated and mute. The heroines in most of the novels were denied resistance against their oppressions. There was hardly any woman empowerment actions occurred in the stories. Most probably the women characters were exploited and they were retained as stereotypical in the novels. In this situation there were few women writers in the postcolonial era started viewing women subjugation in feminist perspectives and they came forward with solutions for women's issues. One among those women writers is Bapsi Sidhwa, and she as a postcolonial feminist woman writer raises her voice of opposition against women's oppression and she wishes for women's emancipation. According to her the primordial practices like denial of women's education, child marriage, and widowhood are the barriers against women empowerment.

In *An American Brat* the female protagonist Feroza Ginwalla is portrayed as a new woman of colonial Pakistan, challenging the old obsolete mind-set towards women and reshaping her individuality through education and economic independence. In the beginning, Feroza is shown as an innocent school girl that she internalizes the rigid codes of the Islamic rulers. Ever since her childhood, Feroza has been under stress to follow the rigid Islamic fundamental norms of Pakistan. Though she belongs to a rich Parsee family in Lahore, and has all fineries to enjoy, her mind is

packed with puritanical ethics and moral values. She is very exactly fit in the stereotypical image of woman. She is a hesitant to attend telephone calls and she does not want to perform a role in school drama. She openly shouts at her mother not to wear sleeveless blouse when she comes out especially to her school to pick her up. Feroza wears *pardha* like Muslim girls to her school. In this regard Zareen says, "She objected to my sleeveless sari-blouse! Really, this narrow minded attitude touted by General Zia is infecting her" (10). Feroza's understanding about her own female identity is based on the Islamic fundamentalism that restricts her free mobility. She internalizes certain conventional ideologies that include even riding on bicycle that is outlawed to a woman. The social and cultural set up of Pakistan warns its women folks to be dependents on their men for everything. It is obvious that Feroza in the beginning refuses to step out of that tradition-bound and conservative stand point. She possesses all required features of a stereotypical woman. Feroza is frequently complained by her mother Zareen for her custom-ridden attitudes. Zareen wants her daughter to be modern and independent. Feroza is urged to leave for America by her parents for three months vacation. They believe that life in America will change her orthodox mind set and so she will learn the modern ways of life.

As a postcolonial woman writer Bapsi Sidhwa encourages the women to emancipate themselves from the age-old customs and creedsthat have silenced them for centuries and to empower them. She points out how the fossilized social habits and customs obstacle the progress of the women in the society. She exposes how women in the postcolonial era sense their thralldom condition and how they create awareness of independency on their younger generation. In *An American Brat*, Zareen views the fundamentalism of Pakistani society as a handicap that would do nothing good to her daughter Feroza's future. Feroza represents the new generation that wants changes in its life style. The uniqueness of the postcolonial thinking is to bring changes in the fossilized social systems through rehabilitation and replacement.

Feroza goes to America in order to get refined. She easily gets along with that outlandish cultures and behavioural patterns. Importantly, her ignorance gradually vanishes from her mind when she mixes with the people of the modern society of

America. There is a sea change in her attitude and she starts valuing life with utmost enthusiasm and passion. She becomes focused on her catering professional studies and turns all her ears to enrich her knowledge in that. She earns sufficiently from her part time jobs. Feroza becomes generous to share her residence with her friends of different cultures and nationalities. She even doesn't bother to stay with lesbians. Above all, in spite of her rigid Parsee legacy, Feroza is able to accept David, a Jewish American's love proposal. Feroza's decision about her marriage with David reveals her mental ripeness to face any cultural conflicts in future. Her intention to marry David Press, over takes the classical rules of her Parsee ethnic system. According to the rules of Zoroastrians, a Parsee woman cannot marry a non-parsee and in such case the girl will be excommunicated from the ethnic milieu permanently. Feroza, indeed has been regular to Azura-masta temple in Lahore, a stauncher of her religion, and also has beliefs in Parsee rituals, is willing to marry a non-parsee shows her height of broad-mindedness. Feroza knows well that she will become paradigm in Parsee society, if she breaks traditions to marry a non-parsee. Feroza reacts in normal way when Zareen makes fuss to accept her daughter's choice of her life partner. Though Zareen's intention to mould Feroza modern is fulfilled, her Parsee background pulls her back to primitive system. Feroza withstands the pressure to marry a Parsee boy by declaring that she will neither marry David

Press or any Parsee gentleman in Lahore. She determines to go back to America to pursue her higher studies. Froza, a humble and conservative girl becomes conscious of her self- respect and identity and she creates a new space for her to live in.

One of the themes of Postcolonial literature is resistance against any oppression imposed upon the people who have weak and fragile metabolism. Particularly women are being underestimated regarding their physical and intellectual potentiality. Still, literatures in the world level produce a good number of women protagonists who resemble and reflect the real heroines in the social set up.

Thus, Feroza in *An American Brat* sheds away the traditional beliefs and she reimages herself as a non-stereotypical woman. She proves that she is an individual and independent woman.

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## Looking Beyond the Screen: A Study of Shashi Tharoor's *Show Business*

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### Abstract

Tharoor's *Show Business* is published in 1991. This is the result of his research and association with the Bombay film world. The scholar turned politician, Shashi Tharoor presents the other side of the twinkling cities. He also conveys the magical dream world of cinema has another untold story. Tharoor's *Show Business* is a story of a mega star Ashok Banjara. The story narrates how Ashok attains stardom. It pinpoints his popularity as a star and how he fails as a politician. The story, with this background conveys the theme of generation gap, culture in the film industry and the regrets in film industry. He concludes the story with a wonderful saying, "Life without regrets is a life lived without introspection, without enquiry. That is not a life worth living".

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Tharoor's *Shows Business*, published in 1991 is the result of his research into the ways of the Bombay film world. His detailed access to the sets, studios and locales, active co-operation of the film crews who allowed him to make a close study of their work and the filmy magazines of India helped him write this book that makes Bollywood

(as the celluloid city is popularly known) come alive before us. Tharoor, however, makes it clear that "I remain solely responsible for what I have made of the materials".

Bombay, the film capital of India, attracts the attention of every film goer greatly. Every year it gives many films to entertain the masses. It presents charming heroines and handsome heroes. They fight against the injustice single handedly. The good invariably triumphing over evil finally and it fascinates the masses. But the grim reality behind this beautiful shadow is unknown to many. Tharoor tears open the mask and exposes the real colour of the dream city.

Though the book primarily deals with the life of a superstar from a humble beginning to dizzy heights- the author makes an incisive study of a variety of issues closely associated with film industry such as appearance and reality, inner story behind stardom, plight of the junior artists, generation gap, filial ingratitude leading to parental anguish, politics and cinema, extra-marital relation etc.

This paper however highlights another aspect of the book. Quite often, in course of his narration, Tharoor looks beyond the show business and reflects on issues of deeper significance that concern all of us. Ashok Banjara, termed a mega star, the hero who earns in a day what the President of India makes in a year, heartthrob of million lies suspended between life and death in the intensive care unit of a plush Bombay hospital. As he lies fighting for life, memories crowd in on him.

His father, Kulbhushan, a politician, had always wanted Ashok to take on a political career. Naturally, he disapproves of his son's decision to join film industry. The ambition he has harboured is going to be ruthlessly thwarted. But the determined son goes to the tinsel town and, after initial struggle, attains stardom. The adulation he gets is awe-inspiring but his cinematic accomplishment fail, to make his father happy.

Now, in the Indian context, a father has some ambition about the career of his son. The psychologists attribute it to the unfulfilled wish of the father who wants to materialize it through his son. It does not occur to him that his son might be having entirely different ideas about his career. Besides the father thinks he has an undeniable and unchallengeable claim over his son: 'a father never switches off his fatherhood, whatever, his son may do'.

Kulbhushan has intense dislike for film industry where a star, despite his money and fame, 'earns his status by wearing drainpipe trousers and shaking his hips before the camera' and that it presents a 'never-never land' that bears 'no relation to any accurate perception of the India in which one live'. He advises his son to stay away from the make-believe world but while from his point of view it is the essential transmission of parental wisdom from father to son, the latter almost switches off his mind to the advice and guidance given with love. A hurt father tells his wife about the acute sense of disappointment he feels and she replies quietly: "why are you surprised, K.B.? Love, like water, always flows downwards". Parents love their children as much when they are tiny and weak and vulnerable as when they are growing. But every love for his parents is born out of need and dependence. That needs decreases with every passing year while the parents only grow. It is an uneven emotional balance.

Tharoor's vision of a peaceful happy life is dependent on healthy interactions between the parents and the children. While the former should, not unduly impose their views on the children, the latter's attitude to them should be one of love and respect.

Another thing Tharoor hints at is not to get carried away by so-called modern trends lest we should fall into a dangerous trap. The institution of marriage, for example, has been there to meet one's sexual need and raise a family whose peace depends upon the loyalty of the partners to each other. When an extra-marital affair develops, the smooth rhythm at the home front is broken. A sort of discordant note is struck and it produces a jarring effect on the melodious tune achieved earlier. Ashok is happily married to Maya but starts a relation with his co-artist Mehnaz Elahi and defends his stand by telling that every actor in Bombay has extra-marital affairs. It does not occur

to Ashok what might be going on in Maya's mind when, especially, 'she was undergoing a difficult pregnancy and bringing his heirs into the world'. Tharoor seems to say that to accept something immoral in the name of modernity and fashionable trend can have disastrous consequences.

Ashok Banjara, at the height of his popularity in the film industry, thinks of joining politics and does get elected to the parliament, but finds himself a total misfit in the new set up: The inexperienced field gives him many failures.

His initial spurts of enthusiasm soon get dampened as he looks around him at his fellow backbencher in the teak-panelled sanctum of national legislation. The general atmosphere is one of absolute indifference to the ongoing affairs. Some are even more sonorously undisturbed in the innocence of their ignorance. The most knowledgeable seem to be the most powerless.

I'm just a backbench MP, the political equivalent of the fat-arsed females with tree trunk thighs who dance behind the heroine. (206)

In sheer disgust he resigns. Tharoor shows why a film star does not necessarily make a successful politician. Through Pranay, an important character, he tries to make an analysis: "Did you ever wonder why you were so much more popular a film hero than a politician? Elementary, my dear son. Your screen image was that of the angry young man, the righter of wrongs, the rebel against injustice and the enemy of the establishment. The son of a politician. The Prime Minister's man. But when you became a politician, you were revealed as what you were- the opposite of your screen image. A part of the establishment. The people who cared for you as a hero could not come for you as a leader. You no longer meant anything to them". (294)

Tharoor seems to convey most of his significant message, views opinions through the character of the Guru. The self-styled godman, who can be sometimes taken lightly, does make thought-provoking statements and, to some extent, we can take him as Tharoor's mouthpiece. Some of his striking lines are:

Learn detachment... Take life as it comes. (185)

There is no use worrying about what might happen, because it is already willed. Why shed tears about the workings of destiny?... Does the river weep because it must flow to the sea? (188)

The present... is an illusion each moment has either already happened or has not yet happened, it is either past or future. The problem with Westerners... is their obsession with the present, which means they are living for something that does not exist. (195)

It is difficult to know exactly what Tharoor aims at. Does he suggest that there is a force, beyond our control, governing our life and activities and that, for our peace of mind, it is wise to yield to that force? Does he suggest something that goes against what H.W. Longfellow spoke in his celebrated poem 'A Psalm of Life:'

Trust no future however pleasant  
Let the dead past bury its dead  
Act, act in the living present  
Heart within and God overhead.

We may not be very sure, but about one thing, perhaps, Tharoor is very emphatic. Again through the Guruji it comes:

From dharma comes success, from dharma comes happiness, everything emerges from dharma, dharma is the essence of the world, (300).

However, successful a person may be, some of his wishes remain unfulfilled. He repents for some of his actions. He often finds himself in the world of 'what might have been'. In short, he has some regrets. But then that is part of life and we should not grudge it. Tharoor seems to say that a "life without regrets is a life lived without introspection, without enquiry. That's not a life worth living". (300)

## Quest for Identity in the Alien Land: A Study of Amit Chaudri's *Odysseus Abroad*

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### Abstract

Amit Choudri is an Indian novelist, poet, essayist, critic, editor, singer and music composer. He is a professor of Contemporary Literature at the University of East Anglia. With his academic prowess and creative intensity he has come out with some fine works of literature. His novel *Odysseus Abroad* is a fine diasporic novel which narrates a day in the life of Ananda, a twenty two year old London settler. The protagonist is homesick and thinks that he is an outsider in the new land. He is caught between the romanticism of the new land and the bitter reality of being ignored. His uncle Radhesh is also another key character in the novel who has been struggling to establish himself for more than thirty years. The novel moves around both of them and expose the disillusion that they face in the new land. Often the narrative goes back to their native place which is Bangladesh at present. These two characters serve as the persons who seek a new life in the new land which may be impossible to achieve. This paper analyses the 'alienation,' 'identity crisis' experienced by the characters and their 'quest for identity'.

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Amit Choudri is an Indian novelist, poet, essayist, critic, editor, singer and music composer. He is a professor of Contemporary Literature at the University of East Anglia. His novel *Odysseus Abroad* is a fine diasporic novel which narrates a day in the life of Ananda, a twenty two year old London settler. The protagonist is homesick and thinks that he is an outsider in the new land. He is caught between the romanticism of the new land and the bitter reality of being ignored. His uncle Radhesh is also another key character in the novel who has been struggling to establish himself for more than thirty years. This paper analyses the 'alienation,' 'identity crisis' experienced by the characters and their 'quest for identity'.

The people who are living in the new land always have a sense of insecurity. They are

conscious of the fact they are living in the land that does not belong to themselves and they do not feel at home at all. Even the things that happen in different parts of the world intensify their insecure feeling. For example, in this novel, when Ananda and his uncle watch the news related to war somewhere else, they become tensed. "He didn't want to die and he didn't want the world to blow up (as it seemed it any day would), but he couldn't spend too much time thinking of the shadow of death hanging over mankind" (5). This insecure feeling is very common among the people who live in diaspora.

Generally, many Indians move abroad towards green pastures- either for higher education or employment. This novel portrays the lives of these two kinds of people. For example, Radhesh is living in London more than thirty years whereas Anandha is a student. His flat mates like Cynthia and Vivek Patel are also there for higher education. The bitter reality is that none of them is sincere and dedicated towards education. "Cynthia was a new kind of woman – a social aspirant, like her boyfriend – that Ananda couldn't rally fathom, especially the mix of characteristics: newfangled but unintellectual, independent..." (7). Though they are from the same country, they could not adjust among themselves. They live apart at their hearts. They are not worried about the mutual living space to be given to each other. For example, Ananda is not able to tolerate the noise created by the flat mates during the midnights in the name of parties. Ananda also disturbs them every morning by practising songs. Chaudhuri comments on the modern Indian students in London as "*No wonder they don't have to study. Besides, who comes to London to do management*"(8).

The gulf between the Indian neighbours is exposed further during one of the visits of Ananda's mother. She scolds them that they are disturbing her son who is doing a 'real degree' in a 'real university' and asserts "...he'd embarked on a difficult voyage, his father was paying through his nose..." (33). This points out the reality that many

Indians go abroad only to have the pride of earning a degree in a foreign land. They are not really motivated towards their cause which mostly will lead to an unsuccessful education and career. Hence such people waste their resources and life in an alien land.

Like any other youth, Ananda is fascinated by the life in new land and wants to shed his Indian identity. He tries to avoid the hard reality of the past of India. "He briefly sought but couldn't find a connection between London and Bombay...It made him ill at ease – over and above having to swallow the insult of having been ruled by this nation!" (11). His desire to be one with the main stream English society makes him to reject things related to his Indian identity. His admiration towards the West is at its peak. He "...was disengaged from Indian politics but dilettantishly addicted to British politicians – the debates; the mock outrage; the amazing menu of accents; the warmth of Tony Benn's s's and his inexorable fireside eloquence; the way he cradled his pipe; the wiry trade union leaders..." (11). It shows Ananda's desire to be immersed in the culture of the settled land. Everything that is foreign fascinates him.

Diasporic writers, generally, expose the inherent fallacy of the West. Similarly, Chaudhuri comments on the inequality that prevails in the English society in the following passage with reference to Marx and Shelley: "The rich have become richer, the poor have become poorer; and the vessel of the State is driven between the Scylla and Charybdis of anarchy and despotism" (12). At the same time the novelist does not fail to point out the fortunes of England and her people. "Lucky island, with more than its fair share of windfalls, rewards, and fortune" (14).

The life in the new land and its foreignness paves the way to loneliness. In this novel, often, loneliness creeps into Ananda's mind which leads to the quest for self identity. He is haunted by the loneliness when he moved to the new flat. "...this previousness was an established feature of English coexistence" (10). He "...was full of loneliness that it couldn't even be softened by self-pity. During the day, he sometimes forgot lunchtime, delaying eating since it was a boring duty, as sleeping and occasionally waking were...Still, none of these compared, in their undermining, of the stripping of his identity itself. None of the things that defined him – that he was a

modern Bengali and Indian" (17). Chaudhuri comments, "He was an exile in his home...he was a singer in his own solitude, he was his own audience" (34). Often he asks himself, "What am I doing here? This is not my home" (39). Thus the migrants feel fish out of water in the new place and this affects their daily life and aspirations.

Ananda was not able to withstand the complexity of life in the new land. He found it very hard to cope with the new environment during the first two years of his life in London. "He felt terrible excluded. Or chose to be excluded; it gave his drift and insignificance meaning in his own eyes. The students in the college – they filled him with nervousness and distrust because of their pink complexions and blue eyes, their easy taking for granted of each other..." (49). Through this passage, the novelist points out the age old admiration of Indians towards English culture and their inferiority complex.

Travelling to a new land for a degree can be considered as an attempt to establish a new identity. But in the case of most of the Indians this aspiration is not realized as it happens in the life of Ananda and his flat mates. "He was clearly not at home; he was lost" (57). Hence, the question of identity surfaces at all levels of life. "His identity had been taken away from him; and he'd become conscious, in England, of class. Class was what formed you, but didn't travel to other cultures – it became invisible abroad. In foreign places, you were singled out by religion and race, but not class, which was more indecipherable than any mother tongue" (18).

The novelist demonstrates the contrast between the English and the Indian in their life styles. The Indians prefer noise like Mandy and Patels who live in the same flats – below and above Anand's flat. The writer points out that all disturbances related to identity or self is within everyone. "The noise is in your head. Stop thinking about it. Yes, that was it; it was thought, self-conscious" (20). Whereas the English are presented as the lovers of silence. "The silence...emphasised the leaden permanence of that proximity – of this shadowy, indestructible thing, the self. He had become fully aware of its constant nearness in England. He was married to his consciousness forever and ever. He wanted to escape, to slip away from the 'I' surreptitiously, leaving it behind somewhere" (22). Like this, the settlers are

constantly surrounded by the foreignness which constantly unsettles them. Moreover, Chaudhuri observes the peculiarity of the English. "...the English, unlike the melodramatic Indians, were natural actors; ...this race behaved and spoke in normal circumstances like they were in film, with a peculiar self-consciousness, as if their gestures and words were being recorded. There didn't appear to be a complete separation between fantasy and social life for the English" (31).

Chaudhuri's criticism on the English is very sharp when he points out their insensitive nature towards the settlers. "The English were a strange lot: even if they didn't acknowledge your existence, they made you feel on display...Their books advocated the virtues of observation – but they didn't look at you directly. If you sat opposite an English person, you may as well not be there – that was English politeness, or the rules of the culture. It wasn't obliviousness. They did practice the art of looking in secret..." (89). Likewise, the English differ from the Indians in terms of their beliefs too. They prefer to lead a life as they like without worrying about the superior spirit above us. "The English ignored the festivities; as Forster had said, they'd never had Gods, only goblins and fairies. They wouldn't know what it meant to have gods watching over you; they didn't know what to do with them" (118). It is clear that the physical and the psychological worlds of the East and the West are entirely different and they will never assimilate.

The narrative voice of the novel comments that the English used to be "the master race" which no longer enjoys that privilege. "There's an unwritten law in this land that you can't criticise drinking. All the propaganda – the surgeon-general's health warning etcetera – is about smoking...They keep saying smoking kills you. It's a lie. What they won't say is that drinking is far more lethal than smoking – and it changes personality too" (229). Here, Chaudhuri boldly exposes the ugly face of the West behind their cultural mask.

Ananda feels that the English behaves in an aggressive way in public through their so called cultured behaviour. "*What they do and how they behave is law...Sometimes their laughter's like an assault on the surroundings. It's a form of aggression*" (225). Chaudhuri, by giving it in italics, conveys that this idea crops in Ananda's

inner mind which does not get a vent for expression. Like this, the diasporic people are forced to bury their sufferings and inner conflicts for the sake of survival.

The dilemma of the Asians and the Indians to mingle with the native people are clearly portrayed in this novel. "Ananda didn't see himself as 'Asian'. He was keen to militate against the category, though his militancy must, naturally, remain incommunicable to the people it was intended for" (113). This proves that the Indians who are in abroad are divided among themselves. "The gradations of colour between white and black were infinite in London; you didn't need the seven colours of the rainbow here – these two were heterogeneous enough to suffice" (115). Though Radhesh lives in London for more than thirty years, "he saw as the very antithesis of himself – solitary, without roots, without family or clear future. 'I'm a black Englishman,' he'd say proudly to fresh acquaintances" (115). He continued to wear three-piece suit like the English men. This shows his longing to be assimilated with the English race. When it does not happen, he criticises "Western civilization was all vanity" (116). This is nothing but the an individual's longing for one's own identity.

Racism is also one of the main problems to be tackled by the settlers. Once Ananda experiences the pangs of racism when an English man calls him as 'Vindaloo, Vindaloo' in the street. His uncle Radhesh advises him to be careful about the nature of racism that prevails in the English society. When the settlers carve their living space in the new land, they earn the displeasure of the natives too. The native people consider them as rivals who have come to take away their opportunities. Hence the misunderstanding between the native people and the settlers begin. In this novel, Khuku, Ananda's mother is often ill-treated by her immediate boss Miss Watkins. Occasionally, Khuku loses her calm and flinches the file at her. These things happen only because of the jealousy of the native people on the settlers.

Through Radhesh, Chaudhuri seems to give a solution to handle such problems. "Such people were to be ignored and avoided; there are certain demonical beings in the universe, his uncle had said, quoting Taranath the tantric, who are dim but incredible powerful; they can grow a hundred times their size in a second; they have brute

strength; they can fly; but they are intelligent. You won't be able to beat them in a contest of strength, but you have to hold your nerve when facing them" (69). While metaphorically presenting the problem, the novelist records the potential difficulties to be faced by the Indians in abroad and suggest that these cannot be won but to be avoided.

All settlers, at the end, realize that they are in the alien land and accept the reality. It is this existentialist principle that ensures their survival in the new land. The novelist records, "Most Indians and Pakistanis are "old souls". They've been born so many times that they're tired, they've returned to reality so often they take it for granted" (159). Chaudhuri illustrates the fact that the settlers can

never become one with the native people. This impossibility assimilation is exposed through the description of Ananda. "Ananda was from a breed on a new planet, impossibly removed from the world that had formed his own parents" (217). In fact, this is the reality with every settler. In spite of their aspiration to gain a new identity in the new land, they cannot unmask that has been with them since the birth.

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## Portrayal of Ethnic Clash in Michael Ondaatje's *Anil's Ghost*: A Non-Tamil Reading

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### Abstract

Michael Ondaatje's *Anil's Ghost* discusses the upshots of ethnic clash in Sri Lanka. It delineates Anil Tissera, the protagonist's inquiry into human rights violation in Sri Lanka. Set in the 1980s in Sri Lanka, the novel is a sensible account of the ethnic clash between the Tamils and the Sinhalese. Ondaatje is neutral in his exertion that the result of the ethnic clash is quite uniform. Sarath Diyasena, The Sri Lankan archeologist, Sarath Diyasena's demise during the course of the clash proves this argument. This paper presents the vicious ethnic clash of Sri Lanka as portrayed by Ondaatje as a Burgher.

**Key Words:** Ethnic Clash, Sri Lanka, Tamils, Sinhalese.

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Ondaatje's association with Sri Lanka, his birth place, is relatively impressive as he explodes with pungent evidences of ethnic clash in Sri Lanka in his *Anil's Ghost*. His portrayal possess no inhibitions. He expounds the uncertainty--the disappearance and murder of ordinary citizens. He reports that the search of the missing son, father or other people by their relatives was customary in the country's long-standing ethnic clash. He holds that murder was committed by "Every side . . . The government was not only one doing the killing . . . three groups of enemies—one in the north, two in the south—using weapons . . . importing state-of-the-art weapons from the West, or manufacturing homemade weapons" (13). Ondaatje's daring statement adjudicates that the government was not the only one doing the killing but also "extrajudicial executions" by "the insurgents, or by the government or the guerilla separatists. Murders committed by all sides" (14).

The root cause of ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka was conceived during the colonial period in which the British introduced English education and the Tamils pursued it without any resistance. As a

result, they could get government jobs and their socio-economic status was enhanced whereas the Sinhalese were reluctant to follow English education and they felt sidelined. They felt irritated at the socio-economic status of the Tamils. Besides this, issues like the rejection of citizenship to Indian plantation Tamils, the execution of official language in the fifties and standardization policies during the seventies imbued them with frustration. The period from the 1950s to the 1970s, the Tamils staged only non-violence protests and even tried negotiations to retain their rights. But all their peace-making activities ended with disappointment. The frustrated Tamil youth started showing their militant attitude by forming the LTTE. The attitude of the government upon the Tamils was too discriminated. To make the matters worse, the Jaffna library was burned to ashes by the Sinhalese police officers in 1981. In 1983 a riot broke out at a large scale.

Ondaatje *Anil's Ghost* posits that "the reason for war was war" (39). He renders the atmosphere of Sri Lanka during the 1980s: "If a father protested a son's death, it was feared another family member would be killed" (52). Joanne Lipson Freed, in his article "Invisible Victims, Visible Absences: Imagining Disappearance for an International Audience" sums up this: "victims of disappearance are often arrested without notice and detained in secret facilities; if they are killed, their deaths are concealed, and their remains are often disposed of anonymously" (25). Ondaatje's becomes a transmitter as he revives the dead.

Lesley Higgins and Marie-Christine Leps in their article, "The Politics of Life after Death: Ondaatje's *Anil's Ghost*" quote Foucault's *biopolitics* as "the fostering of life in each individual and the population as a whole" (202). They elaborate it as "the exercise of biopolitics, sanctions states to function routinely by *coups d'etat*, that is through the declaration of "states of exception" that suspend the law, individual rights and freedoms, or fundamental ideological premises,

ostensibly in order to protect them” (202). But *necropolitics* was the trend in Sri Lanka during the eighties. Lesley and his companion quote Mbeme’s definition of necropolitics as “the exercise of power through the wholesale threat and dispensation of death” (202).

Anil, the protagonist, thinks that SAILOR, recently excavated skeleton by her, must have been buried somewhere else before and regards: “They buried him, then later moved him into an old gravesite” (47). She adds, “SAILOR is a murder victim who is found within a sacred historical site – “A site constantly under government or police supervision” (48). She firmly concludes SAILOR’s case “It was buried no more than four to six years ago . . . There are thousands of twentieth-century bodies” (48).

Anil is more curious to investigate the murders but Sarath warns her that her present work in Sri Lanka is dangerous. She utters to Sarath “there are so many bodies in the ground now, that’s what you said . . . murdered, anonymous I mean, people don’t even know if there are two hundred years old or two weeks old, they’ve all been through fire. Some people last their ghost die, some don’t, we can do something” (49).

V. Suryanarayan and V. Sudarsen in their work, *Between Fear and Hope: Sri Lankan Refugees in Tamilnadu* bring light to the consciousness of the people that “the first challenge to the Sri Lankan political system did not come from the Tamils, but from the Sinhalese” (27).

M. Preetha reminds that the first agitation of the Sinhalese insurgents:

The insurgents participated in various revolutionary activities. They attacked the police station and the radio stations of the country. They ransacked several houses stripping them of everything-food, utensils, radios and clothing. They broke into the local government offices and seized several files that revealed the location of every registered weapon in the country. (195)

Michael Ondaatje presupposes the plot by positing the reaction of the insurgents to the government.

Ondaatje talks about the victims of the international violence that took place in Sri Lanka

in 1984. The victims “were nearly all male, in their twenties, damaged by mines, grenades, mortar shells” (114). The injury is very severe as the doctors “removed metals and stones from lungs, saturated lacerated chests” (114).

Sarath, the government employee, agrees that the government was doing political killings:

You don’t understand how bad things were. Whatever the government is possibly doing now. It was worse when there was real chaos. You were not here for that – the law abandoned by everyone, save a few good lawyers. Terror everywhere, from all sides . . . And we were caught in the middle. It was like being in a room with three suitors, all of whom had blood on their hands. In nearly every house, in nearly every family, there was knowledge of someone’s murder or abduction by one side or another. I’ll tell you a thing I saw . . . (149-150)

Sarath knows that Anil’s journey is getting to the truth. For him truth “was a flame against a sleeping lake of petrol” (152). He believes in truth as a principle. He sees that truth is “broken into suitable pieces and used by the foreign press alongside irrelevant photographs” (152-153).

He thinks that this is unsafe to Anil to handing truth. He says that the country “existed in a rocking self-burying motion. The disappearance of schoolboys, the death of lawyers by torture, the abduction of bodies from the Hokandara mass grave. Murders in the Muthurajawila marsh” (153). Thus, Ondaatje takes all the aspects of the ethnic clash into account to form his narrative pattern.

Sirissa, an artificer, Ananda’s wife is one among the victims of the war. She works in a school. She happens to witness “*the heads of the two students on stakes, on either side of the bridge, facing each other. Seventeen, eighteen, nineteen years old . . . she doesn’t know or care. She sees two more heads on the far side of the bridge and can tell even from here that she recognizes one of them*” (171).

As a strict anthropologist, Anil wants to expose the murder crime of the government. She believes her teacher, Clyde Snow’s words: *One village can speak for many villages. One victim can speak for many victims*” (172).

Ondaatje's brilliant observation is quite visible when he announces that "in all the turbulent history of the island's recent civil wars, in all the police investigations, not one murder charge had been made during the troubles. But this could be a clear case against the government" (172). Later, Sarath concludes his study that Sailor "worked in one of the mines" (176).

He comments on the tyranny of the Sri Lankan Army:

We have seen so many heads stuck on poles here, these last few years . . . You'd seen them in the early mornings, somebody's night work, before the families heard about them and came and removed them and took them home. Wrapping them in their shirts or just cradling them. Someone's son . . . This was at the height of the campaign to wipe out insurgent rebels and other sympathizers in the villages (180-181).

Anil identifies Sailor as Ruwan Kumara, a toddy tapper. All her results are captured and she is ordered by Dr. Perera to "give her reports with no real evidence" (268). She is forced to discredit her whole investigation and given another skeleton. She is warned to sign back all her research before she leaves.

Ondaatje's aim is to unearth the brutalities committed during the course of civil war in Sri

Lanka. Though the civil war in Sri Lanka broke out between Tamils and Sinhalese, it made other ethnic groups homeless. As a non-Tamil writer, Ondaatje's perception is realistic and terrific.

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## Impact of Power Politics in Postcolonization: Reimaging Humanism in the Works of J.M Coetzee

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### Abstract

J.M Coetzee is one of the most famous gifted and celebrated novelists of twenty first century is noted for his novels like *In The Heart of the country* (1977), *Waiting for the Barbarians* (1980), *Life & Times of Michael K* (1983), *Disgrace* (1990) and so on. Most of the novels of J.M Coetzee exhibit the impact of colonization and the mutilation left as a scar in the society. This paper intends to bring out the power politic between the hierarchal societies under one roof. On the basis of power politics: the power of Imperialism over colonized, the power of nation towards the weaker citizen of the society, the power of pedagogue over the students, the power of masculine over psychological submissive person. These novels discuss the characters' humiliations, their redemptions and speak for promote of humanization.

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J.M Coetzee's *Waiting for the Barbarians* is political allegorical novel which deals with the political problem between the natives and colonizers. This novel highlights the issues of colonization and imperialization. According to Edward Said: imperialism means thinking about, settling on, controlling land that you do not possess, that is lived on and owned by the others(5). To him imperialism is an act to establishing ones territory in others land resulting in untold suffering and pain.

This novel begins with the entry of Colonel Joll. He is a Third Bureau to arrive to the land of Magistrate which is once the land of barbarians. He is sent by the Empire to look out the administration of the Magistrate. The purpose of his visit is to clarify the rumours about the barbarians that they are behind the hills waiting to attack the empire. Barbarians arm and train

themselves. They create tension and chaos. In this case the Magistrate has the experience of identifying and spotting the common innocent men and the barbarians. But to colonel Joll whoever he sees, he judge and consider them as barbarians. His mind is preoccupied that these are lands of barbarians and all are assumed to be barbarians.

When Colonel Joll's soldiers ride over the streets of the city in order to observe the activities of the barbarians. Whoever they see at the roadside is taken to charge. People who are caught by soldiers are beaten and torn into pieces. Once they happen to encounter two prisoners, an old man a young boy. They are lying at the road side they are tied up and are brought to the Magistrate. The Magistrate explains to Colonel Joll and introduces the captives. He also adds that, they are innocent prisoners they have been interrogated thoroughly to confirm that they are not barbarians. The old man who is taken by soldiers says:

Excellency, His voice croaks; he clears his throat. Excellency, we know nothing about thieving. The soldiers stopped us and tied us up. We were on the road, coming here to see the doctor. This is my sister's boy. He has a sore that does not get better. We are not thieves. show the excellencies your sore.' [...] the boy begins unwrapping the rag that bandage his forearm.( 3-4)

Joll's prejudice is not rectified with those clarifications; prisoners have been beaten and ill-treated. The old man dies on the spot while the young boy is seriously injured and is left to bleed. Atrocities are carried out by colonizer Colonel Joll. The important issue of South Africa during Apartheid regime is lack of humanism which means lack of love and kindness towards others. Most of the places in South Africa are vandalised, robbed and there is murders and bloodshed. Promotion of humanism and brother hood are

presumed to be impossible dreams of the Dark Continent.

The imperialistic views always have its prejudice over oppressors. When the Magistrate narrates the novel, he starts with sun glass wearied by colonel Joll. He narrates....

Is he blind? [...] but he is not blind. The discs are dark, they look opaque from the outside, but he can see through them. He tells me they are new invention. 'they protect one's eyes against the glare of the sun', he says. 'you would find them useful out here in the desert.. (1)

These lines denote Joll is wearing a sun glass. It represents his eyes are guarded and protected by the new invention. Whatever place it is a desert or dry land on, farm or hill regim they protect him. The normal human views are different from this. Seeing through the opaque one cannot have realistic picture of what he sees and how he sees. Colonial views are one way narratives. Orders are to be executed and no question can be raised. There is always a gap, a thin minute space like the dark disk which separates human from unhuman. For colonizer these disks protect them from desert but for natives of South Africa they are unfamiliar.

Seeing through this dark disk makes the entire land dark, even darker in many situations. The natural human eyes views are unnaturalised. The true nature and life of people is not seen. As an agent of the Empire when one enters into land of the Barbarians one should have clear view of the land and its people. Only then one can judge what is right or what is wrong. If there is a barriers like dark glass one cannot see the plight of the people, their cries, their pains, their suffering and the blood shed

The magistrate in the novel has a soft corner for the prisoner. He knows well the people and the land where he lives in. He sympathies for the poor and marginalized people. This is one of the rare phenomenon that magistrate symbolizes which no other colonizer has. He saves innocent people from being prisoned and tortured. He even calls the prisoners as 'father' the act of acceptance. To avoid more prisoners the Magistrate says to colonel Joll "we do not have facilities for prisoners" "there is not much crime here and the penalty is usually a fine or compulsory labour" (2).

He senses that Colonel Joll seems to be hardhearted and knows not how to differentiate the barbarians from the common fisher men among the tribal group. Colonel Joll is unable to communicate to the prisoners they raid, since they speak a different language.

The farms of Africa are multicoloured. The Magistrate loves the land as he is single. But for colonel Joll this is dark land filled with dark people like Barbarians. It is very particular to point out the dark glass because the socio political condition of South Africa is worst. A redeemer is much needed for these lands. When a person like colonel Joll enters this land situation gets worse. So the Magistrate acts as negotiator between the colonel Joll and the natives. The Magistrate tries to make a balance in the unbalanced society. Robert M. Post writes like this "by siding with the oppressed, he has become one of them" (72). J.M Cotzee in this novel writes (Magistrate) "I grow conscious that I am pleading for them" (Barbarians) (4). Knowing by or unknowingly, Magistrate stands in the favour of oppressed. In spite of this, he also acts as an imperialistic because he is naturally a hand assigned by the Empire to govern the land and to send the report. So the Magistrate likes to prove to colonel Joll about the rumour that barbarians are not armed and are not going to attack the Empire. Joll emphasizes on the dominant culture; to him dominant culture is a tactic to maintain his power and superiority. Colonel Joll's hatred towards the barbarians makes him to involve in violence and war with the barbarians.

In fact in this novel, *Waiting for the Barbarians* the representatives of the dominant culture cannot see one self as a person or member of the marginalized culture and he /she cannot act or do favour to the Native Barbarians in South Africa. Colonial representation is very important rather than doing motherly or fatherly service. Colonel Joll and the Magistrate are mere representations of the colonial culture. Colonel Joll executes of the Empire when the Magistrate stands in favour of the barbarians..

Frantz Fanon in his work *The Wretched of the Earth* (1963) says "A national culture is the whole body of efforts made by the people in the sphere of thought to describe, justify and praise the actions through which that people has created itself and keeps itself in existence"(233). Obviously,

Frantz Fanon highlights that the culture of the nation is very important than the nation building. The Barbarian can be as barbarians.

One Political issue that the novel *Waiting for the Barbarians* deals with is the war between the Empire and the barbarian. On reading the novel one is not able to see the details about the Empire since the novel lack description about the Empire. The Empire is considered to be an official leader from another land. In moreover, it is not easy to spot out who are barbarians and who are not. No description about barbarians is found on the novel. Many people in the town and many other soldiers or invaders know how the barbarians will look like. This is obvious when the Magistrate narrates he says "A child tugs at my hand, 'is he a barbarian, uncle?'" (140). It clearly indicates barbarians do not carry any identity with them as the Empire has. One presumption about barbarian is they are native people.

It is the responsibility of the readers to understand that all the natives depicted in the novel

are imagined and they are considered to be barbarians; the invaders are considered and named as the Empire, colonel and magistrate. Some of the episodes in this novel depict a fight or war between the Empire and barbarians. Hence it is inferred that the barbarians are not silent, they have started resisting the domineering force of the Empire.

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## The Indo-Caribbean Women's Subconscious Memory as a Flash of Insight in Rambai Espinet's *The Swinging Bridge*

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### Abstract

Rambai Espinet is an Indo-Caribbean-Canadian poet, novelist, essayist, critic and a significant voice in Indo-Caribbean Literature. She was born in 1948 in San Fernando on the Caribbean island of Trinidad. Rambai Espinet's *The Swinging Bridge* describes the subconscious memory of Indo-Caribbean women as migrants in strange lands who travel across many countries and cross-borders for their livelihood and other reasons. *The Swinging Bridge* is a novel which vividly records the memory of Indo-Caribbean women. The term 'Diaspora' indicates a plurality of belonging identity, cultural mix and double identity or multiple dislocations. The writers of Diaspora state their expatriate, migratory, dislocated and displaced experiences through feelings and ideas and thoughts in a stream of consciousness. Their desire and wish lie in their subconscious mind as reminiscence. These writers express their reminiscence of their homeland through their writings.

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The occurrence of relocation is not a latest detection as an object of study. The way back, it reached the attention of many research scholars who belonged to sundry fields. Each of them examined and elaborated it differently from his own standpoint. Various motivations were the cause for the movement across territories and were conceded on with different intensity. There are a lot of perspectives from which the occurrence of migration might be explained, because it raises a wide range of issues. Angelika Bammer states dislocation as "The separation of people from their native culture either through physical dislocation (as refugees, immigrants, migrants, exiles or expatriates) or the colonizing imposition of a foreign culture." (xi)

Displacement is one of the main causes for Diaspora. The concept of Migration and Diaspora constantly transforms existing cultural systems giving birth to new tradition, culture, and language. Jaywanti Dimiri has analyzed these dilemmas of Diaspora very appropriately as, "Expatriate experience is problematic for the second generation immigrants of the third world for specific reasons. Born and brought up on foreign soil expatriation for this neo- class of immigrants hangs the background as an imaginary reality, free from the stigma of nostalgia and the popular symptoms of angst, loneliness existential rootlessness or homelessness, their predicament is in many ways worse than that of their predecessors. Despite their assimilation and acculturation they cannot escape from being victimized and ostracized." (Dimiri, 28)

The Canadian nation consists of an array of races and cultures. Multiculturalism is an important aspect of the Canadian panorama, and is reflected in the life and literature. Many novels in Canadian Literature show the problems of exile because Canada is a country whose population comprises mostly immigrants from various countries. The term 'Diaspora' exists thus,

"A Diaspora exists precisely because it remembers the 'homeland'. Without this memory... these migrants and settlers would be simply people in a new setting, into which they merge, bringing little or nothing to the new 'home', accepting in various ways and forms the mores and attitudes that already exist in their new country and society".

However these people "do not merely settle in new countries: they recreate in their socio-economic, political and cultural institutions a version of that...that homeland they remember". (Lal Brij V.*et.al.*18). Rambai Espinet is an Indo-Caribbean-Canadian poet, novelist, essayist critic

and a significant voice in Indo-Caribbean Literature. She was born on the Caribbean island of Trinidad. Her book review, *Nuclear Seasons*, is popular. Most of Espinet's works relate to her Indo-Caribbean heritage. Since she originally shifted to Canada in the 1970s, Espinet has divided her time between the Caribbean and Canada. As a Diasporic writer, Rambai Espinet's *The Swinging Bridge* foregrounds the importance of healing the wounds of trauma and reconciling with the ancestral past. The longing to get back lost home and identity often culminates in the formation of a different version of home. In an interview with Birbalsingh, Espinet explains the political agenda that informs her writing:

"I think that there is a pressing need for us [Indo-Caribbeans] to move into the arena of self-investigation with rigour and honesty. Nostalgia may be nice and comforting but our needs have now gone beyond that. And even though we are in the process of adapting and integrating ourselves into our adopted country, Canada, it is vital to remember that we are travelers moving with a lot of 'cultural baggage' [...] the time for honest appraisal is now." (178)

Espinete's *The Swinging Bridge* documents all the issues she faces as an Indo-Caribbean woman in Canada. Mona Singh, the protagonist of the novel faces the issue of Caribbean culture, community relations, writing, activism and the search for past. The novel describes a journey of repossession and search of her ancestral identity. Espinete portrays how the path of identity formation is more difficult for women due to various levels of marginalisation.

This article contributes to the ongoing discussion on the representation of Indo-Caribbean women's sub-conscious as flash of insight through their external tensions such as marginalized Indo-Caribbean's experiences, values and Indo-Caribbean female subjects, silencing of history and its voices besides dealing with Diaspora, "Double Diaspora" both the Indian Diaspora and the Indo-Caribbean Diaspora in North America, emigration and dislocation. For an Indo-Caribbean, this novel is universal and significant because it tells the stories of their youth and highlights their experience to the larger society. Ramabai Espinete's debut novel, *The Swinging Bridge* published in

2003, is a touching story of race, dislocation and displacement. The novel carries the reader from nineteenth-century India to the cane fields of Trinidad, where poor Indians become indentured slave laborers, and now Trinidad is a new homeland for cultural mix. Rambai Espinete's writing should be treasured for her unique voice. She talks about the subject of Diaspora concentrating on the struggles associated in the lives of Indo-Caribbean women.

*The Swinging Bridge* is a story about the immigrated and multi-generational Indo-Trinidadian family living in Canada. Mona Singh is the central character of the novel. Her family migrated from India to Trinidad to Canada. In Canada, Mona stays in Montreal because she won a scholarship and working as a researcher for Films Canadiana, a small company specializing films about immigrant life in Canada. She is deeply in love with a journalist, Roddy. She always refuses to marry him and live with him. In the meanwhile, her older brother Kello has been diagnosed with lymphoma. Whole family come together to comfort him. Kello wants to buy back his lost land from the money lenders. Kello requests Mona to go Trinidad to buy back the land. Mona moves to Trinidad. On the train to Trinidad the memories begin to take over her. She also comes to know that her great grandmother Gainer had been indentured servant from India to Trinidad. Thorough Gainer's document she knows that Gainer was a fine-looking poet. She found some songs of her great grandmother about the pain of indenture ship. Gainer's secret leads Mona towards the searching of her own identity as well as the homeland. She now relates herself to the Caribbean, Canada as well as the India as follows: "I was an Indian, an Indian from the Caribbean, an Indian long out of India, for generations now" (Espinete, 188).

The central character, Mona started to search her own identity and she thought that now she has an Indian belonging but at same time she cannot refuse her Caribbean belonging. Now she is living in Canada. She is in under pressure to question that, who is she precisely? She has a twice migrant. After her brother's death, Mona's main responsibility is to take back their land and she wants to know more about her identity. When Mona sees the family land on Manahambre Road, she feels an intense sense of belonging:

“I imagine that something of me, and of all our lives here, lies buried in it. I sit on the ground and then lie flat. I press my face into the earth and search for my scent [ ... ] And I was not disappointed. The smell I had then rose up into my nostrils from the land, up from long ago. The land, the land had remembered. Lay face down on the earth, my first earth, breathing it.” (270)

Mona has live in Caribbean and Trinidadian society and because of that she relates herself to the Caribbean and Trinidadian identities. She is very much upset from the South Asian identity but even though she tried know more about Indian identity. She thinks that her Indian identity helps her to shape strong Caribbean and Trinidadian identity. The major source for Indian identity was the great grandmother’s history and her stories and poems. From the point of view of Mona, one can understand that in Canada the South Asian identity has been very much neglected. Da-Da, Mona’s father has highly influenced by the Western culture from Trinidad but his style has neglected in Canadian society. They relate themselves to the particular identity in particular environment and they search their identity in this landscape with the different experiments. Espinet states her identity as,

“The swing bridge hung over the river, suspended by delicate filaments above the water rushing downstream. It reminded me of a spider’s web-as transparent and fragile [...] At any minute, I feared, the fine silk threads would break and I would be flung into the roaring river below.” (85-86)

The title of the novel shows the deeply distressing experience of Mona and her family. The *Swinging Bridge* is also referring to the uncertainty of Mona’s identity. She relates herself to the swinging bridge of her past and present life as follows: “indeterminate timelines in which the past mediates a future-inspired present in the form of multiple Diasporic dislocations and exilic relocations” (25). The multiple migrant community claims that “those who are twice-displaced, those unfixed selves, signal a diasporic awareness that cannot be contained within the theories of diaspora that neglect to specify historical moments, specific experiences and differences in historical conditioning”.(Lal Brij V. et.al p.g.130).

Representatively, the swinging up of the bridge symbolizes the exit from India and the swing down symbolizes the back in memory where she returns to Indian identity. But there is no connection to India for the twice migrant peoples. When Da-Da and Mona’s Uncle Peter try to join up with their Indian identity they are not succeed. Return to our own identity is very difficult.

The stories of Gainder and her experiences from India are highlighted in italics. It describes that the vagueness of Mona’s identity. Migration to another land is always done for the better life and creates a new identity. Because Gainder was a widow when she lived in India, After she migrated towards Trinidad for better life and creates a new identity. Mona migrated to Canada and creates a new identity. Though it gives better life as well as many identities, their life is always swinging in between those identities. It is difficult to belonging to one country and one identity. Finally, she realizes that she has to be live in Canada for better future. Mona has many homes, multiple identities as an Indian, a Trinidadian and a Canadian woman.

The *Swinging Bridge* situates the diasporic subject of women in a boundless diasporic time and space which ousts home and away constructing India, Trinidad and Canada. Its renovation of the past promotes cultural hybridity and diasporic belongings as options to cultural conflict and dislocation. Globalization and modernization leads people to migrate to other countries but unknowingly it leads towards the question of ‘belongingness’. One comes to know that migrated people are always resisting with their individuality in any society as well as in mind also. The exiled experiences of Mona Singh and her family from India direct them towards challenges to face their identity. The *Swinging Bridge* is a perfect instance of the Caribbean social order and a voice of Indo-Caribbean woman.

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## Ethnographic Realism in Mahaswetha Devi's *Imaginary Maps*

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### Abstract

This article offers a close reading of Mahaswetha Devi's ethnographic reportage in her short narratives "The Hunt" and "Douloti the Bountiful" in *Imaginary Maps* to show how marginalized and demoralized women overcome from upper caste and patriarchal society. Suffering is a universal human experience and the basic element that makes up phenomena. It may be physical or psychological and may be felt at all degrees of intensity from mild to intolerable. Literature is the mirror of life and deals with human life, it has been portraying physical as well as psychological sufferings of human life. When the sufferings of the characters are low magnitude, they feel discomfort and are unable to achieve or accomplish what they want. These stories explore troubling motifs in contemporary Indian life through the figures and narratives of indigenous tribes in India. Devi's stories map the experiences of the "tribals" and tribal life under decolonization. In "The Hunt," "Douloti the Bountiful" and the deftly wrought allegory of tribal agony "Pterodactyl, Pirtha, and Puran Sahay," Ms. Devi links the specific fate of tribals in India to that of marginalized people everywhere. This paper tries to how secondary genders win their independence, liberty and rights from the subjugated humanity

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### **Introduction**

Women's writing has emerged and evolved as a result of socio-cultural conflicts that originated in nineteenth century India. The women emancipation is a matter of much upheaval both globally and locally and in India the reawakening of women is an outcome of the efforts of reformers like Raja Ram Mohan Roy (1772–1833) and Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar (1820–1891). They declared women morally superior to men and took recourse to the Vedic era, also called the Golden Age of Hinduism, during which women were believed to be possessors of shakti (energy/power)

and deified as Durga (protector), Kali (destroyer), Laxmi (nourisher) and Saraswati (creator). Women during this period commanded respect from family and were on the same platform as that of her consort, thereafter, a change occurred with which started the process of degeneration of women at all levels of life. The depiction of tribal women's predicament serves as a corollary to the status of women in India. The study becomes imperative due to the fact that women are the pillars of mankind, comprising almost half the population of human race, and the different facets of their socio-economic life which play a landmark role in their destiny.

Despite women being the bedrock of society, they are subjected to repression, marginalization and exploitation at the hands of men for centuries. Mahaswetha Devi examines the deep rooted prejudices of race, class and gender and envisages to bring the spirit of egalitarianism among human beings so as to achieve a holistic development of the tribals. As a subaltern class, women demystify the idealized notions of womanhood and proclaim themselves as makers of their own destiny. The tribal world finds space and voice in her works, specifically the inhabitants of the Palamau district of Bihar, she considers to be the "mirror of India."

From British Colonialism to post independence India, Bengali writer and social activist Mahaswetha Devi has witnessed decades of political change that have culminated in India's pivotal presence on the global stage. Inspiring young and old with her strong position in support of India's tribal populations, Devi has been a tireless activist for the socio-economic protection, security, and political wellbeing of the 'Adivasis', also known as the 'Scheduled Tribes'. The word 'ethnography' is derived from the Greek word *ethnos*, meaning "a company, later a people, nation" and -graphy meaning "field of study". Ethnographic studies focus on large cultural groups of people who interact over time. Ethnography is a

set of qualitative methods that are used in social sciences that focus on the observation of social practices and interactions. Its aim is to observe a situation without imposing any deductive structure or framework upon it and to view everything as strange or unique. Described as a political anthropologist for her keen ethnographic observation, Devi captures an ethnographic realism in her writing and a social conscience that have influenced all phases of her prolific career. In this point of view, this paper specifically focuses on Devi's work "The Imaginary Maps", situated as they are at the cusp of neo-liberalism, to show how capitalist forces have penetrated female reproductive spaces disposing them to sexualized and commodified sites of exploitive fluctuating ideological values. Devi locates these gender violations in the rural areas where Adivasi women struggle daily to ward off physical thirst, hunger and male predatory advances against them and their children. In a corrupt social system where the Adivasi community is deemed a financial blight to the postcolonial economy, the women in Devi's narratives have suffered the cost of development propaganda. Therefore, it is important to read women as occupied territories in order to reveal how local, regional and national patriarchal and capital arrangements have dispossessed the Adivasis from their reproductive systems and livelihoods.

"*Imaginary Maps*" is a collection of three stories by Mahasweta Devi in 1995, namely 'The Hunt' 'Douloti the Bountiful' and 'Pterodactyl, Puran Sahay, and Pirtha'. All three stories describe a fictional rendition of situations that are very real in the lives of the tribal people. The first story "The Hunt" maps the experiences of the Oraon tribals (particularly of a tribal woman) and tribal life in post independent times. It is a social portrait of the contemporary transformation of gender roles and relationships that tribal women are undergoing in everyday life. It is a story of daring attempt at one's search for identity, self preservation and resistance of women in the tribal forest land. Mary Oraon is partly a tribal girl, an illegitimate daughter of tribal mother and Australian father, but in her attitude and values she is tribal to the core. Unlike other Oraon girls she has a light copper skin, flat features, tall built, and always wears a sari. Physically she is very attractive but there is "a strong message of rejection in her glance". She is liked by village

society as she is very talented and stands by her values for her life is not just for living but for living meaningfully. The noteworthy fact is that a tribal or for that matter any woman has an inherent sense of self respect and self esteem. The very origin of Mary has been a source of hurt for her as her Australian father has cheated her mother. She yearns to be completely associated with her tribe who has reservations in accepting her. Mary, unlike other tribal girls has a razor sharp brain, an inviolate constitution and infinite energy that makes her reject the Oraon men for marriage as she feels that their life style denotes wants and indiscipline, she emphatically says, "No, living in a shack, eating mush, the man drinking, no soap or oil, no clean clothes. I don't want such life" (3).

The colonialist mindset of having right to exploit tribal women for physical satisfaction reigns supreme here. Nevertheless, Mary's unique personality becomes the medium to mock at the sexual advances of the mainstream forces embodied in the character of Tehsildar Singh. She uses the traditional tribal myth of Janiparab as a symbol of resistance. Traditionally, hunting has been an activity performed by men and it also embodies a hierarchical relationship between the prey – the weak object as the award – and the predator (the strongest) whose mental, physical and cultural capacity gives the possibility to dominate others. Therefore, hunting as a socio-cultural activity has accrued men the chance to historicize their male identity in the premises of strength, power and domination. In "The Hunt", it is revealed that "the ritual of the hunt that the tribes celebrate at the Spring festival is for the women to perform this year. For twelve years men run the hunt. Then comes the women's turn. Its Janiparab. Like men they too go out with bow and arrow. They run in forest and hill. They kill hedgehogs, rabbits, and birds, whatever they can get. Then they picnic together, drink liquor, sing and return home at evening. They do exactly what men do. Once in twelve years" (12). The switch over to traditional male roles by hunt women demonstrates that the qualities related to hunting like sagacity, physical strength, and knowledge about the prey are not exclusively masculine, these can be feminine qualities as well.

Mary is an agent of gender transgression because she is able to act like a man and offer resistance against exploitation. Here differences between men and women are celebrated to

showcase that aggressiveness, strength, passivity, weakness, courage, bravery are qualities and states of mind acquired through socio-cultural censorship rather than through sex– caused limitations. Mary’s temperamental behaviour and physiological differences become irrelevant as she challenges power politics of male chauvinist society. Thus, the story embodies a space that is, no doubt, a site of exploitation by and domination of the society but at the same time it is well equipped with an equally strong, subversive agency to topsy-turvy the whole game.

The story is a powerful attempt to interrogate the subservient role of women in society by reversing the traditional victim position for avenging injustice and oppression. Women are usually seen more as flesh and blood than hearts with independent minds. Mary’s beauty excites the lust of Tehsildar Singh who visits her village to buy logging rights, he pursues her relentlessly with his tireless single-minded pursuit. She is steadfast in her attempts to stop him and does not give up and retorts emphatically, “You look like a monkey ... Brokers like you, with tight pants and dark glasses, are ten rupee on the street of Tohri, and to them I show this machete. Go ask if you do not believe me” (9). He is further infuriated by the fact that an ordinary girl can reject him for an inconsequential Muslim boy. Mary finally invites him on a rendezvous during annual Spring festival, Janiparab or the festival of justice to a secluded place deep in the forest and thus thwarts the attempts of Tehsildar Singh by hunting him on the day of the great hunt. Symbolically she is the one who kills the biggest beast of the jungle and solemnizes the blood ritual. “In the women’s gathering, Mary drank the most wine, sang, danced, ate the meat and rice with the greatest relish. At first everyone mocked her for not having made a kill. Then Budhni said, look how she’s eating? As if she has made the biggest kill” (16). Mary emerges as a powerful voice of gendered subaltern by grabbing the dominant place. Devi, through this story aims at transgressing the norms and by subverting the patriarchal boundaries she exhibits an assertion of sexuality by women rather than being just passive and eternal victims.

Mahaswetha devi’s novella “douloti the bountiful”, an adivasi bond slave’s daughter gets effectively bought off her parents at the price of 300 rupees and is enslaved as a prostitute. The bitter story culminates in the

death of Douloti at 27, riddled with infection and venereal disease. In this grim ending, however, the story attains the quality of a national allegory that seriously disturbs the myth of national cohesion. For the super-exploited Adivasi slave, Douloti, dies on the night of August 15, India’s Independence Day. If this temporal dimension of Douloti’s death already points quite clearly to the disruption of a national pedagogy that attempts to enact the imagined community’s cohesion through secular ceremonies, then this disruptive gesture gets grounded spatially as well: The tribal woman’s body is found spread all over the map of India that adorns the festival grounds prepared for the ritualistic flag-hoisting ceremony:

Filling the entire Indian peninsula from the oceans to the Himalayas, here lies bonded labour spread-eagled, kamiya-whore Douloti Nagesia’s tormented corpse, putrefied with venereal disease, having vomited up all the blood in its desiccated lungs. Today, on August 15th, Douloti has left no room at all in the India of people like Mohan [the village teacher] for planting the standard of the Independence flag. What will Mohan do now? Douloti is all over India (Devi, 94).

Devi’s move here is meticulously simple: Since two bodies cannot occupy the same space at the same time, the outline of the national territory leaves room only for either of the two — the Adivasi corpse or the Indian flag. In this agonistic conjuncture, Douloti’s body is suddenly where it should not be: It has usurped the place that, according to mainstream hegemony, is the place of the nation itself: “all over India”. Already dead, the tribal body can (and probably will) be easily removed in order to give room to the standard of independence, unity and modernity. However, this act of planting and hoisting the flag will from now on be marked as an invasive colonization: As long as the tribal body is there, there will be no room for the flag; in order to inscribe the Indian map with the nation-form, that body has to be disposed of so that India be constructed, in time-worn traditions of conquest, as terra nullius. The sudden visibility of Douloti’s abject tribal body questions this assumption of an empty land onto which the banner of the State could be superimposed

without violence, and which could be imagined as evenly populated by one homogeneous national people.

Mahasweta Devi states how, even today, the lives of bullocks are considered superior to the lives of lower caste bonded labourer. The story of Douloti is where multiple levels of oppression and marginalization- caste, class, gender - merge together. Douloti is sent by her father to the service of prostitution in order to pay off his debt to the upper caste master. As Mahasweta Devi comments, this is nothing new. Although bonded labour was officially abolished in 1975, it has been replaced with a more inhuman form of exploitation. For the villagers, there is no alternative. They may have got land ownership after the abolition of bonded labour system, but this land is basically uncultivable. With no water for drinking and irrigation, and no other employment opportunities from Government sources, there is no choice but to become a kamiya. Even today therefore, slavery is being practiced by the powerful and the mighty in different places under different names - this is the social system, as it exists today. Douloti presents on account of the various contradictions operating within India. Quite literally, a midnight's child, she is the first generation of newly independent India, with hopes of a new life, new dreams, new aspirations. Yet, it seems that for the tribals and Scheduled Castes, nothing has changed. The system of oppression continues, they continue to be the victims, only the masters have changed. Throughout her life, Douloti's body has been battered by the powers through constant exploitation. When her body lying on the Indian map, it symbolizes the whole system has been corrupted. Through this incident the government fails to control the social system, her body leaves a lot of questions to the readers. indeed, Douloti's tormented corpse bears truthful witness to the fact that decolonization has colluded in the collective processes of patriarchal rape of mother earth and gender specific violence against the many individual female bodies that populate India.

Devi's stories are iconoclastic. She skillfully uses myths and empowers them to serve the tribal cause. Similarly, the title of her story "Pterodactyl" is quite suggestive and significant. The pterodactyl of the story, an

extinct creature is resurrected and brought back to emphasize the ancient tribal way of life. Through the use of the myth of the pterodactyl, Devi accurately highlights the hazards of modernity and its impact on the natural and simple lives of the poor Adivasis. The obvious results are disharmony and alienation. In this story, Mahasweta Devi expresses her serious concern for the mountain-dwelling tribes of Madhya Pradesh who are being gradually erased from the map of the world. In order to present the situation from multiple points of view, she knits a complex tapestry in which the characters from various walks of life are drawn in order. Puran Sahay, a radical journalist, belongs to the region of Palamau. Pondering over the issues of tribals in India. He has been created by the writer as one of the voices to make us aware of the tribal condition of the area. Harisharan, the Block Development Officer and his intimate friend invites him to Pirtha. He requests Puran to write a report on the drought and famine and hence make the government aware of the dire condition of Pirtha. The story of finding out the truth begins now and the reader find some suggestive references to an extinct animal right from the beginning. The survey map of Pirtha resembles an extinct animal of Gondwanaland. Puran is unaware of the shadow of the extinct pterodactyl looming over Pirtha, but is aware of the painting drawn by Bikhia, Shankar's nephew. Through Puran, the reader comes to know about the miseries and agonies of the tribals along with the greed and atrocities committed against the tribals by the mainstream. Pirtha is a tribal region having a unique history of its own. Since their experience of outsiders has been traumatic in the past, the tribal people are quite alarmed by the arrival of Puran. The encroachment of the forests and building of roads has resulted into the easy access of the tribal lands by bourgeoisies and other profiteers. The cave paintings found at Pirtha clearly reflect the devastation of their land. They explore how the intrusion of the outsiders has brought a destruction of their culture. The character Puran, as portrayed by Devi, accomplishes the act of writing the subaltern into being. Through the description of his own experience in the tribal universe, Puran make the reader aware of

the condition of the tribals as the 'subalterns' who are dominated, captivated, ignored, exploited and enslaved by the main stream.

### Conclusion

"The Hunt" underlines the significance of the act of violent protest as opposed to silent submission. It is a bold indictment of society that uses custom, religion and even brute force to keep women subjugated. Mary combats biological and socio-cultural delimitations about polarized gender identities. Mahasweta negates both the coded nostalgia and the separate space of Douloti at the end of her story. The movement of negation, destroying the nostalgia and the space of displacement as well as preserving it, transformed, starts working through a lyrical celebration of the nostalgic affect. During night, Douloti stumbles with a broken body: body tortured by extreme exploitation. Devi also highlights the sacredness of the tribal culture in "Pterodactyl". Through the description of his own experience in the tribal universe, Puran make the reader aware of the condition of the tribals as the 'subalterns' who are dominated, captivated, ignored, exploited and enslaved by the main stream. Due to their association with the nature, they are seen as "jungle", "brute" and "ignorant". Mahasweta Devi's purpose is very clear. She aims to improve the tribal condition without destroying their culture. Since the

modern world has failed to understand the significance of the tribal culture Devi uses the image of the pterodactyl in an apocalyptic fashion to warn the outer world that the tribal culture would be wiped out of history like the extinct pterodactyl.

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## Exclusion and Resilience of Marginalised Women – Mahasweta Devi's *Mother of 1084*

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### Abstract

A great writing is certainly a gateway to immortality. This is the only lasting solace to a great writer. Mahasweta Devi, the Bengali writer and activist, focuses on different phases of suffering the women undergo in the society. She does not write as feminist, but as a human being who opens up the realities of human trauma. Her major work *Mother of 1084* reflects such affliction under patriarchy. They are considered as inferior human beings and are always looked down upon. Since ages, they have been dominated by the patriarchal society. Woman is not free and secure as man. Especially the marginalized women's status is very pathetic. Yet most of them resurrect from that with an unbelievable resilience. She has been a victim to both physical and psychological affliction. Since ancient times, man has acquired and occupied a superior status to a woman in the society. Simone de Beauvoir in *The Second Sex* has highlighted the victimized position of a woman in the society and she opines, "One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman" (87). Woman is not born fully formed; she is gradually shaped by her upbringing. Biology does not determine what makes a woman a woman—a woman learns her role from man and others in society. Woman is not born passive, secondary, and non-essential, but all the forces in the external world have conspired to make her so. The novel *Mother of 1084* focuses on the trauma of a mother who awakens one morning to the shattering news that her son is lying dead in the police morgue, reduced to a mere numeral: Corpse No. 1084. Through her struggle to understand his revolutionary commitment as a Naxalite, she recognizes her own alienation—as a woman and a wife—from the complacent, hypocritical, and corrupt feudal society her son had so fiercely rebelled against.

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The World of 'Marginalised' in Mahasweta Devi's Play *Mother of 1084* G.Gulam

Tariq Mahasweta Devi was born in the year 1926 and belongs to Bengal. She began to show keen interest in literature since the young age itself. This can be witnessed in her contribution of several stories to the various literary magazines. Her first novel "Nati" was published in 1957. Gradually she raised herself to the level of a writer activist as she spent many crusades for the rights of the tribals. From 1980 onwards, Mahasweta Devi has been actively associated with many grass root level social movements around the plight of bonded labor, persisting feudalism in rural polity, state negligence especially to the marginalized section of the society which includes communities like untouchables and tribals. In recognition of her social activism through the media of literature, she has been honored with Padma Vibhushan, Magsaysay and Padmasree awards for her activist work amongst dispossessed tribal communities. Besides this, she is the recipient of the coveted, India's highest literary award Gnanpith Award (1996) and YashwantRao Chavan National Award for 2010 "for her contribution to national integration, democratic values and the socio-economic development of India. Recognizing the work of the writer and social activist, the Human Resource Development Ministry has appointed her as National Research Professor for a second term of five years from February, 2011. This honor fetches her Rs. 75,000.00 a month. This has added another feather to the crown of her glory as a dynamic writer.

Her plays, "represent a profound concern for human predicament and sincere hope for the better future of mankind." 1 Before acquainting ourselves with the plight of the marginalized, to know the exact meaning of the term 'marginal' or 'marginalized' is of vital importance. According to the Oxford Dictionary the concept 'marginalize' means 'to make somebody feel as if they are not important and cannot influence decisions or events; or to put somebody in a powerless position'. So, the word 'Marginalized' refers to the group of people who are deprived of their minimum rights

and are exploited. In Post-colonial dialects the term, 'marginalized' occupies a prominent place. The term 'subaltern' or 'marginalized' incorporates the entire people who are subordinates in terms of class, caste, gender and office. It is the subject position that defines marginality. The lack and deprivation, loneliness and alienation, subjugation and subordination, the resignation and silence, the resilience and neglect, mark the lives of 'marginalized', even when they resist and rise up. They feel bounded and defeated by their subject positions. They have no representatives or spokespersons in the society they live in. The play *Mother of 1084* is the original translation of Mahasweta Devi's Bengali play "Hajar Churashir Ma" has the best illustrations for the marginalized category. The neglected and suppressed plight of the woman is represented by Sujata Chatterjee, mother of the protagonist of the play Brati Chatterjee whose ideology i.e., commitment to the revolutionary and Communist Naxalite movement has labeled him as a rebel, and was killed ruthlessly by the police in an 'encounter'. In the play *Mother of 1084* Sujata Chatterjee, a traditional apolitical upper middle class lady, an employee who awakens one early morning to the shattering news that her youngest and favourite son, Brati, is lying dead in the police morgue bearing the corpse no.1084. Her efforts to understand her son's revolutionary activism lead her to reflect on her own alienation from the complacent, hypocritical, bourgeois society against which he had rebelled. The play moves around Sujata, a middle-aged woman belonging to a 'bhadralok', bourgeoisie Calcutta family. Born into a conservative, affluent family, Sujata is advised to pursue her B.A. so that it helps her marriage prospects, but is ultimately married off to Dibyanath Chatterjee, a chartered accountant, despite his unsound financial situation. In thirty-four years of their married life, Sujata gives birth to four children, two sons (Jyoti and Brati) and two daughters (Nipa and Tuli). When the novel opens, two of her children are already married, Jyoti to Bina and Nipa to Amrit. In the eyes of the world, all of them are leading perfectly happy and settled lives, but as Sujata goes on to discover later, that this happiness is only superficial. Significantly, Sujata makes several other discoveries, only after the sudden and mysterious death of Brati, her younger son, with whom she had always shared a very special relationship. For instance, she discovers that all her thirty-four years of her

married life, she has been living a lie, as her husband, being an incorrigible philanderer, always cheated her with his mother's and children's tacit approval. He fixed up a petty bank job for her, when Brati was barely three years old, is not out of any consideration for her economic independence, but essentially to help the family tide over a temporary financial crisis. And, as soon as the tide is over, he wants her to give up the job, which Sujata simply refuses.

Sujata also discovers that her children, too, are leading lives very similar to her own. If there is someone who has dared to be different, it's Brati. Sullenly rebellious, right from his childhood, Brati has made no secret of his disregard, even contempt, for his familial code and value-system. Turning his back upon this decadent and defunct code, Brati decides to join the Naxalite movement sweeping through the State of West Bengal in late 1960's and early 1970's. Unaware of his secret mission, Sujata is not able to dissuade her son from joining this movement. During his period of struggle, he comes into contact with a young girl, Nandini, who is also a member of the underground movement and with whom he shares his vision of a new world order. On being betrayed by one of his comrades, Brati and three of his close associates, Somu, Parth and Laltu, are brutally murdered by the hired assassins of the police. Later, the police call up his father, asking him to come and identify the dead body of his son, who, has in the meantime been divested of his identity as a person, and given another 'dehumanized identity' as corpse number 1084. Not only does the father refuse to go, but he also forbids other family members from doing so. Outraged at the manner in which his associates, his immediate family and the state have abandoned the dead Brati, his mother, Sujata decides to go, throwing all pretensions to false social respectability and the fear of public censure, to winds.

Dibyanath Chatterjee, father of Brati Chatterjee is represented, as an honest representative of the male dominated society. As soon as he comes to know about the news of his son, instead of rushing to the police station he tries to hush up the matter. Sujata is aghast to see the indifferent behaviour of her husband. He was least bothered to talk about this matter to his wife Sujata. The following sentences reveal very clearly how much she was neglected by him, "Sujata: (uncomprehending, in a panic). What will you hush

up? What are you talking about? Dibyanath: Jyoti, there is no time to waste. He goes out. Sujata : Jyoti! (Jyoti busy in dialing a number. He does not reply) Jyoti! (Reproving). Jyoti! What's Happened? 3 From the above lines one can easily conclude that Sujata was neglected though she was the second important member of the family. Dibyanath Chatterjee bothered to consult his son Jyoti rather than his wife, Sujata and she was neglected though she was the second important member of the family. Women always suffer whatever happens to any member in the family. It will be affected directly to the women yet she is considered as a second member in the family. Sujata felt shocked when Dibyanath Chatterjee refuses to go to the police station with the fear of stigma in the society for his son's involvement in anti - government affairs. In the words of Sujata, "But that soon? Even before the body's been identified? A father gets the news on the telephone and does not even think of rushing to have a look? All he can think of is that he'd be comprised if his car went to Kantakapukur?"

The four chapters in the play mark a new stage in the evolution of Sujata's consciousness, as it enables her to re-order her fragmented and chaotic life in search of a cohesive identity. Every time she visits her own past or that of Brati, Somu's mother or Nandini, her long-suppressed personal loss is slowly released into the ever-widening, spirals of betrayal, guilt and suffering. From a weak-willed, hopelessly dependent and a non-assertive moral coward, Sujata is transformed into a morally assertive, politically enlightened and a socially defiant individual. In the first chapter, significantly titled 'Dawn,' Sujata primarily returns to her interior, private world of personal suffering, torture, betrayal and loneliness. Negotiating the inner time in relation to her immediate familial situation, she becomes aware of how she and Brati were not just fellow sufferers but also soul mates. In the second chapter, 'Afternoon,' Sujata's visit to the bank to get jewellery from the locker is only a pretext for her to visit the house of Somu's mother. A close associate of Brati, Somu had been killed in the same encounter. More significantly, Brati had spent his night in Somu's house before his mysterious disappearance and death. While Sujata goes to Somu's mother with the specific aim of retrieving the memories of Brati's last few hours, it turns out to be her entry and initiation into another world altogether. It is the world of primitive

squalor, filth, poverty, degradation and subhuman existence that only hovers tentatively on the margins of 'bhadraloks' consciousness. She enters into the little known world of slum dwellers.

In the third chapter, titled 'Evening,' when she visits Nandini, who apart from being Brati's comrade-in-arms was also his beloved. It is Nandini who reconstructs for Sujata all the events leading up to Brati's betrayal and murder. It's through Nandini that Sujata is finally able to understand the reasons for Brati's political convictions and his rejection of the bourgeoisie code. In the last chapter of the novel titled 'Night,' we meet a transformed Sujata, one who is more self-assured, morally confident and politically sensitive. She decides to leave the house in which Brati never felt at home, where he wasn't valued while he was alive, nor his memory respected after his death. Having found a soul mate in Brati, she turns her back on Dibyanath and his decadent value-system. Bound by a sense of moral responsibility, she does go through all the rituals and ceremonies connected with Tuli's engagement, but during the party, she maintains stiff, studied silence. Her insistence on wearing a plain, white sari for the party is also a significant gesture. The feelings of Sujata were not respected but misinterpreted by the members of the family. Thus, one can infer the insignificant role of Sujata in the play *Mother of 1084*, as a woman who has been relegated to the position of a neglected, suppressed, ill-treated, mechanical and marginalized in all forms in the male dominated society who consider woman as an object of sex, only to reproduce, bring money when needed and does not possess even a voice to express her own concerns.

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## The Self - Identity of Woman- Gayatri Spivak Vs Tagore

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### Abstract

Gayatri Spivak raises the question whether the subaltern Indian woman can raise her voice and answers with a negative note in "Can the Subaltern Speak?". Spivak argues, by speaking out and reclaiming a collective cultural identity, subalterns will in fact re-inscribe their subordinate position in society. Spivak encourages but also criticizes the efforts of the subaltern studies group, in order to locate and re-establish a "voice" or collective locus of agency in postcolonial India. On the contrary, Tagore has no gender variation in the process of the glorification of divinity in the 'self'. His works assert the strong identity of women. Tagore's views on women can provide a positive answer to the questions raised by Spivak, insisting women to develop their inner strength and assert their individuality.

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Gayatri Spivak's 'Can the Subaltern Speak?' raises questions on the inequality in race and gender. She raises the concealed identity of women and its connection to the community ensuring patriarchy and its acceptance. The paper attempts in understanding the 'silence' to which the women subjugate themselves as disclosed by Gayathri Spivak where women are oppressed by the patriarchy and the colonizer which marks a dynamic deviation as disclosed by Tagore who ventures in the glorification of the 'silence' by the nurturing of the 'self' with divinity.

Gayathri Spivak has her concern for a society where women are treated with equality and respect "What interests me is that the protection of woman (today the 'third world woman') becomes a signifier for the establishment of a good society which must, at such inaugurative moments, transgress mere legality, or equity of legal policy". She raises the charge that women are silenced by the dominant patriarchy where she cannot raise her voice. The lamentation is that her voice has no listener. The struggle of the post colonial female where she can assert herself in the formation of her

'identity' is worth of being given due consideration.

There must be an attempt to decode the 'silence' suffered by the women and its impact in the society. Women form the equal percentage of human beings in earth and their oppression would not allow the flourishing of a society.

Women of our country are under the misconception of weak and powerless. So it is really worth wondering how a woman who is considered as weak and fragile can protect a man and give him moral strength and support. Women possess a very unique power within themselves. So a woman too can protect and give support to a man using her strong will power and inner strength. How can a woman be weak? The Hindu mythology says that a woman has so much (inner) strength and power that she can stop the mighty Sun also! The story of *Satyavan* and his wife *Savitri* proves her devotion to her husband that she fought the very Lord of Death from taking her husband away and brought him back to life. The inspiring story of *Devi Anusuya* too asserts women strength. So, women possess the power of feelings and emotions, and have great inner strength within them. This is the greatest strength that anyone can have irrespective of gender. If one loses one's inner strength then the outward physical strength is of no use. To be physically strong, one has to be strong from within first (referring to strong will power and courage). Inner strength here means both – the power of the intellect and also the strength of inner will and emotions. A woman possesses the unique and beautiful combination of both of these. The strength of a woman is not measured by the impact of all her hardships in life have had on her; but the strength of a woman is measured by the extent of her refusal to allow those hardships to dictate her and who she becomes. The art of femininity lies in the moulding, pounding, and defeating the weakness that is artificially thrust upon her.

The intelligence and persistence with positive attitude to self-motivate herself and steer her own movements in the desired direction is the

reflection of woman that is found in Tagore's writings. The optimism and determination with confidence are appreciated in Tagore's works. Focusing largely on emancipation, his writing campaigned for women's liberation, equality, freedom, justice, power and dignity and rights.

The mysterious widow Binodini of 'Chokher Bali', defies the norms of widowhood, refusing to curb her sexuality and thirst for love. A story of distrust, adultery and lies, the novel highlights the dictatorship of a patriarchal society. Tagore brought into the forefront even the sexual desires of a woman, which even today is considered taboo, reflecting his liberal approach to the topic. The character of Charulata in 'Broken Nest' is married to a journalist who has no time for her, gets tied to her brother-in-law through their shared passion for music. As her husband takes lightly her love for poetry and music, she falls in love with her brother-in-law. Her husband offers moving away to start afresh but she chooses to stay behind. Mrinmoyee in 'Samapti' is the character who refuses to mould her to femininity, even after marriage. She is a girl who has grown up climbing trees and playing cricket with a group of boys, is not ready to accept the thought of tying her hair and wearing jewels. She questions why it is the girl who has to make all adjustments post marriage and runs away twice. Her spirit is too free to be confined within the domestic walls.

A common feature in all his characters is the pride in the identity as a woman, instead of being defined as a wife, a mother or a daughter. Their rights and wrongs are not shaped by what the society expects of them. They do not leave behind their passions and hobbies after marriage and aren't afraid to look at sources of acceptance and love apart from their marriage. They challenge the concepts of dowry, feminine, chastity of widows and honour. These characters challenge the conventions of the world as we know it even today and it is only Tagore who could create them, a century ago. Being a progressive thinker, his writings often were based on bold subjects that were far ahead of the time.

Humanism hones sympathy and empathy towards the fellow gender. Tagore's female characters are quite vivid in that their souls are elevated and the silent spirit stands revolutionized. There is a marked insight into the life of widowhood and their frustration in extreme reality.

An educated woman brings in a change in her individuality. There is conflict between orthodoxy and individualism where the family norms and freedom is a matter of debate in his works.

There are plenty of queries on custom, convention and tradition. Shiv Gajrani explores that Tagore emphasizes "woman is endowed with the passive qualities of chastity, modesty, devotion and power of self-sacrifice in a greater measure than man is." Tagore could not accept tradition blindly unless it was healthy and stimulating. Tagore was impressed by Raja Ram Mohan Roy's synthesis of East and west which Tagore himself achieved.

Humanity and Divinity according to Tagore do not belong to two different orders but they are only the aspects of the same reality. As a poet Tagore seems to have been influenced by the ancient Indian texts such as the Vedas, the Upanishads, the Puranas as also by the Ramayana and the Mahabharata. It is natural that he imbibed a good deal from the sacred and venerated writings, and the kind of cosmic vision, spiritual profundity and a sincere search for truth that we get in them may be associated with Tagore's poetry. Tagore is a humanist and his Gitanjali is steeped in humanism. No doubt, Gitanjali is a religious poem, but the greatness of the religious poem lies in its humanistic appeal. As and when we go through the poems collected in Gitanjali, we come to realize that here is a collection of poems which may be looked upon as an expression of an illuminated human soul, of a continuous and sincere quest of the truth, and of a deep awareness of the core values of life. The poet's soul is full of prayer and he receives whispers from the almighty, the prayer evoking the response, or the whisper provoking the prayer and always prayer and whisper rhyming into song. Gitanjali is full of such poetry.

Only let me make my life simple and straight, like a flute of reed for thee to fill with music. (Stanza VII) The same sentiment of self-surrender is expressed more explicitly a little later when the poet sings with full-throated ease: This is my prayer to thee, my lord-strike, strike at the root of penury in my heart. Give me the strength lightly to bear my joys and sorrows. Give me the strength to make my love fruitful in service. Give me the strength never to disown the poor or bend my knees before insolent might. Give me the strength to raise my mind high above daily trifles. And give me the strength to surrender my strength to thy will with

love. (Stanza XXXVI) In successive poems Tagore keeps on telling us in a highly formal manner that there exists an essential kind of link between man and god, the visible and the invisible, humanity and divinity. In the modern world of tension and turmoil, logical derivations and scientific rationalism the poet tries to transport us to the serene world of supreme peace and joy. His first major achievement as an Indo Anglian poet is to make his contemporaries painfully aware of the cramping limitations that surround them and at the same time to impress upon them the absolute necessity of discovering and realizing the transcendental glory of over soul. The songs of Gitanjali are songs mainly of the closest personal relationship between the poet and the Eternal. They present the ups and downs in the drama of the human soul in its progress from the finite to the infinite.

Gitanjali dramatizes the trials of the self and the ordeal of consciousness in the intricate web of love and pain, joy and loss, union and separation, with the mystery of cosmic reality. Thus, Tagore appeals to our inmost feelings of love and longing for the supreme creator as our beloved who transcends this world of man and nature and yet remains immanent in it. The songs in Gitanjali form a mighty piece of prayer and pleading and exultation. The poet is a sincere humanist and in tune with his humanistic creed he does not wish to bid farewell to the world. He does not want to seek salvation or deliverance through renunciation. He makes this very clear when he says; "Deliverance is not for me in renunciation. I feel the embrace of freedom in a thousand bonds of delight. Thou ever pourest for me the fresh draught of thy wine of various colors and fragrance, filling this earthen vessel to the brim."(Stanza LXXIII) He firmly

believes that he can establish relationship with God by union through love with humanity itself.

The subaltern can rise to the higher level by developing their inner strength and simultaneous appreciation and concern for the fellow gender can be developed by the spirituality and humanism. To understand the oppression and voice of the subaltern humanism provides platform to eradicate gender and race inequalities. As a humanist Tagore appeals to us that faith from humanity and benediction from divinity are needed to end the waywardness of man and human wretchedness of his country, praying to God to let his country awake into that heaven of humanism and freedom. What will be remembered forever about Tagore is his contribution to literary society and his attempt to create a world "where the mind is without fear and the head is held high".

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## A Playful Mixture of Facts and Fiction: A Historical Autobiography in Alice Munro's *The View from Castle Rock*

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### Abstract

The term history denotes a mixture of facts which happened in the past. The past historical events are given in the form of fiction in the present by some writers. "History was a series of accidents" says Edward Hallet Carr. There are some writers who wanted to share the past or historical events through their writings. One such writer is Alice Munro, she was born and brought up in Ontario, Canada. She is known for her short stories. She is the recipient of 2013 Nobel Prize in literature. *The View from Castle Rock* is one of her short story collections containing all the historical and autobiographical facts.

The book has two parts. Part one is named as "No Advantages" which gives the autobiographical details about Munro's ancestors starting from their Scottish Origin. The second part consists of fictionalized tales inspired by events in her own life. The book closes with the oldest memories of living members of the family. I have selected this work to bring out the originality of the author through her own style. The author has proved that history is a treasure which cannot be taken away. It provides wealth for all from where it is.

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The word 'history' reminds us of the past facts and events. There are some writers who wanted to share the past historical events through their writings. Edward Hallet Carr the author of *What Is History?* says that history was a series of accidents which was merely an expression of the pessimism. In Carr's opinion, historical works that serve to broaden society's undertaking of the past through generalizations are right and socially acceptable than works that do not.

Canadian author and recipient of the 2013 Noble prize winner Alice Munro's *The View From Castle Rock* is a collection of stories which contain all the historical and autobiographical stories.

Munro wanted personally to go and find out her own ancestry and so she along with her husband took random interest in the history of one side of her family, whose name was Laidlaw. In her foreword she says:

I lived in Scotland for a few months, close to the Ettrick valley, so I was able to find their names in the local histories in the Selkirk and Galashiels Public libraries, and to find out what James Hogg had to say about them in *Blackwoods Magazine*. Hogg's mother was a Laidlaw, and he took Walter Scott to see her when Scott was collecting ballads for The Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border. And I was lucky, in that every generation of our family seemed to produce somebody who went in for writing long, outspoken, sometimes outrageous letters, and detailed recollections. (VCR ix)

*The View From Castle Rock* is a collection of eleven stories with an epilogue. These collections are divided into two parts. Part one is named as 'No Advantages' there are five stories in part one, where it gives the autobiographical details about Munro's ancestors. Her Family tree begins from William of Farhope, who was called as Will O' Phaup. Part two is titled as Home. I have taken the first part alone for focusing on the history of the author.

William was said to be the great great grand father of Munro. She writes about Ettrick, Scotland, and her ancestors who lived there, but quickly begins imagining things. Specifically, she focuses on one ancestor, Will O'Phaup, and his encounters with the fairy people. She feels very proud that she has come from a generation who went in for writing. Alice Munro's forefather lived in Scotland 'where John Knox had decided that every child should learn to read and write, in some sort of village school, so that everybody could read the Bible'. (TVFCR ix)

Stories pay more attention to the truth of life than fiction usually does. But not enough to swear on. And the part of this book that might be called family history has expanded into fiction, but always within out-line of a true narrative. With these developments the two streams came close enough together that they seemed to me meant to flow in one channels (TVFCR x).

The first part of the book is mostly based on letters or a few diary entries, with the time between actual events being filled with fiction. In the first story Alice Munro talks about her great, great, great grandfather William Laidlaw. Will O'Phaup was a mythical man, a prodigious runner, a bootlegger and a heavy drinker. He had encounters with fairies and ghosts. Munro's art of creativity is shown while she elaborates in detail the innocence of her forefather Will O'Phaup, his fear for ghosts and fairies and his spirituality. Once he had seen tiny creatures dressed in green in the edge of the hollow and he also heard them humming his name. He became frightened. He ran home, bared his doors, gathered his children and started to pray aloud. He cried, 'Oh, Lord have mercy and falls silent'. (TVFCR 12)

In the title story *The View from Castle Rock*, Munro gives the reader a glimpse into what prompted the emigration of her family from Scotland to Canada. A young boy Andrew follows his intoxicated father James Laidlaw, son of Will O'Phaup to the steep, uneven stone steps of an ancient castle and onto a roofless tower. Munro's strength in these early stories is her ability to set place and time for the reader. Munro uses real documents such as Walter's journal to help to gather the history of her family and there are times when it is difficult to ascertain what fact is and what fiction is.

And I am surely one of the liars the old man talks about, in what I have written about the voyage. Except for Walter's journal, and the letters, the story is full of my invention.

The sighting of Fife from Castle Rock is related by Hogg, so it must be true (TVFCR 84).

James Laidlaw had one daughter, Mary and five sons, Robert, James, Andrew, William and

Walter. Robert and William had moved to the Highlands before the move, while the others followed in the voyage. Andrew's wife gave birth to a girl baby during ocean crossing. They also had their infant son young James. Mary was very much attached to young James, she took care of him. Young James died shortly after their landing. Walter wrote down an account of the trip in his journal. William Laidlaw also moves to America, specifically to the town of Joliet, *Illinois*.

William wanted to break with his roots and start a completely new life with his wife, but he dies of cholera. His wife and children were taken to Canada by Andrew Laidlaw. The oldest of the children Jamie, steals his new born sister Jane and tried to direct the blame on a half-Indian neighbour. This was a plot to keep the family in their home, but fails. The youngest of William's sons, Thomas was said to be author's great grandfather.

Alice Munro gives the next story *The Wilds of Morris Township* in the form of a record, where we find William's children growing among their cousin. Andrew's son then moved towards the wild Morris Township. Big Rob son of Andrew had the family custom or duty of writing his memories. He had many sons and daughters. They started to build a shanty and settled in Morris. They all lived together taking care of one another.

'They were devoted to each other', said my mother, who had never actually met them, but was generally in favour of brotherly- sisterly relationships, unsullied by sex. My father had seen them at church, when he was a child and might have visited them a couple of times, with his mother. They were only second cousins of his father's and he did not think they had ever come to his parent's house (TVFCR 126).

Munro completes part one of her collection with the story *Working for a Living* which recollects her father's boyhood in the town of Blyth. This story comes from the memory of the author as her father had told her about his childhood. She remembers her father telling an incident which happened in his school while he was a student. Her father had heard a poem recited by the teacher in a different way. Soon he was surprised to see the poem written on the blackboard differently.

*Working for a Living* recounts how Munro's father begins his adult life as a fur-trapper and seller of skins for the commercial market and how he meets her mother. After her father stops raising animals for fur, he gets a job at a foundry as a night watchman; when Munro, as a young girl, goes to visit him there, she sees him as someone other than just her father. In this story, we are introduced to Munro as a future writer. While her father provides her with particular explanations of the foundry, she is more interested in the general effects--the gloom, the fine dust, and the atmosphere of the place. Munro leaves this first half of *The View from Castle Rock* with her father listening to his grandfather and other men speaking

in the dialect of their own childhood--an appropriate transition to the second half, which begins with a fictional account of Munro's early understanding of the complex relationships that daughters have with their fathers.

Alice Munro's most personal book ends appropriately with a metaphor, a huge seashell, which she holds to her ear to listen to the pounding of her own blood and the roar of the ocean. This metaphor of listening to the self and the sea brings the book full circle, echoing the young ancestor so many years ago, gazing from Castle Rock across that misty ocean which held the future and now holds the past.

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## Ecology, Environment and Ecocriticism: A Historical Perspective

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### Abstract

The function of literature has been a contentious issue since the time of the masters of Greek. The “Arts for Art’s sake” group who advocated a philosophy that the intrinsic value of art and the only “true” art is divorced from any didactic, moral, or utilitarian function, making a literary text or piece of art as autotelic. It was, in fact, a silent but strong protest against materialism, which extolled that everything should have a use and practical value. But the opponents of this inward looking ideology questioned the theoretical framework of such claims and called for pro-human approach to literature. They argued that human being the principal producer of a literary text or piece of art as a social animal and a member of society has primary responsibility to the society. Artists and writers in all their work should promote essential values of goodness, truth and beauty; and more than that, they should have an eternal commitment to any attempt to actualize such ideals. The debate still goes on even now; and there have been several literary theories subtly aligning with either of the above views. Ecocriticism, when scrutinized from the above debate, can said to be a theory which promotes a pro-human culture. It explores, investigates and questions the relationship between man and his environment. In the backdrop of these roadmaps this paper traces the Victorian ecological sensitivity from a historical perspective to see the evolution and major concerns as far as ecology is concerned.

**Key words:** ecology, ecocriticism, Victorian, nature and literature

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### **Introduction**

Ecocriticism, from Glotfelty’s perspective is the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment. In this theoretical approach a literary work is closely studied to see environmental ideas and representations as they appear at various cultural spaces. In the backdrop

of these roadmaps this paper traces the origin, development and ideology of critical terms like ecology, environmentalism and ecocriticism against the socio-cultural space of Victorian society from a historical perspective. The Victorians lived at a crucial time in world history as their generation was dawned to a new awakening in various new knowledge systems hitherto unknown like scientific, social and epistemological. These facts not only perplexed the Victorian writers but also stirred their philosophical enquiries to new avenues to encapsulate the realities that they encountered. The rapid changes that gradually unfolded as a result of material progress wreaked havoc on the serene country side of Victorian England to which the thinking minds of the time responded cautiously. It was not just the beautiful landscapes that were under attack but largely human conceptions and attitudes particularly about his/her own role on this planet whether to “subdue everything and rule over” or “care for everything that matters and affects my own existence” was a question that they tried to answer individually, of course without much clarity as we have today about its ramifications. This paper makes an attempt to historicize the evolution of ecological concern during the Victorian period and answers how the social and scientific advances impacted the literature and hermeneutics of the period.

### **Victorian England and Emergence of Science**

Queen Victoria’s reign, spanning from 1837 to 1901, made England Europe’s most stable and prosperous country. Her long and bold leadership made England first in many fields such as maritime activities, trade and commerce, agricultural production, general education and above all in military might. Such a privileged position further boosted England’s status as a colonial super power bringing many nations in Africa and Asia under her military clout. The industrial revolution which paralleled the Victorian period, paved the way for scientific advancement and extensive technological development. The invention of steam engine led to massive increase

in motor transport and bequeathed the railway age. New roads, Ports, mines and factories were built all across the country and raw materials were in great demand and nature was mindlessly exploited by the nouveau riche. Small towns were beginning to swell into smoky centers of manufacturing industry. All this was taking place at a time when the iron hand of power still wrested with a privileged few, who were wealthy by birth or becoming wealthy in commerce. In spite of all the developments wrought by the industrial revolution through factories, mills, mines and workshops, England remained largely an agricultural country. Three major development in the scientific arena paved way for a paradigm shift in the way man/woman understood the meaning and his or her role in the universe. They are: Laws of Thermodynamics from physical sciences, Theory of evolution from the field of natural sciences and the general scientific discoveries leading to Industrial revolution.

### Socio-Cultural Context of Victorian Ecology

The foundational question that bewilder us while talking about ecology and literature is that what is the connection between Victorian writers and ecology. Do the books written in this period in any specific way communicate the concern for the nature? In his book “The Environmental Tradition in English Literature”, John Parham outlines four reasons for proposing to study Victorian writers from an Eco critical perspective<sup>i</sup>.

1. The proximity to the scientific developments that converge[d] to form ecology allowed the Victorians to develop a partial understanding that humans are part of an interrelated network of species.

2. From the new scientific knowledge emerged a materialistic awareness that the concept of “human being” resides in the nature and quality of humanity’s relationship with other species and the surrounding physical environment.

3. The awareness of humankind’s interdependence on other species and the physical environment led to the emergence of an early environmental activism and ‘green politics’.

4. Victorian writers, often ambivalent about new scientific ideas and sometimes alarmed by the implications of their own social-environmental critiques, constantly ‘shuttled’ between a bewildering array of influences trying to

make sense of the scientific, social and epistemological complexities with which they were confronted. (Parham, 157-59)

In the Victorian period the impact of Industrial revolution as experienced by or sensed by the Romantic artistic was on the rise. Problems such as urban expansion unleashed a host of other issues: housing facilities of the burgeoning migrants to the city centers, working conditions, unemployment partly due to the collapse of agriculture sector and partly as a result of mechanization-direct ecological problems such as sanitation, air quality, diseases, deforestation- proved to be issues that those writers found it hard to come to terms with. As Parham points out, “it became an age of observation, investigation, and social responsibility, in turn, promoting campaigning, political intervention and legislation. This impulse to intervene permeated the Victorian literary culture.”<sup>ii</sup> (Parham 163) Informed by the developments in the arena of science particularly natural science and thermodynamics the writers began to write more accurately about nature showing careful observation and detailed nature description as an anticipation of scientific ecology and an understanding of the atmosphere as a sustainable energy system.

### Environmentalism to Ecology

Conservation is “as a utilitarian notion, the orderly exploitation of resources for the greatest good to the greatest number over the longest time”<sup>iii</sup> (Tim O’Riordan 12). Understood from this definition, conservation is the management of natural resources for human benefit based upon scientific understanding and this presupposes the notion of limitation in terms of resources. The next terminology is Preservation which is concerned with protecting the existing environments. Preservationism can be defined as a social philosophy “which is premised upon a corresponding notion of limitation, advocating limited access to wilderness or other such areas so as to preserve the integrity of a supposedly natural state”<sup>iv</sup> (John Parham Green Man Hopkins 15). As an ideology and political stand environmentalism has gained much popular support in the last few decades of twenty-first century. From a scientific perspective, Environmentalism is “the study of the specific physical, chemical and biological surroundings in which organisms live and the changes wrought on them by human activities”<sup>v</sup>

(Michael Allaby 9). The word ecology was coined and defined by German Zoologist Ernst Haeckel as “the investigation of the total relations of the animal both to its inorganic and organic environment; including above all, its friendly and inimical relations with those animals and plants with which it comes directly or indirectly into contact”<sup>vi</sup>(Robert P McIntosh 7-8).

### From Ecology to Ecocriticism

Eco criticism is a branch of literary theory which study ecological concerns in a literary text. Glotfelty, one of the pioneers of the field defines Eco criticism as “the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment”.<sup>vii</sup> (Glotfelty, Cheryl and Harold Fromm viii) As a literary theory, ecocriticism was not born on a single day but has had a historical evolution over a long period of time.

“Unlike feminism or post colonialism, ecocriticism did not evolve gradually as the academic wing of an influential political movement. It emerged when environmentalism had already turned into a vast field of converging and conflicting projects and given rise to two other humanistic sub disciplines, environmental philosophy and history. This diversity resonates in the different names by which the field has been identified: ecocriticism has imposed itself as convenient shorthand for what some critics prefer to call environmental criticism, literary-environmental studies, literary ecology, literary environmentalism, or green cultural studies.<sup>viii</sup> (Ursula K. Heise 503)

A work of literature is the product of a social milieu in which it was written expressing the ethos of that particular culture and environment. Looking from this angle a text has so much to say about the specific period in which it was written. Hence, as Kerridge says an Ecocritic “wants to track environmental ideas and representations wherever they appear, to see more clearly a debate which seems to be taking place, often part-concealed, in a great many cultural spaces”.<sup>ix</sup> (Kerridge and Sammells 5) Thus ecocriticism does not see a text as a mere collection of words dissociated from the social realities but rather very much rooted in the context with a corrective purpose. Buell echoes the same: “Ecocriticism is

one of the new approaches to literature that have presented themselves as correctives or enhancements to literary theory’s preexisting toolkit.”<sup>x</sup> (Buell, 11) Later in this study we see how Victorian society is slowly reawakened to realize if they go on in this attitude they will have serious consequences to face. The literature of the period act as a corrective measure as far as ecology is concerned. “Contemporary ecocriticism is both deliberate in its focus on the materiality of the environment and interdisciplinary in its approach.”<sup>xi</sup> (Mazzeno, Laurence W and Raonald D Morrison 1) On the basis of a close analyzes of recent research and publication in this field we can conclude that ecocritics have appropriated freely from different theoretical or disciplinary models such as animal studies, feminist theory, the history of science, Marxist theory, New Historicism, and post-colonial theory, often employing these methodologies in unique combinations.

### Victorian Poetry

Tennyson writes in ‘*In Memoriam*’, giving a clear indication of the changing world view informed by the development of science:

Sweets after showers, ambrosial air  
That rollest from the gorgeous gloom  
Of evening over break and bloom  
And meadow, slowly breathing bare<sup>xii</sup>...

(lxxxvi 1)

He further writes lamenting that the natural environment is lost as a result of disruption of balance by evolutionism:

The hills are shadows, and they flow  
From form to form, and nothing stands;  
They melt like mist, the solid lands  
Like clouds they shape themselves and go

(cxxxiii. 5)

Mathew Arnold’s ‘*Dover Beach*’ demonstrates similar sentiments about nature and society in the context of evolutionary theory undermining religious belief. He makes a famous analogy between inhospitable nature and the decline of organized religion:

Hath really neither joy, nor love nor light,  
Nor certitude, nor peace, nor help for pain;

And we are here as on a darkling plain.

Hopkins contemplates this destruction of nature and how it is, in many ways, typical of mankind's behaviour in his famous nature poem *The Binsey Poplars*:

Since country is so tender  
To touch, her being so slender,  
That, like this sleek and seeing ball  
But a prick will make no eye at all,

Hopkins likens this wanton destruction of the nature to the way in which the delicate wonder of nature that is the eyeball can, with a simple 'prick' from a pin or needle be turned into 'no eye at all'. This analogy is obviously designed to strike us at our very core, to hit us right between the eyes: who is not extremely delicate and queasy around the idea of their eyes being harmed? It reminds us that our responsibility to look after nature as a whole should be as keenly felt. It also likens the organs of sight, the eyes, to the beauty of the trees: one enabled us to enjoy the other, and both are capable of being snuffed out in seconds.

### Victorian Prose and Philosophy

Thomas Carlyle was a forerunner of advocating this new trend in English literature through prose. His '*Sartor Resartus*' is a metaphoric representation of universe as a huge steam engine—a symbolic manifestation of the fact that energy is the elementary entity in nature—which is the conclusion of the first law of Thermodynamics. Carlyle through this work was pitching for conservation of energy from unprincipled exploitation. He even called for a new understanding that the Romantic idea of superior perception and critical insight of the artist should be in the service of society. Men of letters, according to Carlyle, must replace the priests as the dispensers and living types of God's everlasting wisdom through their writing as it is required in their particular age.

Another prominent thinker of the time John Ruskin, in his work *Modern Painters* attempts to differentiate 'typical' and 'vital beauty'. The former refers to the outer form and is constituted by aesthetic rules supposedly derived from nature so that for example, artists would follow the graceful symmetry of oak leaves. Whereas, the latter denotes the inner goodness or a personal or

spiritual beauty, that is. The link is that a person's ability to perceive typical beauty' depends on their mastery of 'vital beauty' implying art becomes a barometer for the moral health of the society. All throughout, Ruskin relates the rules of art to a proper understanding of nature. This some way or other had an impact on Victorian relationship with, attitudes to nature and treatment of the natural environment. Grounded on such an ideological framework Ruskin attacks Victorian environmental damage in his *Fors Clavigera*, which actually contained his ninety six letters to the workmen and labourers of England about the pitiful state of environmental degradation: "you are vitiating [the air]with foul, chemical exhalations; and the horrible nests, which you call towns, are little more than laboratories for the distillations into heaven of venomous smokes and smells, mixed with effluvia for decaying animal matter, and infectious miasmata from purulent disease."<sup>xiii</sup> (Cook and Wedderburn 91)

### Victorian Novels

Victorian novelists too were not far behind in assimilating and communicating these scientific trends discoveries. William Morris' *News from Nowhere*, a soft science fiction work speaks of an ideal society where nature is well taken care of. Gaskell's works creatively foreshadows the convergence of social and environmental ills in the Victorian city. Dickens demonstrated how a social organization through the urban environment moulds both the non-human and human components of the eco system. Finally Hardy another prominent writer to delve on nature wrote about the impact of non-sustainable economic and development policies on the rural eco system and its people.

### Conclusion

Victorian writers championed the causes of nature by positively seeking to use the means available to preserve beautiful places and conserving natural resources, standing as a proxy for nature that has no means of expressing its own distress. They so revolutionarily did it at a time when massive level atrocities against the nature were taking place in the name of development and progress. In such a context, the texts of the Victorian era show the importance of masquerading as nature, recognizing that there can never be a voice of nature. While ecocriticism may not be able to share all the basic goals of other

approaches to literary criticism, eco-criticism is an important exploration of how humans interact with the natural world. Most of the authors of the period found inspiration not only from the natural world, but from the power of information and scientific exploration.

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## The Stigma of Marginalisation in Mahasweta Devi's *Outcast: Four Stories*

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### Abstract

Mahasweta Devi is a Bengali litterateur. Like Medha Patkar the social activist, she too holds a prominent place among Bengali writers. The core theme of her writings brings out the ups and downs of democracy in India. It also highlights the plight of marginalised women in India. In India marginalised women suffer in silence in their community and outside their communities also. Therefore Mahasweta Devi can rightly be called the 'voice of the voiceless'.

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Mahasweta Devi's story, *Outcast: Four Stories*, is about the travails of four marginalised women characters. Their names are- Dhouli, Shanichari, Josmina, and Chinta. They are even ill-treated by their own marginalised kith and Kin. In these stories, Mahasweta Devi actually envisages a three-tier hierarchical structure in the Indian social order composed of the rungs of the non-marginalized or the mainstream, the marginalized or the subordinated, and finally the outcast or the marginalized by the marginalized. At this juncture the researcher would like to point out that Mahasweta Devi's main aim in these stories is to bring out the causes leading to the socio political, economic, exploitation of these women who belong to the marginalised community. The writer reveals the virtual slave trade that festers under the facade of the democratic society of India, and clearly indicates the plight of these women who usually have no one to turn to, nothing to look forward to, and have only a few to lend them a voice-women who are regarded as sub-humans and treated as commodities both without and within their own communities.

The first story titled 'dhouli' reveals the miserable plight of a young widow. This young widow belongs to dusad, an untouchable lower caste. She is seduced and becomes pregnant by Misrilal. Misrilal is the son of a rich upper caste Brahmin named Hanumanji Misra. Misrilal deserts the new born child and its mother. He marries

another woman who belongs to his own caste and settle down in Rachi which is another Indian city. The tod of irony used by the translator can be found in the name 'dhouli' which begins with the small 'd'. Actually in the story it is a proper noun and the name has to begin with the capital 'D'. When Dhouli begins to sell her body in order to earn bread for her son and for her, Misrilal returns and becomes instrumental in forcing her to leave the village and move to the city to become a prostitute.

Mahasweta Devi's second story, "Shanichari," is about an Oraon girl who belongs to the same marginalised society like Dhouli. She returns to her kith and kin with a Diku's child which is not yet born. Therefore she is marginalised by her own community. Gohuman, a middle aged woman has sold Shani chase to a brick-kiln owner in West Bengal. There economic conditions force her into sexual exploitation. As Shanichari becomes pregnant she is sent back to her native place. There also her own people treat her with contempt and segregate her.

Somewhat differently, however, in the story, 'the fairy tale of rajabasha,' a self-imposed ostracism, not from her own society, but from the world, is the consequence of the love of Josmina for her husband Sarjom. Both of them are sold to a landowner in the far-away Indian state of Punjab, where Josmina faces the same treatment as Shanichari, even though she eventually manages to come back home with the prospect of beginning life afresh. But this bright vision of hope turns out to be a hallucination, as she develops the symptoms of motherhood, a condition forced upon her by her master in Punjab. In the end, to save her beloved husband from being ostracized from his own community, Josmina commits suicide.

Dissimilar as these characters and their stories seem to be, what brackets these three characters together is the label of 'Otherness' that sticks to their existence. It is interesting to note that this leitmotif of 'Otherness' is recreated in the narratively mode of the three stories at different levels. The very opening paragraph of 'dhouli,' for

instance, creates an ambience of an 'Other world,' the world of the subaltern where no light can ever penetrate:

The bus left Ranchi in the evening and reached Taharr around eight at night. ... The world beyond and the wide, metalled road ended here. Rohtagi Company's bus was the only link between Taharr and the rest of the world. [...] They used poor, rundown buses for poor, rundown places like Taharr, Palani or Burudiha. The service was suspended during the rainy season as buses couldn't play on non-metallic roads. Taharr would be completely cut off from the rest of the world during the monsoon months.(1)

An ambience of marginalization, which is intensified later on, is suggested by the use of words like 'poor, rundown buses for poor, run down people.' At another level, too, the word 'buses,' a clear signifier of modern life style and civilisation, fixes the nature and role of the people of the 'Other world' as these buses are explicitly defined as rejected vehicles fit only to ply to a world where the 'metalled road ends.'

In total dissonance from the reference to the civilized world in the opening paragraph, the concluding paragraph of 'dhouli' signifies another frame of marginalization. Here Mahasweta Devi delineates the natural world and thereby ironically effects a dissolution of the nature-civilization dichotomy:

The sun shone brightly. The sky looked blue and the trees as green as always. She realized that nature was unaffected by the upheaval in her life. This painful thought made her weep. Wasn't everything supposed to change from today? Everything? The day Dhouli was to finally enter the market place? Or is it that, for girls like Dhouli, nature accepted such a fate as only natural? The nature, which, after all, was not created by the Misras-or had the sky, the trees and the earth [been] sold out to the Misras as well? (33)

Significantly, the effacement of the nature-civilisation binary leads to a kind of identification between the two apparently dichotomous entities and suggests an ominous absorption and annihilation of nature by a soul-

killing civilization. Like the world of civilization represented by the 'metalled road' in the opening paragraph, nature at the conclusion of this short story remains apathetic to Dhouli's exclusion from her own subaltern community.

Mahasweta Devi, however, makes it clear through her narrative that the label of 'Otherness' is conferred by the politics of power dynamics and the hegemony exercised and enjoyed by a privileged class. In the Panchayat meeting where Dhouli's fate has been decided by the senior Misra, Dhouli is given two options—of being burnt alive, or having to adopt the path of prostitution in an 'Other world.' Hanumanji announced, "Dhouli cannot practise prostitution in this village. She can go to some town, to Ranchi, and do her whoring there. If not, her house will be set on fire and mother, daughter, child will be burned to death" (31). It is significant and pertinent to note that even the tribal untouchables, the dusads and ganjus, do not make any protest against this verdict. The narrative thus overtly points to direct repression, which is the product of a societal power structure interlinked with the hegemony of a dominant class. An exposure of the outcome of the exploitation of power- the acceptance of the verdict of Hanumanji even by the marginalized- is shown to be the consequence of the created culture of the privileged, which results in the desertion by the marginalized of even one belonging to their own community.

In the story 'shanichari,' Mahasweta Devi presents the young tribal girl, Shanichari's status in the social hierarchy. Shanichari, along with her grandmother "enjoyed the train ride to Tohri, sitting on the floor of the [train] compartment, chugging along, having a good time picking the lice from each other's hair" (34). This oblique reference to Shanichari and her grandmother's subaltern state, suggested by the phrase "sitting on the floor of the [train] compartment," is further reinforced through an apparently innocuous folk-tale fragmentarily narrated by the grandmother:

Don't you know the one [story] about the carpenter who carved a girl out of wood and became her father? The weaver who gave her clothes and became her brother? The goldsmiths who gifted her jewellery and became her uncles?

Didn't the sindoorwala [the seller of vermilion] bring her to life by giving her sindoor?' (35)

In quintessence, this story is reminiscent of the myth of the birth of Eve. As Eve was brought to life from Adam's rib, so too was this girl carved from wood by a man and brought to life by the sindow of another man, the Sindowala, who eventually possessed her. The implication of this tale in the very opening of the short story is that Shanichari will be treated as a commodity and thrown away as soon as her commodified existence becomes useless to the males in her life.

This implication becomes even more unambiguous with the coming of Hiralal, the itinerant folk-song singer who ekes out a living by singing his songs in train compartments. Hiralal, who is endowed by the author with an obvious choric function in the narrative unravels explicitly the woman, Gohuman's wiles in trapping young girls like Shanichari. Employing sometimes an intimate conversational tone and sometimes a direct narrational and descriptive mode, Mahasweta exposes the devious ways in which tribal girls like Shanichari "felt the fangs of Gohuman" (44). The tragic fate of tribal girls like Shanichari is explicitly presented by Mahasweta Devi in this short story. The Indian paramilitary forces sought to subjugate the tribal people by burning their huts, by looting their possessions and killing them, and by gang raping their women. In a tone of cutting irony, Mahasweta Devi discriminates between the civilized mainstream reader, reading a short story about the condition of the exploited tribal sitting in his or her comfortable hearth and home, and the condition of the "Ho-Oraon-Mundra girls":

The BMP [Bihar Military Police] took the young girls into the forest and raped them. Imagine the scene. Familiar to you, no doubt, from innumerable story books—the lush green forest and a group of Ho-Oraon-Mundra [three Indian tribes] girls who look as if they have been exquisitely carved out of black stone. Only the bestial howls of the BMP would have been left out of such a picture-book scene. (46)

Driven out of her village and compelled to leave the inhospitable forests, Shanichari thus goes to the brick kilns to face a situation worse than her earlier one. There she is provided with clothes by the owner of the brick kiln, but only to be stripped and raped. "Rahamat would dress Shanichari in good clothes and nice jewellery, rub fragrant oil in her hair—and then tear into her

ruthlessly"(51). Very soon she is replaced by another tribal girl and she began working as a reja. Underpaid, half-fed, treated at best as sub-human and impregnated by the owner of the brick kiln, Shanichari returns at last to her people only to discover that she is an outcast in her own community. This final marginalization of Shanichari—her marginalization by the marginal is neatly presented through a dialogue between the brother of her murdered lover, Chand Turkey, and the naiga, the village head-priest: "We should think about this as a community. There could be more Shanicharis in the future. Should we cast out our own women? Will that benefit our society?" The naiga said, "We'll think about it if it happens again. Not now. This is a new problem" (54).

In 'the fairytale of rajabasha,' Mahasweta Devi, along with providing a graphic portrayal of the exploitation at all levels of Sarjom and Josmina, a tribal couple, projects certain instinctive reactions of the tribal people living below the poverty line to the minimum that they get, and finally records the behavioral patterns of the affluent people belonging to the mainstream. The story opens with the description of an arrangement of a tribal feast on the occasion of the marriage ceremony of Sarjom and Josmina, and we hear SuraJonko saying: "Not just turmeric and salt, let's cook it [the meat] with onions, pepper and other spices" and the narrator voices their unuttered senti-ment: "Great fun, great food" (57). The narrative voice then goes on to express the feeling of peace and happiness experienced by the couple even in the midst of their deprivation and poverty:

Josmina collected roots and tubers from the forest. Living off just these and ghatomade of makai, she looked gorgeous. A new mother, the curves of Josmina's body filled out like the gushing Koyena in the months of rain. There was much happiness and peace in this first chapter of the fairytale of Rajabasha (59).

Later, after the cataclysmic upheaval in the lives of the couple caused by their moving to Punjab as slaves and when they come back to their village, Mahasweta Devi's description points to the minimum that a subaltern requires:

Within no time everything became as it was before. It was so refreshing to bathe in the waters of the Koyena. So peaceful to boil some makai at the end of the day...

...To sprinkle salt on it and eat off leaf plates. So pleasant to sit by the banks of the river, washing pots and pans while chatting to girls you've known all your life (78).

In contrast to the happiness of the couple even in the midst of poverty, Mahasweta Devi's projection of Nandlal Sahu's unhappiness in the midst of affluence is revealing: "*He had two fine houses in the districts of Monoharpur and Raikera. And two wives [in contrast to Sarjom's one hut and one wife] in those two houses. Now his first wife, who lived in Rajabasha, was pestering him for a pucca brick house*"(59). So to fulfill the desire of his first wife, Nandlal sold Josmina and Sarjom to an "adarshkisan [an ideal agriculturalist] of Punjab."

Mahasweta Devi shows here that at the very core of the mainstream-marginal issue lies the typical power dynamics of a feudal master-slave relationship in which the former treats the latter sometimes as a commodity and at other times as an instrument of labour, a beast of burden. This is why, while buying the couple, the Punjabi agriculturalist, Niranjan Singh, "*pinched Sarjom's arm and shoulder muscles,*" and a little later when Josmina, "*gaping open-mouthed at everything around her, put a nipple to the child's mouth,*" Niranjan mused: "*Feed her for a week and these goods will be just right.*"(66) Throughout the story, Mahasweta suggests that these subaltern people are nothing but "*maal,*" "*goods,*" commodities, "*junglejaan- wars,*" forest animals, to those at the top of the social hierarchy: "*To Niranjan, she [Josmina] was just fresh meat; dark, jungle [savage] flesh which he had paid for. They bought it all up, everything. Everything that belonged to the Josminas*" (72). Consequently, the master treated them as he pleased-subjected them to '16 to 18 hours' labour,' stripped and abused the wife in front of her child, and put them under lock and key at night: "*It was his [the master's accomplice, Harchand's,] job to keep the buffaloes, cows and bonded labour under lock and key*" (68).

But 'the fairytale of rajabasha' is not merely about the exploitation of the tribal 'Other.' After winning a reprieve from their slavery, Josmina and Sarjom come back to their tribal village. But their hopes of happiness are shattered when Josmina realizes that she is carrying the child of the Punjabi man who has raped her. Knowing that her own tribal community would never condone this, and that both she and her husband would be socially ostracized, Josmina drowns herself in the Koyena River on the banks of which she and Sarjom spent so many idyllic moments before.

One way to look at these short stories of Mahasweta Devi is to read them as the voiced articulations of the tribal "Others" in contemporary Indian society. Gayatri Spivak's answer to the question as to whether the subaltern can speak has been resoundingly in the negative. Yet, it is important to note that Mahasweta Devi speaks not only about the marginalized, but, far more importantly, about the marginalized within the communities of the marginalized. Her voice does not simply ventriloquise the plight of those at the edges of civilization, but goes deeper to analyse and reflect upon how the power structures that engender marginalisation are replicated in the texture of the society of the marginal. The point is that the author's sympathy unearths the reality of an exploitation concealed within the truth of another and more obvious exploitation.

Thus, Mahasweta's true concern is with a subalternity subsumed within a larger parameter of subalternity. In a sense, this is a deeply humanistic perception, one that is as incisive as an insight into human reality, as a deep and penetrating social understanding.

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## Anita Nair's *Ladies Coupe*: The Configuration of the Cultural Determinant Women.

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### Abstract

Anita Nair's fiction is expressive of the Indian culture, especially culture of the women noted in an Indian cultural tradition. Specifically her novel *Ladies Coupe* is demonstrative of various types of women present in the novel. There is one category of submissive women, there is another category of women in argument with men and finally there is a third category of women who radically position themselves in juxtaposition to the male values. My paper is fixed on central character Akhila who overthrows the values of male super structure and radically defines herself her choice of her boyfriend Hary is a case in point. Hary is much younger to her. Also he is shorter than her and more specifically she allows her body to be manipulated by a stranger by the close of the novel. Significantly, Akhila's negotiations with male hegemony for a sample of radical feminism. She is not married and doesn't want to. More so her choice of manifest her inner radically like the cotton she wears where she feels she is starched within. She doesn't want to be passive to be recipient of male ideology instead her questions ideology and finally overthrows it. I have examined the cultural factors in the novel before finding out how they hamper the identify of women. Akhila's quest for identity is unique in the sense. It should not be taken literally but extended figuratively. The novel *Ladies Coupe* is a figural representation of the contest of the male values. Specifically Akhila's choice of Hary and her redefinition of her body and selftogetherly make a symbolic revolution of the gender. Metaphorically it is putting the male values upside down. Hence the paper titled is not only representation of the cultural categories but also a specific fixation of a character as a radical feminist.

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novel *Ladies Coupe* is demonstrative of various types of women present in the novel. There is one category of submissive women, there is another category of women in argument with men and finally there is a third category of women who radically position themselves in juxtaposition to the male values. This paper focuses on central character Akhila who overthrows the values of male super structure and radically defines herself her choice of her boy friend Hary is a case in point. Hary is much younger to her. Also he is shorter than her and more specifically she allows her body to be manipulated by a stranger by the close of the novel. Significantly Akhila's negotiations with male hegemony for a sample of radical feminism. She is not married and doesn't want to. More so her choice of manifest her inner radically like the cotton she wears where she feels she is starched within. She doesn't want to be passive to be recipient of male ideology instead she questions ideology and finally overthrows it. I have examined the cultural factors in the novel before finding out how they hamper the identity of women. Akhila's quest for identity is unique in the sense. It should not be taken literally but extended figuratively. The novel *Ladies Coupe* is a figural representation of the contest of the male values. Specifically Akhila's choice of Hary and her redefinition of her body and selftogetherly make a symbolic revolution of the gender. Metaphorically it is putting the male values upside down. Hence the paper titled is not only representation of the cultural categories but also a specific fixation of a character as a radical feminist.

Anita Nair's *Ladies Coupe* is a book makes a replay of repressed desire of woman kind. The characters enhance the text and we also get the feminist version of the writer. The writing of women story is all a matter of feminist construction. When we read a *Ladies Coupe* it starts like a traditional female story. But later it begins to construct a unique paradigm. Akhila is at war with patriarchy. The novel is all about what the society does to women when they make war. The

novel suggests that the Akhila has a war with her own kind.

This paper attempts to advance character in post feminist framework. It is an assumption that novelist is a woman whose representation of women shapes the feminine consciousness of the characters in the novel come as various forms of representation. They have to be read not only in relation to each other but also in relation to the feminine experiences. This feminine consciousness explored by women writers leads to self-discovery of the women characters, who realize their inner strength. The result of self-introspection varies in the second and third generation of women writers. In the first group women characters are hyper-sensitive, which plunges them in dark dismal neurosis. In the second group they are silent suffers and in the third women discern new and important discoveries of themselves and find a sense of fulfillment in their equation with the world. *Ladies Coupe* is a construction of women story which is attributed to feminism. There is also the idea that *Ladies Coupe* is best told as a story of power relations and women struggle. It is a story that is also contradictory and even fragmented. *Ladies Coupe* is the excursion hegemonic power which is exercised upon the weak and the marginal.

Anita Nair's *Ladies Coupe* as the title indicates offers a narrative concerning the chance encounter of six Indian women belonging to different backgrounds and vocations in the train journey. Anita Nair brings together women of different ages, experience and social strata. Nair's *Ladies Coupe* raises many questions, which are considered as taboo in the typical Indian set-up. Nair uses the technique of flash-back and forth in time and place narrating the experiences and life of the fellow passengers and the place of the woman in the contemporary Indian Society. Despite the variety and shade of experiences shared in the *Ladies Coupe* the overall conclusion is that women are secondary (to men) in their importance and are rendered silent and absent as far as the reckoning goes.

The women in this novel are silent in their male-dominated homes but get a chance to communicate in the special 'female space' of the *Ladies Coupe*. Akhila, a 45 year old spinster gathers strength from these exchanges, realizing that she is not alone, and her problems are not unique. She seeks guidance and perspective from

the experiences and these strangers. Akhila knew she could tell these women whatever she chooses whether her secrets, desires and tears. They would never see each other again. Akhila considers her dreams valid for the first time and she begins to dare and hope to realize them. In an interview when Nair was asked about the character Akhila, she said "She is typical of that generation. Not many have the courage to break away. You get sucked into the vortex. To me, Akhila in some sense enjoyed being a martyr. She's not an exceptionally strong woman. She is just somebody who has coped. All she wanted was to be a good wife and mother. It's a typical South Indian dream, especially for women of that generation. Akhila is 45 years old."

The central character is undergoing an identity crisis, like Nair describes her dilemma. As the title of the novel indicates the plot is in a *Ladies Coupe* where five women, who meet for the first time in their lives, share their life's experiences. Even though they differ in age, educational backgrounds and cultural upbringing; the stories have a common thread-an Indian woman's life is dominated by a man in one way or another. Perhaps the combination of the confined space and assurance of anonymity makes the coupe into a confessional box. It is a rather remarkable the way in which Nair brings out the candor and subversiveness of the characters. She connects their lives with that of Akhila, who in turn is strengthened by their experience. Each character realizes something after her confession. Akhila finally draws the courage to break through the barriers of culture and tradition.

*Ladies Coupe* revolves round the life of the women from different walks of life, but bound by a common bond of being a woman. Their stories make Akhila ponder and seek answer to the question always troubling her: 'Can a woman stay single and be happy at the same time?' Nair devotes each chapter to each woman in the *Ladies Coupe*. Each one whether it is Janaki, the old woman, Margaret- the chemistry teacher, Prabha the rich wife, Sheela a young 14 year adolescent or Marikolanthu all have various shades of emotions and stories to tell. But they have one thing in common, they all have as Janaki said,

I am a woman who has always been looked after. First there was my father and my brothers; then my husband. When my

husband is gone, there will be my son waiting to take off from where his father left-off. Women like me end up being fragile. Since ages women had been made to feel that they were inferior by nature. Though there are discussions and laws regarding equality, in reality it is a myth. Some men might be sympathetic to women's issues, but only women themselves what they felt and wanted. The ladies in the Coupe introspect and ask themselves and answer is 'happiness'. Akhila's definition of happiness is "Happiness is being free to choose one's own life; to live it the way one wants."(66)

The journey is the journey of self discovery and transformation for ladies in the coupe. Janaki, an elderly lady is a typical Indian wife. She married Prabhakar when she was eighteen and he was twenty-seven. Janaki did not know what to expect of marriage. It was a destination for which she was groomed. She considered that it was her solemn duty of every woman to please her husband and keep shut to whatever he does. The journey of her life from being a wife, a mother to a grandmother continues without any change. Their love was 'friendly love' with no reward for her loyalty. Karpagam, a widow continues to wear signs of marriage and live fulfilling life. It was she who shows Akhila the possibility of living a full life without man.

Prabha Devi's swimming adventure underlines the realization that it is never too late to embark upon a new experience. It also reflects that something gives you simple, undiluted pleasure is more precious than all the riches in the world. She waited for her husband throughout the life. There was only vacuum. The nursery rhyme significantly reflects the life of a woman.

"Prabha Devi, Prabha Devi, where have you been?"

"I became a woman, neither heard nor seen."

"Prabha Devi, Prabha Devi, what did you do there?"

"I waited and waited till ash speckled my hair."(184).

The women break the silence and communicate with each other. They longed for a sympathetic listener and had a longing to be heard. So when Akhila gets down at Kanyakumari, she is a new Akhila. She has the courage to confront the world. She shades the traditional image. According to Sangita Gupta's analysis there are three kinds of women in the Indian Society. They are traditional, transitional and egalitarian. In this novel Janaki Prabhakar is at one end and Akhila is at the other representing traditional and transitional stages in the life of a woman. Even if Akhila is educated and financially independent she cannot be called an empowered, an egalitarian person. Anita Nair understands the complexities in the lives of woman. Even though many have modern point of view they are still grounded in tradition which tilts towards patriarchy.

Anita Nair was born on January 26, 1966, the living writer of this century, who is an Indian English writer. She is a creative artist bestowed with immense proficiency and scholarly panorama. She is regarded as one of the leading novelists in Indian English Literature. In her works, Anita Nair mainly focuses on the real human condition on the earth. At the same time, she is artful in interweaving her stories in the Indian scenario, unique in presenting her conceptions and innovative in sharing the experiences of language.

Exhibiting an individualistic flair in her writing style, Anita Nair's novels display an awe-inspiring depth in her narration, and the main thrust of her novels is the confrontation between the self-actualization and family responsibilities of the individuals. Almost all her novels are embedded in Indian culture and the characters and settings are inherently Indian. Her stories may be said to be ideological as well as practical, based on the structure of Indian middle class families. In this context, she displays a sharp mind and observation skill which she details stories depicting the enigma of Indian women, in an easy manner.

During the initial years of Indian English writing, the premier kind was poetry. It was followed by other kinds especially drama. Though its growth in later years far exceeded that of most other forms, fiction was actually the last to arrive on the Indian English literary scene. Indian fiction in English, like other branches of Indian English literature, originated and grew up under the tutelage of the British.

The urge for social reform was an important theme in some early Indian English fiction. Topics like the position of women, the plight of peasants and the decay of the old aristocracy were the ones dealt with in most works. However, the political theme was not in the forefront. Another type of fiction which made an early appearance was historical romance.

The beginning of the twentieth century witnessed a gradual growth of the fictional form. The most significant event in the history of Indian English fiction in the nineteen thirties was the appearance on the scene of its major trio: Mulk Raj Anand, R.K.Narayan and Raja Rao, whose first novels were published in 1935, 1935 and 1938 respectively. Anand's *Untouchable* and *Coolie*, Narayan's *Swami and Friends* and *The Bachelor of Arts*, Raja Rao's *Kanthapura* marked the beginning of the solid Indian English fiction. And these three novelists continued to write till the end of the twentieth century.

In her novel *Ladies Coupe*, the Brahmin heroine, Akhila, whose life has been taken out of her control, is a spinster, daughter, sister, aunt and the only provider of her family after the death of her father. Getting fed up with these multiple roles, she decides to go on a train journey away from family and responsibilities, a journey that will ultimately make her a different woman. In the all-female *Ladies Coupe*, she meets five other women each of whom has a story to tell. The stories are all an attempt to answer Akhila's problematic question: Can a woman stay single and be happy at the same time? She questions her family members:

Why shouldn't I live alone? I'm of able body and mind. I can look after myself. I earn reasonably well. Akhila paused when her voice choked with tears, and began again. Has anyone of you ever asked me what my desires were or what my dreams are? Did anyone of you ever think of me as a woman? Someone who has needs and longings just like you do? (206).

She comes out of the family as a rebel and her response is rejection-the rejection of social standards, values and the traditional life pattern. Her story endurance and perseverance supported her in all matters. Living in such a condition, she had nothing to fall back upon, no shoulder to lean on, and out of her total vacuum she had to re-create herself and meet the challenges of life.

Each chapter of the novel *Ladies Coupe* is devoted to one of the women's stories: Janaki, the old woman whose relationship with her husband is a friendly love; Margaret, the chemistry teacher, who succeeds in disciplining her narcissistic husband/principal; Prabha, the rich submissive wife who loves swimming because it, metaphorically, gives her a sense of achievement; Sheela, the 14 year-old whose understanding of her dying grandmother paves the way for her own future liberation; and Marikolanthu, whose rape, literally and metaphorically, coupled with extreme poverty and class exploitation is the culmination of all other stories.

*Ladies Coupe* is in fact a critique of andro-centric. It reads like compendium of the post feminist assumptions currently attributed radical feminism. The novel is subjectively constructed and culturally tuned. It is the reading of literature centered on social relations interacting with women. The novel also sounds like a blue-print for the reading cultural codes for instance, we have three categories of women one is passive recipients. Janaki, an elderly lady is a typical Indian wife. She married Prabhakar when she was eighteen and he was twenty-seven. Janaki did not know what to expect of marriage. It was a destination for which she was groomed. She considered that it was her solemn duty of every woman to please her husband and keep shut to whatever he does. The journey of her life from being a wife, a mother to a grandmother continues without any change. Their love was 'friendly love' with no reward for her loyalty.

Margaret Shanthi is another example of how women are dominated upon by male power-the powerless are like the colonized who fail to see and appreciate their true worth. When she marries Ebenezer Paulraj, she has made the perfect choice according to her family. Ebenezer Paulraj, Margaret Shanthi's husband does not give importance to her individual tastes. When she prefers to work for a doctorate, he says her to do B.Ed. When he opts for an abortion, Margaret had to go along. She laments "What about me?" I wanted to ask. Don't I have right to have any expectations of him?"(112). Margaret suppressed an occasional burst of irritation at his self-absorption. He was only pretending to take interest on her. His attitudes commonly harden into extreme hostility.

The greater the stress of the situation, the more extreme is her reaction likely to be and the less likely to result from a process of understanding. She could not have a peaceful sleep. "I thought of hoe there was nothing left for me to dream and the words rose to the surface again: I HATE HIM. I HATE HIM. What am I going to do?"(131) The internal environment under stress involves all the human feelings-shame, fear anxiety, envy, hero-worship, love, hate, identification with a group and many other pressures. Due to perceived threat there is a passive submission in Margaret. She is helpless, depressed, have a poor self-image and suffer from self-devaluation. Education is intended to widen and deepen one's perception, but it is an utter of failure in the case Ebenezer.

I can find out how women should emerge as individuals. Akhila has to undergo many ordeals when she comes out of bondage to evolve as the new liberated woman. She has never been allowed to live her own life. She is presented as an independent woman who refuses to follow the expectations of the patriarchal life style. The ability to endure under the worst of circumstances are Akhila's key to survival. Akhila tries to search her own identity and happiness.

Akhila is a determinant operates out of an experience and she committed definition of body. The none come to the close with their choice of

two things. First is reunion with heavy which is indicative of her feminine consciousness. Second her choice of a stranger to share the bed is an indicative of radical consciousness. What emerges consequently in *Ladies Coupe* is a new woman story. I would like to suggest at the moment that *Ladies Coupe* looks like a story in the first place and then her Akhila story in the second place.

Probably, Feminist writers actively engage in unearthing women's history from the archives of oblivion, and attempt to reread the same, taking into account the ontological realities concerning both men and women. They generally look at the construct 'woman' and study how she is located in literary narratives, focusing mainly on elements of phallogentrism. The novel makes for differences in the degree to which dominant representation and hegemonic ideologies are taken to task. It destabilizes the male centric and re-centers the new cultural feminine.

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## The Elements of Nostalgia in Kiran Desai's *The Inheritance of Loss*

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### Abstract

In general, Diasporic literature deals with alienation, displacement, existential rootlessness, nostalgia and quest of identity. It reflects the immigrant experience that comes out of the immigrant settlement. Robin Cohen, in *Global Diasporas*, defines a Diaspora as a community of people who have settled outside their native country but still have fidelity towards the country of their origin. Kiran Desai's novel *The Inheritance of Loss*, which has won the 2006 Man Booker Prize and the National Book Critics Circle Fiction Award, pictures the condition of 1980s in India where a Cambridge educated Indian judge living out his retirement in Kalimpong near the Himalayas, with his granddaughter until their lives are disrupted by Nepalese insurgents. The novel also interweaves the story of Biju, the son of the cook who works in the household of the judge. Biju struggles to survive as an illegal immigrant in the United States. The novel throws adequate light on isolation, alienation, aloofness in the point of view of illegal immigrants, their loss of homeland, diasporic articulation and the dialectics of marginality. The present paper is a modest attempt to examine Kiran Desai's diasporic consciousness emerged from *The Inheritance of Loss*. It attempts to have a descriptive, diasporic analysis on immigration with illegal documents. It unfolds the experiences of Biju's dislocation and unsettlement and his inner conflict and feeling of insecurity as a "shadow class" in the new land.

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*of Loss*, which has won the 2006 Man Booker Prize and the National Book Critics Circle Fiction Award, pictures the condition of 1980s in India where a Cambridge educated Indian judge living out his retirement in Kalimpong near the Himalayas, with his granddaughter until their lives are disrupted by Nepalese insurgents. The novel also interweaves the story of Biju, the son of the cook who works in the household of the judge. Biju struggles to survive as an illegal immigrant in the United States. The novel throws adequate light on isolation, alienation, aloofness in the point of view of illegal immigrants, their loss of homeland, diasporic articulation and the dialectics of marginality. The present paper is a modest attempt to examine Kiran Desai's diasporic consciousness emerged from *The Inheritance of Loss*. It attempts to have a descriptive, diasporic analysis on immigration with illegal documents. It unfolds the experiences of Biju's dislocation and unsettlement and his inner conflict and feeling of insecurity as a "shadow class" in the new land.

In *The Inheritance of Loss*, Biju is compelled to feel the borderline belonging neither to his motherland nor to his new land. It unfolds the experiences of Biju's dislocation and unsettlement and his inner conflict and feeling of insecurity. He is thinking of his home land and his father and longing to go home. For him, there is no sense of security or prosperity in the new land. It merely results in the creation of this "shadow class" who have no real existence but whose life is full of despair, sorrow, grief and pain. Thus the life of the illegal immigrant Biju in New York belongs to the "shadow class" life of spending much of his time dodging the authorities and moving from one ill-paid job to another.

The novel pokes into the problem of illegal migrants which is a result of the process of globalization. Kiran Desai exposes the complexities of the law and the Green Card syndrome. The cook believes in the dream of going abroad and his son is the medium of the execution.

He is ready to be exploited to realise the dream. But Biju, the cook's son, suffers great to meet his father's dream. He becomes a member of a new class named "shadow class." His character deliberately reveals the diasporic articulation of the novelist. He has migrated to New York in the pursuance of a good job. His findings in the USA, shows how the dream of globalization has become a threat to the identity of ethnic community. For them, to seek spaces in the American society is a challenge involving social chaos, economic insecurity, legal complication, the psyche of subjugation and persistent hurdles born out of the dearth of competence to cope with high tech social structure which is a major factor in attracting to foreign countries.

Desai says in an interview that "the idea of the American Dream is being embraced so enthusiastically by a very privileged, educated class of Indians....they are the living American Dream." To fulfil this dream and to lead a prosperous life, Indians drift towards America. Traditionally, diaspora as a translocation identity relies on the concept of home that has been left behind or lies elsewhere (Jigna Desai,19). The diasporic communities breaking the barriers and boundaries and moving on for personal progress and development have been termed by Fanon as "Individuals without an anchor without horizon colourless, stateless and rootless..." (Fanon,176)

Diaspora refers not only to physical displacements but it also refers to a sensibility in which nostalgia, alienation and sometimes cynical celebration are deeply engrossed. The physical and mental anomolism of diasporic life is what Homi K. Bhabha described as the condition of being 'unhomed'. (Bhabha, 9) The cook Panna Lal had taken initiative steps to send his son Biju abroad to earn more which is a kind of snobbery during the 1980s. He pines to have his position equal to other persons on high rank. Kiran Desai has reflected his anxiety and curiosity about Biju. It reflects the competitions in India to get visa.

*"The cook had first made the effort to send his son abroad four years ago, when a recruiting agent for a cruise ship line appeared in Kalimpong to solicit applications forwaiters, vegetable choppers, toilet cleaners – basic drudge staff..."* (IOL 180)

The judge objected the cook to do further because it is illegal and the man who is recruiting sets up a temporary office in his room at Sinclair's hotel. Biju also took some of his fake recommendations with him to the interview and the interview was a success. The cook has an attraction towards the eating habits of the British. Thinking of his son, he prepares 'Angrezikhana' such as ham roll, tuna fish souffle', khari biscuit pie and proudly thinking of Biju that he would have got a higher position as a cook in America than in India.

Desai showcases the nature of Indians in keeping the letters safely. As a father, the cook advises his son to save money while replying. He is minding his son's friendship too which reveals the mentality of the Indian parents who try to treat their grown-ups as children. They never allow their kids to take any decision of their own. The cook mentions particularly that his son must be careful in moving with the Pakistanis.

*"...What kind of place was he working in? He knew it was a country where people from everywhere journeyed to work, surely not Pakistanis!..."*

*"Beware", the cook wrote to his son. "Beware. Beware. Keep away. Distrust"*(IOL 22).

Kiran Desai has documented the pitiable condition of illegal migrants in her novel adequately. Assimilation and acceptance of diversity is accepted as a necessary phenomenon but humiliation and negation of self -identity is the predicament of all migrants. The overwhelming feeling of humiliation experienced by ethnic groups who stand on the global dais of America to have a better future is registered by the novelist Desai through the character of Biju. The Diasporic experiences of the immigrants are not the same for it differs for different individuals pertaining to their status there in the foreign land.

Ashcroft, writing about life in a new land, asserts: "There is no one 'Diasporic Imagery.' As historical experiences diasporas are made up of many journeys, an interweaving of multiple travelling, a text of many distinctive and perhaps even disparate narratives" (47). Though Biju and – begin their journeys from the same land, diaspora gives them diverse routes to move on; to evolve with a true 'self.' Biju could not proudly accept his status of 'Otherness' in the Diasporic consciousness. Thus Biju, the exile in an alien land, fails to emerge as an empowered man since he is

unable to locate his 'self.' He returns to his native land India where he belongs.

Through Biju, Kiran Desai, presents the status of illegal immigrants and the feeling of alienation often experienced by expatriates. Even though they will be successful, they have to face humiliation. Behind the initial reference to the glamour of the West, the horrible experience of the bitter reality of Biju is a correct manifestation of the humiliation of Third World Migrants. Biju comes to know that he could never have the privilege of a legalized citizen. Through the interaction with other cooks, Biju got the idea of their real their position in New York. "Perfectly First World on top, perfectly Third World twenty two steps below (IOL 23). The illegal immigrants stay together in the basement of a building. *"By the time he had found employment again, at a bakery on Broadway and Lasalle, he had used up all the money in the savings"* (IOL 53).

In the US, as an illegal immigrant, Biju feels the difference in the treatment where they will not be paid properly according to their job. Eventhough they become sick, they will not be taken care of. When he is injured, he is maltreated, because any of the medical facility is denied to him. He busted with his throbbing knee and complains to Harish Harry, the owner of the Gandhi Café, who refuses to meet his medical expenses. Harish Harry uses his callous favourite axioms as usual.

*"I take you in. I hire you with no papers, treat you like my own son and now this is how you repay me! Living here rental free"* (IOL 188).

Biju also yells at him back defending the condition of their way of life, the underpaid rotten life of pigs.

*"..This is how you make your money, paying us nothing because you know we can't do anything, making us work day and night because we are illegal"* (IOL 188).

Bill Ashcroft in his essay "Home and Horizon" states, "Whether home is a place, a location, a feeling, a tradition, an ethnicity, it carries with it the sometimes imperceptible but ever-present reality of boundaries." (45) Living in America, Biju misses his native home India all the time. He couldn't have any facilities. Ashcroft

further speaks of 'home' and 'horizon' the two opposite ideas with special reference to boundaries because, "it is into the horizon beyond the boundaries of home that the diasporic writer takes us." To Biju dissolving the boundaries is so difficult since he has migrated to the alien land illegally. He is forced to live in squalor. Biju represents a typical Asian, who goes to meet the American dream, but is exploited and becomes hopeless and suffocated.

The livelihood is terribly miserable for the illegal immigrants. Millions risked death, are humiliated, hated and lost their families. They are underpaid and treated like slaves and never get apartments to stay. They are terribly afraid of the police and would often go into trauma. The siren of the police van scares them greatly. They are unable to settle in one place, often jumping from one job to the other. Feeling nothing but emptiness in life year by year is the common result of these immigrants.

Due to cultural differences they do not get the same hospitality. They are compelled to suffer in their homeland and the exile they opt for only increases their suffering more. Biju faces humiliation when he starts his second year in America at Pinocchio's Italian Restaurant. The owner's wife openly asserts that he smells badly with his hair oil and insists him to use soap, toothpaste, shampoo plus conditioner etc. as if he does not know to take bath properly.

*"He smells", said the owner's wife. "I think I'm allergic to his hair oil."* *She had hoped for men from the poorer parts of Europe- Bulgarians,"*(IOL 48) He receives complaints from the customers which adds to his tension. Even though the weather is cold outside, it is his duty to serve them food hot.

Kiran Desai humorously states the tendency of Indians who wants to help others without understanding the reality through the cook's character. Unaware of his son's plight and real status in America, he writes,

*"Dear Biju, can you please help...his son big enough to get a job, but there were no jobs.... would be willing to start at a menial level....Dear beta, please see if you can help the Metal Box watchman's son."*

In reality, at the bakery, they call the immigration hotline as soon as the clock struck 8:30 and takes turns holding the receiver. They put

down the phone hurriedly if they get a beeping high –alert from the electronic supersonic space speed machine that could “Trace the number through to their *Illegality*.”

Biju feels the loss of identity, loss of human relations, loss of emotional binding, loss of human value, loss of rationality, loss of peace and harmony, loss of human beings’ faith in each other. Sense of loss is an integral part of every character’s life. Biju feels so restless sometimes and barely tolerates that he couldn’t show his anger to his father. He is like fish out of water there which is reflected in the following lines, “*Biju couldn’t help but feel a flash of anger at his father for sending him alone to this country, but he knew he wouldn’t have forgiven his father for not trying to send him, either*” ( IOL 82).

Biju does not want to live in New York. His self-consciousness, his self-pity gets expanded day by day. Biju feels hollow when his friend Saeed leaves him after getting a job. “He thinks of his village where he spent time with his grandmother, eating fresh roti, ghee, fresh butter, fresh milk from the buffalo, playing through the grasses, going to market with his grandmother which is natural in the minds of the people living in the other land (IOL 102).

There is conflict between his wish and father’s wish. He wants to go back to India whereas his father’s expectation differs from his and his voice lingers in his mind. Yet Biju decides to return home. His father does not want him to come back to “this shitty place.” But in India, Biju, may or may not have a promising career but he is not immune to nostalgia. He can “*Feel the pulse of the forest, smell the humid air, the green black lushness, he could imagine all its different textures,*

*the plumage of banana, the stark spear of cactus, the delicate gesture of ferns*” ( IOL 230).

Returning home is an accomplishment to Biju. Back home is the feeling of achievement, root and getting back the inheritance of loss.

“*Like a bus,... the plane stopped.... the growing fetor of the bath room.*

*In the mirror of this bathroom, Biju saluted himself.*” (IOL 286)

Kiran Desai’s novel provides an insight into the pain of refugee experience manifested in alienation, marginalization and identity crises in a new land. The inner conflict between the mind and body of an exile is vividly pictured through the novelist’s diasporic articulation. The whole character of Biju is painted leaving no room for hope, for joy and for identity and strongly articulates diaspora experiences.

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## Colonial Experience and Transplantation of Western Culture and Tradition in Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*

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Nigerian novelist Chinua Achebe is a representative writer of Africa and a study of his novels is a rewarding experience for one searching for the true identity of the blacks of today. Achebe novels portrays three different periods such as Pre-Independent Nigeria, Post-Independent Nigeria and Modern Nation under Dictatorship. His novel *Things Fall Apart* can be classified into seven different chapters. The first chapter deals with Igbo Society and it is an Anthropological Document. This shows how the tribal society develops into Modern and partially westernized. The second chapter deals with the Cultural changes taking place and liberating force of Christianity. The third chapter deals with Stereotypic characters and the process of Self-Discovery. Our protagonist Okonkwo undergoes this process of self-discovery. The fourth chapter deals with Black as victim and the Multi-Dimensional suffering of the African race. Achebe's protagonist demonstrate this to a greater extent depict the different dimensions of the oppressed black. The fifth chapter deals with a different conflict that is conflict of cultures. The value system of the tribal society clashed with the modern Christian and western ethos. Here comes the state of dilemma. This aspect of assimilation obliquely implies in his novels. The sixth chapter deals with artistic attainments such as folklore, oral tradition and historic past enrich the narrative, structural unity without losing the values of Black. Achebe uses an alien language skillfully to present a complex culture. The seventh chapter deals with the redemption and salvation of the Black race and Cultural division. Achebe shows that only a cohesive individual who is fully aware of his oneself can bring about a desirable change in African Society.

Commonwealth Literature is remarkable. It has its distinct and separable unit. There are individual cultural and natural diversities among these writings. But, they share a certain common factors namely the colonial experience and transplantation of western culture and tradition.

Chinua Achebe stands out as a representative of the African race. His perspective readers feel the pulse of Africa and his people in general and Nigeria and the Igbo tribe in particular. His art of creation is further enriched by his view of black consciousness, black identity and negritude. His novels include the growing spirit of nationalism, rapid movement towards modernization and industrialization, expansion of education contributed to the emergence of new literature in the African continent. His novel *Things Fall Apart* is a virtual resistance of the black African, his culture and his traditional past. His books contain myths, legends, linguistic and customs.

*Things Fall Apart* exhibits a rare harmony of theme, narrative and technique enriching each other. The white man's arrival in Igbo affects the tribal community of Umuofia, resulting in the falling apart of the old traditions and customs. Individuals like the protagonist Okonkwo meet with the tragic end in the ensuing violence. The white man's religion causes disintegration of families. For instance, when Okonkwo son Nwoye becomes a Christian there is disruption of familial harmony. Achebe succeeds in placing his tale against proper background which is the traditional Igbo society presented in minute detail. There is an omniscient narrator but is the voice of an oral story teller, which permits the introduction of proverbs and songs and masks, to land it a local colour and qualify it with naturalistic realism. The tragedy of Okonkwo is brought on himself. His pride, his rashness and his ambition lead him to his inevitable death. Thus, *Things Fall Apart* projects the idea how the tribal family system disintegrated as Okonkwo and his son moved away from the tribal arrangement. The setting of *Things Fall Apart* is the Igbo land, the large forest area of southeastern Nigeria, between the Niger and the Cross Rivers. There are some peculiar events in this African clan: the talking of the titles, the arrival of the ancestral spirit of egwuegwu, the rituals governing marriages, diseases and deaths, the slaughter of

Ikemefuna by his own foster father, the exile of Okonkwo for causing accidental death of his kinsman, the suicide of the protagonist and the consequent ignominy.

The Igbo community depicted in *Things Fall Apart* had the will of the clan as supreme. The clan manifested its authority in many ways. The first was the great assembly of Umuofia in which the community issues were raised, discussed and debated until the collective will of the clan emerged. The political and religious life of the people of Nigeria had been subjected to a lot of stress. In *Things Fall Apart* the supreme god *chukwu*, minor deities and the personal god *Chi*, this formed the core of Igbo religion. The personal god *Chi* was inexplicably Nigerian, quiet different from the Hindu personal god. The evolution of political administration in Nigeria as revealed in the five novels of Achebe makes an interesting study. It was argued earlier that *Things Fall Apart* revealed an inextricable intermixture of social norms, religious practices and political administration. When forces of change beset the community, different individuals responded to the new environment differently. The characters in the novel of Achebe faced crises when they were placed in circumstances alien to them and to the society. It is appropriate to examine the reaction of the individuals, at this juncture. Okonkwo was placed complex situations in which the conditions and controls binding the traditional way of life were breaking down. Achebe's concern is to trace the evolution and development of a race from its traditional agricultural base to a modern level of sophistication. He launched on this mission with his very first novel *Things Fall Apart*. Achebe chronicles the history of his race, in the course of which he draws the reader's attention to the gradual metamorphosis his clan sustained in five or six decades. The ancient political system that one prevailed in Igbo land gave place to the rule of logical chiefs and was later replaced by western type of democracy. It again alternate between dictatorship and people's rule in Nigeria. The fictional works of Achebe examine the decline, the falling into disuse or the perpetuation of the social norms and practices. The response and reaction of the individual changing milieu and identify Christianity as a liberating force.

The protagonist of this fiction, Okonkwo lived in his Obi, behind which were the huts of his three wives. The barn and the shrine of his personal

god and ancestor's spirits were situated within the compound. He supported his mother, his father, and sisters before his father's death. Okonkwo ruled his household with an iron hand. He beat his youngest wife Ojiugo for not cooking the afternoon meal in the week of Peace, thus causing disrespect to his gods. Wife-beating was common among the tribe, but there were enough restraints to check this practice from degenerating into torture. The relationship between Okonkwo and his son Nwoye become strained. The over-beating father used to find fault with him for everything. Once when he asked Nwoye and Ikemefuna to prepare yams for sowing, Okonkwo expressed his dissatisfaction very harshly with their work. Okonkwo's treatment of his son as well as the son's rejection was an extreme case in the clan. In fact, elders demanded respect from the young; the young held the elders in great regard. The filial hierarchy was maintained with care. The family was thus on the verge of dislocation because of the arrogance and over-bearing tyranny of the father.

Achebe establishes that the black race is not inferior to any other race, and that it has its own history, with a well-structured social order, with a well defined code of behavior, and with an oral literary tradition of merit. The Africans are neither barbaric nor primitive but simply human. Achebe follows the twin tragedy of weaving the history of his race into the fictional narrative and exploding the stereotypes, both of which will restore the last dignity of the Africans. This novel also brings out the traditional cohesive forces uniting the clan. Achebe thus explodes the popular fallacy that Africa has no history, no literature, and no social or political order. One of the prejudiced judgements of the Europeans is with respect to the physical features of the blacks who used to be describing as ugly, monkey-like. The attributes of physical beauty differ from race to race, from community to community. The Europeans consider the blacks ugly, and the Africans call them white-skinned. But, in the Igbo-tribe "white-skinned" was a Euphemism of leprosy. Another stereotype of the African was that the black man was unambitious and lazy. Achebe exposes the hollowness of such stereotyping in *Things Fall Apart*. Okonkwo was wild and he was successful great man with wealth and fame. It was not through luck that he reached this titled position but only hard work and industry brought him prosperity and honor. His clan also respected such strong willed industrious men with

titles and ignores people like his who were weak and unsuccessful.

In the pre-colonial era, the black community was a comparatively serene, and to some extent, static entity as depicted in Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*. It has its own domestic problems, with its internal mechanism of accommodation and adjustment, by which the stability of the clan was maintained. An analysis of the characters of *Things Fall Apart* points to the fact that the men of Umuofia reacted differently. The protagonist Okonkwo, is an attempt to preserve the tradition of the Igbo tribe, resisted the changes and when he went against the laws of the clan, he accepted the punishment without a demur. Achebe portrays the existential peril of the community in *Things Fall Apart*. At the end, the community deserted the hero who became a victim of the tribe's traditional customs which pursued him even in his death. Okonkwo in *Things Fall Apart* was rooted too firmly in the traditional tribal customs to read the signs on the wall and he set one course of collision with the western religion and their powerful government. Okonkwo was not a search for identity, but for power and titles and glory. He was the son who discovered for himself a new identity.

Achebe is a creationist, in his choice of titles for his novels, his characterization, dialogue writing, depiction, narration and in his unique blending of western culture with the African culture. He exhibits extraordinary mental alertness in probing the myths, legends and history of his people. He displays remarkable commonsense in approaching human life whether it is the weakness or dignity of his people or the alien whiteman. He transforms history and anthropological details into novels with the help of native ingenuity. Achebe's belief that Christianity can serve as a liberating force is a message to the Nigerians in particular and the blacks in general. As an African writer, he is aware that western is an imposition and hindrance to the black to discover his potentialities and blossom quite naturally and individualistically

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## Dalit Protest through Education: A Critical Analysis of Bama's *Karukku*

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### Abstract

It is believed that education is the liberation force that liberates the marginalized people from their slavery. Educational opportunities are widespread in the age of globalization as compared to the ancient days when accessibility to educational opportunities and limited to only a particular society of people; classic examples to cite for whom the educational opportunities are denied are Ekalaivan and Shambukha. The caste system was initiated into this subcontinent with the introduction of *varnashramadharma* with the immigration of Aryans. Still the caste system continues; still we hear the news of honour killings and caste slavery. Though we claim that we are living in the age of globalization and digitalization, still we have the problem of manual scavenging, remember manual scavenging is prohibited by the act of Parliament promulgated on September 2013. One can strongly affirm that a large scale educational opportunities are given but think over the status of those educational institutes towards the treatment of Dalits. Bama's *Karukku* is an autobiographical fiction which through light on the entire Dalit society and it strives to survival. Her speculations are clearly and succinctly expressed in the thought provoking rather slim novel. This paper analyses the part played by education in the process of liberation using the contemporary predicament of Dalits in the educational institutions, and concludes that education has failed to bring equality among the people.

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In Indian society, casteism is one of the sediments of the well designed and well developed hegemonization of Brahmanical culture, practice and ritualism. Caste stratification exists as a result of the construction of purity-pollution theory based on the Brahmanical texts like *The Laws of Manu*, *Rigveda* and the *Upanishads* and ideas; Brahmans consider themselves as pure and others as polluted. But economically speaking the Brahmanical caste

are exploitative and others as productive. All the sociologists and historian who publish their pamphlets or books on caste invariably adhere to the purity-pollution theory to examine the evolution of caste system in India and they consider, "terms like "upper castes" and "clean castes" as uncontestable synonyms" (Ilaiyah: *Buffalo Nationalism* 95). In contemporary Indian society, caste makes its multitudinous existence and it has spread almost in all minds living in the nooks and corners of very Indian society regardless of their educational background. Even politicians who are the sole part of the governance do not want to eradicate casteism and stratification but want caste and the Brahmanical hegemony to survive.

Dalit liberation movements owe a long standing history right from Mahatma Jyotiba Phule to the present protest at Una in Gujarat against the so called "Cow Vigilantism" mooted by the *Sang Parivar*. The process of the development of Dalit organizations first rooted in the practice of non-Brahmin movement by Jyotiba Phule. The movement has worked within the Congress Party. Simultaneously many similar movements have also been geared up in the communist party, but the movements have possessed differing aim and nature. Many caste reformers also have raised their voice and serious concern against untouchability and operation of the caste system in Indian society.

Dr. Ambedkar has first tried to unify the Dalits and worked towards the liberation of Dalits. He has convened many conferences on the theme of annihilation of caste and liberation of Dalits. Through his versatile works, he enunciates the strategies to be adopted by Dalits to liberate themselves; this is the reason for what he is remembered almost by all Dalit liberation movements throughout India. With the celebration of his centenary, the Government of India has published all his works which have acted out its platform as an instinct for the making of many Dalit organizations, working for the liberation of Dalits.

From 1980 onwards many social and political movements have been developed for the cause of fighting against the caste hierarchy, subjugation of Dalits and domination of the developed castes in Indian society. There are people who are working on the same theme, though they are varied in their approaches and aim. All the organizations working on the theme of Dalits' liberation and emancipation make their confluence in a particular point of strategy—unity, education and protest. The organizations invariably consider liberation can be achieved only by means of education and agitating against the tradition.

Education can be a tool for emancipation of any socially oppressed class of society. Social transformation comes from the collective transformation of individuals of a particular society and this type of collective transformation within the individual can be brought forth through education. Education is an independent institution, and a process that enables the individuals of the concerned society to effectively participate in the activities of society and education is able to bring forth a positive contribution of the members of the society towards an eminent social progress.

Education exists since evolution of mankind in the universe but originally it has been transmitted orally from one generation to another and eventually one can perceive that this oral transmission of knowledge is confined within a select group of people and many living outside the sects have been denied the access to educational opportunities. The content taught through this oral transmission is limited and based on the need of the concerned sect that is a Brahmin is taught the mantras and Vedas but a *Kshatriya* has been taught archery and battle modes, *Kshatriya* is restrained from learning mantras and Vedas. R. K. Sharma and R. N. Sharma observe, "Although *kshatriyas* and *vaisyas* were permitted to enter the higher stages of learning, their periods of study of Vedas were different from Brahmins . . . for they also had to undergo education related to their occupation" (7). In course of time mankind has become civilized which has resulted in creation of educational institutions and the educational opportunities are decentralized, modern education institutions teach everything and are more concerned with the culture and outside the culture, that is to say that the precepts of education have become universalized. Educational opportunities have been denied to the Shudhras and the outcastes

during the ancient days. Their capabilities have been devalued. Alice Walker writes, 'For most of the years . . . in America, it was a punishable crime for the black person to read and write (234), the same plight befalls on Dalits in Indian society.

One of the most incontestable features of cultural reality is the social change, a change in social structure and in the types of its institutions. The pace of social changes varies from age to age, culture to culture and from one area to another. In a dogmatic society, which pervasively sticks to the deadening traditional views put forth by religion, social changes take place or are promoted slowly. Social scientists find out the reasons for sluggishness in the promoting social changes; the chief features among them are the sovereignty, hold of authoritarianism, religion, illiteracy and non-progressive mentality of the members of the concerned society, and also they are of the opinion that social change is influenced by the decline of autocratic thoughts, rise of science and technology and fast means of communication and travel and these things are the offshoots of education by which social change is greatly accelerated.

Bama also brings out the significance of education in Dalit emancipation. Education becomes a liberating force which can bring some respect to Dalits in the society. Bama's brother is an M. A. graduate. Once when he signs in the register of the library, he has added the title of his graduation and from that day onwards the librarian has begun to call him as "Sir" and has given him chair to sit, whenever he has seen him again in the enclosure of the library.

Probably the most pertinent issue that education has to redress in Indian society is the caste and caste based violence which seems to be an obstacle in the progressive path of Indian society. Education is believed to be directly related to the development of an individual and the community. For the weaker section of society, like Dalits' education has a special significance, because for a number of centuries their illiteracy and social backwardness have been the instrument in the hands of dominant culture for their harassment, humiliation and economic exploitation.

The deep foundations of inequality between sexes and castes are deeply ingrained in the minds of the people which has to be overthrown for the process of inclusive socialization of women and Dalits. The persons who aver that there are no

gender based discriminations now, should keep in mind that there is an increase in the gender based violence even in cities and even the villages are of no exception where women are still subjugated and subordinated. The only institution which can counteract the effect of this process is the precepts of educational system. Education must not only promote equality among people, but also it should intentionally make planned sustained effort, so that the values of equality among sexes and equality among castes can successfully replace the conventional system that maintains and promotes inequality.

Dalits also have begun to realize the significance of education in the process of their liberation. Bama's brother instructs her of the importance of education in bringing out emancipation to induce her learning.

'Because we are born into the Paraya jati, we are never given any honour or dignity or respect . . . But if we study and make progress we can throw away these indignities. So study with care, learn all you can. If you are always ahead in your lessons, people will come to you of their own accord and attach themselves to you (Bama: *Karukku* 17-8).

Bama has been urged by this statement and she has begun to learn everything earnestly. She has stood first in all her educational endeavours. Many children, irrespective of the caste and status, approach Bama for getting their doubts clarified and for befriending her for guidance.

Bama is admitted to a convent hostel. Though she does not like the atmosphere, she has been forced by her mother to stay there and study and so she has "grittled . . . teeth and stayed there" (Bama: *Karukku* 73). As time passes on everything turns to her favour and she has begun to love the atmosphere in the convent. Here Bama makes a reference which differentiates the way of dressing by the upper caste students and the Dalits.

Both in hostel and in school, the children wore all sorts of fine clothes, and they kept nice things to eat in their rooms. So I thought they must all be upper-caste children. I wondered to myself how it was that children belonging to other communities always had fine clothes and

good food. I realized it was they who had money. As for me, my community was low-caste; I had no money either. (Bama: *Karukku* 73)

Government provides uniform to all the students to conceal the economic imbalances, whereas the educational institutions demand students to wear clothes other than the uniforms and that increases the differences among the students.

Educationists often view educational system as offering opportunity for mobility of individuals. No doubt that education is helpful in solving poverty providing social mobility but one should remember that there are social classes that are more powerful in hindering the opportunities. Social class background of individuals is strongly related to their educational and professional aspirations and achievements. Consequently, the education system has to be instrumental in promoting unity among the social classes, and thereby providing space for the emergence of an equalitarian and integrated society, but at present instead of doing so, education itself tends to increase social segregation and to perpetuate and widen class distinctions. Educationists and scholars raise their serious concern about the politicization of education in higher educational institutes and also they raise doubts about the mechanism of education in bringing forth the effective changes in society. It is particularly doubtful that the position of the poor and the oppressed is much worsened through education. Economic and social stratification too strongly exist as a pattern of society and consequently, the gap between "haves" and "have-nots", the dominant and ostracized and oppressed is widened, and the scholars doubt whether education system takes us behind to the days of "*Gurukulas*" which restricts educational opportunities to the upper caste only and because of which the people are segregated and the education for the downtrodden is denied, the process of which has pervasively provided a space for remaining the downtrodden as downtrodden and the dominant as always dominant and exploiters.

Bama focusses the economic imbalance between Dalits and other upper caste people. Upper caste people are able to afford to more expensive outfits and to an elevated and sophisticated lifestyle. Bama realizes the socio-

economic inequality and ostracism because of the socio-economic inequality and decided to “study hard and make good” (Bama: *Karukku* 73), as she believes education is the only force which can break the social barriers and bondages of Dalits and it can bring equality amidst the heteronomy which prevails in the present society. Bama’s determination to study well and make good is further intensified by, her brother’s letters who promptly and enthusiastically writes, ““You have lots of brains; . . . study well and gain lots of marks” (Bama: *Karukku* 73), and by others who used to say that Bama would gain good marks and has begun to study well, caring less and less about clothes and others comments comforting herself telling, “this was the destiny . . .” (Bama, *Karukku* 73); education makes the “residuals to accept everything as fate.

Education accelerates the process of social change, but in case of Dalits the process is too slow due to people’s aversion towards Dalits that the dominant cultured people are not ready to accept Dalits. No doubt education leads to enlightening and in turn this enlightenment leads to social change, but when the opportunity is implicitly denied, how Dalits can prosper. So education has failed to create attitudinal change and hence Dalits are forced to live within their culture with given resources which are too minimal.

School and education system is believed to be the only tool that can bridge the gaps, made up of caste, class and race, but in India there are educational institutions run by Nadar, Sengunthar, Devangar and so on and that they admit and appoint their respective caste people, where will the depressed go. Bama expresses her existential agony saying “. . . it seems that Nadar schools only admit Nadars, and Naicker schools only admit Naickers. And then, Aiyar schools will only teach Aiyar children. If it is all like this, then heaven knows where all the Dalit children can go and break their heads” (*Karukku* 119). The entire system marginalizes Dalits saying that the standards of education will fall down, if they admit Dalits. Amidst all these existential mystifications, the Dalits’ survival becomes problematized.

Education, in the modern society is considered as one of the medium for change, but in reality modern education, teaches Dalits to remain as same as they are. They are not educating the Dalit students by making them aware of the present

situation. In turn they direct them to adjust with the existing situation rather than to change it and consequently. God has created everyone out of same clay and His own breath whereas the church which promotes the same God, behaves as an anti-God agency in matters related to Dalits, they not only ostracize Dalits but also God himself since it is God’s breath that animates everybody. The poor Dalit children are made to work from dawn to dusk. On seeing, all these atrocities the narrator argues with the authorities. In many parts of India Dalits have to fight their losing battle for their rights. From independence to present time they face many types of problems often. They have to give the most of the crops yielded to the owners of the land, the upper caste men from whom Dalits borrow the land; Dalits own only a meagre amount of the yielded crops. These landlords lead a wealthy and more comfortable life exploiting Dalits. The welfare of Dalits are completely ignored and they are pushed to the outskirts of the mainstream society.

Not only schools, even the higher education institutes like universities foster caste discrimination. It is a wrong and misleading interpretation that the level of education may diminish the caste hierarchization and discrimination, because casteism is deep rooted in Indian minds. The recent institutional murder of Rohit Vemula a Dalit research scholar of the University of Hyderabad on January 17, 2016, confirms the existence of caste stratification in the universities, which is a consequence of “ the predominance of deep rooted casteism and Hinduism in the Indian universities ” (Vasudevan: “*Nindru Kollum Saathi*” [Slowly Grinding Caste] 20)\*. Statistics show that from 2007 to 2013 nine Dalit students have committed suicide in the University of Hyderabad. In 2008 Senthilkumar has committed suicide because of the caste based atrocities in the same institute, University of Hyderabad. Senthilkumar is a Dalit scholar belonging to Tamil Nadu to whom the research supervisor has not been allotted because of his low caste status. Once educational opportunities have explicitly been neglected to Dalits, whereas now the scenario is not so explicit but circuitously deny educational opportunities thus towards forbidding Dalits entry to the higher education institutes. Dalits have to revise their strategies in order to attain socio-economic, socio-political and socio-cultural independence. Dalits have organized their

own liberation strategies in the Indian social concern.

Raj Gautaman assigns two dimensions for Dalit liberation movements:

First cutting through nationality, race and language, Dalit culture should identify itself with the cultural features among other people similarly discriminated at birth, due to the skin colour like the blacks or due to their gender like women. Second, in India there are other people like them who cannot be considered of Indian nationality but are of a subservient position. (263)

Those people must be joined together to build a distinct culture that radically differs from the existing nationalism. Dalit issues share a common border with racial problems and feminism.

Dalit culture is bound to protest, in order to attain that standard sub-nationalism. Dalits have the need to challenge the Brahmanical Hindu society and the existing Christian society that ostracize the Dalits. The hegemonic classes in Indian society impose the living strategies on Dalits to further their interest which seems to be the ideological burdens on Dalits. These type of ideological burdens can be discarded only through protest, Dalits who are accustomed to live a subservient life that is steeped in guilt, fear, despair, centuries of exploitation, ignorance, and slave mentality, will find it difficult to come out with the protesting mindset, but only by ignoring, attacking, humiliating and ridiculing the dominant hegemonic culture and its symbols of bondage and slavery, Dalits can get out of their mental agony; they should protest against these symbols and hegemonic cultural identities which subjugate and exploit them perennially and should direct their protest towards the destruction of these symbols.

Education has offered a platform for Dalits to hide their cultural identities. Among the educated youths, employed and dwelling in cities, the characteristics of this antipodal culture seems to disappear, as they readily accept the influence of western and Brahmanical culture. The culture of Dalits has rooted deep in the subconscious stratum of mind. Many in urban areas consider this antipodal culture as rustic and barbaric and deliberately want to obliterate it. Nowadays the

educated youths organize themselves and do work for making the people aware of the need for liberation from the upper caste hegemony using the social media like WhatsApp and Facebook. They create their own groups to expose their cultural values that have been devalued and demeaned for decades and its significance in the contemporary social life. This strategy gives momentum to the Dalit liberation movements. They want to follow the devices generated by their veteran leader Ambedkar: inter-caste marriage, education, protest, destroying the Hindu *shasthras* and conversion. Ambedkar opines that the Hindu *shasthras* devalue and deteriorate the Dalit culture, but in the modern days not only the Hindus but also the other religions consider Dalit culture as barbaric; consequently the educated youths need deroot the deep-rooted caste bias in all the religions, merely contemplating on the ideologies on the leaders may not liberate Dalits from the dominant culture that has made them upside down. So the protest culture has to take a newer form. When Dalits project their culture in this way, they appear to the power hegemony as criminals and anarchists, consequently they ban such activities. Evidently three books that are brought out in Tamil Nadu celebrating the culture of the present untouchables, two by Senthil Mallar of *Mallar Meetpukalam*, and another one by Arunthathiar on the history of Madurai Veeran are banned, alleging that these books may bring forth disharmony among different castes. Though Indian constitution envisages freedom of expression, the ban is enforced by the constitutional constituent, Government.

Education teaches Dalits to accept their existence as fate. No doubt it brings emancipation to some extent, but the much worried fact is that the Dalits emancipated through education are not accepted and not also duly recognised by others. So as far as the Dalits' predicament is concerned Education has failed to bring liberation.

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## The World of Business and Personal Relationships in *The Foreigner* and *The Last Labyrinth* by Arun Joshi

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### Abstract

*The Foreigner* (1968) and *The Last Labyrinth* (1981) are respectively the first and fourth novel written by Arun Joshi. These two novels have been grouped together for the simple reason that they both deal with same theme the world of business relationships as well as the personal. Arun Joshi is a novelist of the younger generation to which, besides others, belong the two women novelists such as Nayantara Sahgal and Anita Desai. The heroes of these novels are trained in the U.S.A., and they come back to India to work in industrial concerns. While Sindi Oberoi in *The Foreigner* gets employment in the Khemka concern, Som Bhaskar in *The Last Labyrinth* runs his own plastics industry. Their day-to-day lives are guided both by their existence in the world of their business and also as individuals. *The Foreigner* is a novel deals with several themes love versus hate, action versus inaction; possessiveness versus renunciation. It also deals with the themes of alienation, the absurd, the sordidness and seediness of the human existence. All the fictional works of Arun Joshi delve deep into these problems.

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*Foreigner* is a novel deals with several themes love versus hate, action versus inaction; possessiveness versus renunciation. It also deals with the themes of alienation, the absurd, the sordidness and seediness of the human existence. All the fictional works of Arun Joshi delve deep into these problems.

The heroes of both *The Foreigner* and *The Last Labyrinth* are engrossed in industrial relationships and especially, in *The Foreigner*, industrial problems have also been mentioned and solved. The plot of *The Foreigner* has been unfolded from the viewpoint of the omniscient Protagonist narrator. Though Sindi Oberoi States very humbly, "I am not very good at remembering events, but for some reason I always remember the beginning and end of an affair" *The Foreigner*.pg.no 33 he is above all narrator and succeeds in communicating the very minute details of his life both personal and business relationships.

Sindi Oberoi's life is a study in rootlessness. He is hardly Indian and this fact keeps on haunting him. His mother was an English woman and fathers a Kenyan-Indian. Thus he is a child of mixed parentage. Both his parents settled in Nairobi, died early in an air-crash near Cairo. Being orphaned he is brought up by his uncle, also settled in Kenya. He had lost childhood happiness because of the death of his parents in his infancy. He is a product of a hybrid culture and his education in Kenya, London, Boston, and New York. He always says that he belongs to no culture and cannot confidently call himself either a Kenyan or an Indian. He thinks himself as a lonely planet, and the sense of pity and frustration also engulfs him. The heart of the matter with him is that he feels a foreigner wherever he goes and this is more psychological than physical.

His American girl friend, June Blyth is the first one to point out to him of his being obsessed with the foreign complex: "There is something strange about you, you know something distant. I would guess that when people are with you, they don't feel like they're human beings. May be it's an Indian characteristic, but I have a feeling you'd

be foreigner anywhere" (33). He considers his life to be a wasted one. Sindi thinks:

My fifth Christmas on these alien shores. And yet all shores are alien when you don't belong anywhere. Twenty fifth Christmas on this planet, twenty five years largely wasted in search of wrong things in wrong places. Twenty five years gone in search of peace, and what did I have to show for achievements; a ten stone body that had to be fed four times of a day, twenty eight times a week. This was the sum of a lifetime of striving (96).

Also like Prufrock, he is unable to understand himself or his life. He too is lonely, all alone in the wild world. Although an Indian by birth, Sindi feels himself to be an outsider even in India. Sheila, Babu's sister, tries to understand him but she too remarks: "You are still a foreigner, you don't belong here" (122). There is intense sadness in Sindi which those who come into contact with him, June in America, Sheila, Mr. Khemka in India, can feel in the very presence of the man. This he tries to explain to Mr. Khemka in the following manner: You had a clear cut system of morality, a caste system that laid down all you had to do. You had a God; you had roots in the soil you lived upon. Look at me. I have no roots. I have no system of morality. What does it mean to me if you call me an immoral man? I have no reason to be one thing or another. You ask me why I am not ambitious; well, I have no reason to be. Come to think of it I don't even have a reason to live! (118).<sup>15</sup> Thus, in *The Foreigner*, Joshi depicts the alienation of the protagonist Sindi Oberoi. It results into the identity conflict but the post spiritualism gives him the salvation, an identity, and a meaning to his life. Besides, Sindi Oberoi, the protagonist of his debut novel *The Foreigner*, brings back to life many of the experiences encountered in his author's youth.

*The Foreigner* the world of business relationships is marginal to the hero of the novel. Sindi Oberoi is an engineer by profession who has to manage business. Like *The Foreigner*, *The Last Labyrinth* is also concerned with both the business and personal relationships. Som Bhaskar in *The Last Labyrinth* is himself a business man. At the age of twenty-five he has amassed a huge fortune and everything that is needed for worldly success. He is highly educated in the world's most famous

Universities. His wife Gita, is well-bred, beautiful and trusting and remains loyal to husband despite his erratic love-affairs with Leila Sabnis in Bombay and Anuradha in Benares. In his personal life he is a seeker after pleasure and hungers for the joys of life. In both the worlds of business and love he explores possibilities of new experience. But his indulgences have also an inner contradiction in that the more he runs after the material needs and sensual pleasure, the more dissatisfied he becomes with his existence and cries, "It is the voids of the world, more than its objects that bother me" (47). Yet he is always haunted by an insatiable cry of "I Want, I want, I want" (11). and not knowing what it is he desires, in some ways a parallel figure to Saul Bellow's Henderson, the rain king. His search takes him, however, to infinitely old Benares, a city seen as altogether intangible, at once holy and repellent, and to an end lost in a miasma of non-understanding. But the way there is gripping. Joshi writes with a persuasive ease and illuminates the outward scene with telling phrase after telling phrase.

The idea that the post-colonialism involves collision of two sets of values or notions about what modes of living are and that they are not worth preserving and promoting implies that individuals and communities must resolve the conflicts inherent to this situation. These authors present a range of resolutions to these conflicts through characters that represent the prevailing attitudes of different groups within a community, those of unusual yet believable individuals, and their own attitudes as men who have dealt or continue to deal with such conflicts. Since conflict defines the post-colonialism, resolutions and reformulated conflicts dictate its future definition. Therefore, conflicts and their resolutions enable the author to create, and the reader to discover, the nature of the evolving post-colonialism. The analysis of the entire corpus of Arun Joshi's writings demonstrates that there is a pattern in his works. The innate urge to determine life's meaning in positive terms leads Joshi's protagonists to wage an incessant war against challenging situations. The author's capacity of critical judgment is himself out through an analysis of novels. The socio-economic and cultural background leading to the literary milieu of the period to which Joshi belongs is pushed to further establish the basis of conflict in his novels.<sup>28</sup> The socio-historical realities from two divergent cultures (West and East) got

embedded in the psychological niche up of Arun Joshi.

Arun Joshi, a writer in the pre-Rushdie era, deals with secrecy and shadows of human mind. In today's world of book-promos, Arun Joshi would be a oddball as he kept himself out of the attention. His novels searching into existentialism, along with the ethical choices a man has to make, won him huge decisive admiration in India. Psychiatry was the basic curiosity of Arun Joshi. Most of the writings by Arun Joshi are filled with his own experiences right from his youth. Arun Joshi is a novelist who, more muscularly than most, has brought to his work that aloofness from the everyday, while still allow its existence, which is perhaps India's meticulous gift to the literature of the world.

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## Religious Identities in the Select Works of V.S.Naipaul

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### Abstract

In the whirlwind of globalization the people of Third World nations are desperately engaged in searching their potential for a political and economic growth on the one hand and for a social stability and search for identity on the other. The postcolonial literature primarily deals with the experiences of the colonized people and in the context of the Caribbean countries, too, there has been substantial contribution to it. As an exile enmeshed in the cultural collisions of his epoch, Naipaul does not escape the disintegrating and alienating effects. His dislocation from his roots enables him to treat his own alienation as an instance of his quest for identity of colonial and postcolonial peoples. His works have become the paradigms of the entire modern world's experiences of exile, desolation, dereliction, deracination and floating existence. In Naipaul the process of writing is seen to be a progressive creative endeavour leading to self-knowledge and nourishment of the sensibility to survive amidst the oddities of the postcolonial situations of the world. It is therefore, obvious that self-actualisation, audacity and self appraisal are the answers to the people of the Third World either in their own country or in their floating existence as ever exiled immigrants on any parch of the earth. It is only then that their cultural parasitism and second-rated intellectual status could be removed and their decolonization in its real sense could be possible and this operation is a must to free them from all the stressing pressures of their wrecked past culture and distorted identity. His exploration of religion is incisive.

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context of the Caribbean countries too, there has been substantial contribution to it. As an exile enmeshed in the cultural collisions of his epoch, Naipaul does not escape the disintegrating and alienating effects. His dislocation from his roots enables him to treat his own alienation as an instance of his quest for identity of colonial and postcolonial peoples. His works have become the paradigms of the entire modern world's experiences of exile, desolation, dereliction, deracination and floating existence. In Naipaul the process of writing is seen to be a progressive creative endeavour leading to self-knowledge and nourishment of the sensibility to survive amidst the oddities of the postcolonial situations of the world. It is therefore, obvious that self-actualisation, audacity and self appraisal are the answers to the people of the Third World either in their own country or in their floating existence as ever exiled immigrants on any parch of the earth. It is only then that their cultural parasitism and second-rated intellectual status could be removed and their decolonization in its real sense could be possible and this operation is a must to free them from all the stressing pressures of their wrecked past culture and distorted identity. His exploration of religion is incisive.

V.S. Naipaul, with London as the base of his creativity, has contributed voluminously and qualitatively to the mainstream of British fiction. It is equally well known that London remained the land of his literary exercises and craftsmanship but it is his journeys to various countries including Trinidad – his birth place, and India – his ancestral homeland, which have given him stuff for his literary works. The West Indian literature is one of the major groups today in New Literatures written in English Language and V.S. Naipaul is an extraordinarily important name in bringing this literature to its full blossoming.

*Among the Believers* (1980) based on his travel to Pakistan and non – Arab Muslim countries, narrates his understanding of Islam. *The Mystic Masseur* is set in Port of Spain and the rural

areas of Trinidad amidst Indians. It is a comic study of the postcolonial political rise and expatriate Indians' response which smacks of mutual self-deception. Ganesh, the hero of the novel, is a representative figure of East Indians in Trinidad in their move towards city life and their subsequent Creolization. The novel is an allegory of the history of the Hindu community and Ganesh represents the first generation of the East Indians to come under the influence of the western education which acted as a potent force for cultural colonization. The degradation in the religion of East Indian, which has been reduced merely to rites without philosophy, becomes evident during Ganesh's initiation ceremony, his practices as mystic his marriage and his behavior at the temple that is constructed in Fuente Grove to attract the American soldiers. When Ganesh undergoes the initiation ceremony to become a real Brahmin as per Hindu custom his head is shaved and he is given a little saffron bundle and asked to go Benaras to study. The dichotomy is further exemplified during Ganesh's marriage. In a traditional Hindu marriage, the groom is not supposed to see the bride before marriage. However, Ganesh and Leela have already met each other. So Ramlogan, Leela's father and Ganesh have to pretend that Ganesh has never seen Leela otherwise in Trinidad they shall no longer be looked as good Hindus.

The cultural confusion and the breakdown of traditional values and religiosity are aptly described in the novel *The suffrage of Elvira*. All this is exposed in the passages like the following:

"Things were crazily mixed up in Elvira. Everybody, Hindus, Muslims and Christians, owned a Bible; the Hindus and Muslims looking on it, if anything, with greater awe. Hindus and Muslims celebrated Christmas and Easter. The Spaniards and some of the Negroes celebrated the Hindu festival of lights. Someone had told them that Lakshmi, the Goodess of prosperity, was being honored; they placed small earthen lamps on their money – boxes and waited, as they said, for the money to breed. Everybody celebrated the Muslim festival of Hosein. In fact, when Elvira was done with religious festivals, there were few straight days left."(17)

*A House for Mr. Biswas* (1961) is the masterpiece of Naipaul as it presents the classic struggle of a third generation Indian for an authentic selfhood within the alien environment of Trinidad.

The novel is a tragic – comic dramatization of the self – assertion of a man against the evils of fluid life through the detailed activities of a household of Indian origin in the second and third generation of decadent Hindu cultural legacy in the alien world. The disintegration of Hindu culture and odd assimilation into the Creole culture is complete when Mrs. Tulsi starts sending Sushila to burn candles in the Roman Catholic Church puts a crucifix in her room and has Pundit Tulsi's grave cleaned for All Saint's Day.

Naipaul's next work *In a Free State* (1971) is set in an unnamed African country and it came out in the year in which Naipaul bagged the Man Booker Prize. The story 'Tell Me Who to Kill' takes us to the West Indies, the familiar Naipaul territory. Christianity is held up as the hallmark of progressiveness and the narrator's role model is his Christian uncle Stephen who is well educated and sends his son to Montreal for higher studies.

The novel *Half a life* opens with the beginning of Willie somerset Chandran's search for his roots as he awakes one day to the realization that his middle name sounds alien. He asks his father; why is my middle name Somerset?(16) This question regarding the very essence of a person's existence brings into light the irony of Willie's background of his half – life in half made societies with the people who are themselves leading a life which is half – realized, half – discovered and half – lived . Willie's quarry unleashes a torrent of memories unfolding before him a complicated picture which relates to his roots. A probing look reveals that this man is as much an amalgam of drastically different traits as is his name an admixture of different and even antagonistic streams. It is his destiny that half of his name does not belong to him; it is borrowed from the famous writer Somerset Maugham; his first name proclaims him as a Christian whereas his surname signifies his mixed ancestry. In search of his identity in this strange world Willie adopts the defence mechanism of projecting a borrowed, make – believe identity and ventures to live with this superficial image once again:

“...he adapted certain things he had read, and he spoke of his mother as belonging to an ancient Christian community of the subcontinent, a community almost as old as Christianity itself. He kept his father as a Brahmin. He made his father’s father a ‘courtier’. So playing with words, he began to re-make himself. It excited him and began to give him a feeling of power.” (24)

In his Indian trilogy he describes various occasions when he found Hinduism more mysterious than real. In *An Area of Darkness* he describes his pilgrimage to the Cave of Amarnath. He was encouraged by Karan Singh, the Maharaja of Kashmir to undertake the pilgrimage. He is curious about the discovery of the Cave and the formation of its mystery without bothering too much about its religious significance. He found the Cave a mystery like Delphi. His detached observation of Hinduism is embodied in these words.

It was a mystery, like Delphi, of the older world. It had survived because it was of India and Hinduism which, without beginning, without end, scarcely a religion, continued as a repository and living record of man’s religious consciousness. (164)

*Among the Believers* opens a new territory in Naipaul’s writing. It is the account of a journey which is dedicated to the study of the minutes of Islam. Naipaul explores the effect of religion on individuals of various kinds. In Pakistan, Naipaul found a different scene. It was a country which was newly formed and which still had to develop itself as an independent nation. Islam was becoming a greater force everyday. Several of the young men of the new generation are reasonable about religion. In every religion it is believed that there will be the second coming of the Messiah for the purification of the faith. The Hindus believe that God comes on earth whenever religion is in peril. The Christian believe in the second coming of Christ. The Ahmadis also believe that Ahmad will return to purge Islam of all its impurity Thus, there is an underlying similarity among all religions. Naipaul explores Islam both as a philosopher and a man of practical approach.

In *Beyond Belief* Naipaul continues his study of Islam. Naipaul’s visit to the Islamic countries was inspired by the happenings in Iran. His comments on the Iranian phenomenon are

particularly thought provoking. Yashoda Baht remarks that Iran is at the centre of his Islamic journey.

...Naipaul also sympathizes, paradoxically enough with the modernizing revolution and the spread of Marxist ideology. Within a span of seven months, Naipaul travelled to several Islamic countries – Iran, Pakistan, Malaysia and Indonesia, although the idea had originated when he was to think about the happenings in Iran. (Introduction 123)

Although Islam is the identity and strength of the Malaysian people, their past can easily be traced with all its Hindu and Buddhist associations. To be a Muslim is to belong to a big and powerful group. It provides a sense of security which is of a rare kind. But the past still lives in Malaysia. Its presence is felt in various customs and rituals. The Malaysian marriage customs are derived from the Hindu past. Thus, Islam has not eradicated the past in Malaysia:

The marriage customs of Malays are derived from old Hindu customs. At an early stage gifts have be exchanged between the families. If the girl’s family sends five gifts, the boy’s family has to send seven; there always has to be a difference of two Symbolic things are sent: sweets, money. (403)

Naipaul’s objective and pointed observations make *Beyond Belief* a rare document. His criticism of Islam is free from bias.

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## Humanist Tendency through Selected Poems on Race and Gender

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### Abstract

Poems are the most effective tools to express the voice of the soul. It gives a more prominent impact than reading an essay or novels because of its structure. It delivers the actual meaning intended by the author to its readers in a very precise and accurate manner in a very short span of reading. Every ideology has its form in art because the way these ideologies reach its target audience is through words. In this modern society, the technology has been continuously growing and the minds of the people are tilted more toward economy than humanity. The lack of humanism is seen in every sphere of the present day to day life. The most crucial role played by lack of humanism is when we analyse the area of race and gender in the contemporary world. Even though the discrimination based on race and gender are prominent from the ancient times and slowly diluted as the year's pass, it has been the stinging feature which cannot be completely removed. The paper focuses on the humanist tendency towards the discrimination on race and gender using selected poems to enrich.

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Discrimination based on race and gender has prevailed in our society from the ancient period. It was more vigorous and rigidly followed in those days. Later the time changed and the actual truth of being a good human rather than being superstitious on race and gender was realized. This became possible only because of the rise in the ideology of humanism in the mind and soul of humans around the world. The discrimination on race and gender not only suppressing a certain class directly but also affecting the entire society indirectly. English literature has played a very prominent role in bringing the voice of the suppressed class out to the world to hear and bring change.

Many writers all over the world have written many literary works to bring out their

feeling on the race and gender discrimination prevailing in the world, but when considering all the literary forms of English the poems are the most effective in delivering its complete intention in a most effective manner to its readers. It is very potential in yielding the meaning mainly because of its structure. The poem has created revolutionary changes in understanding the core concept of race and gender. The main change is changing the attitude of the people towards humanism than materialism.

When we read the poem "Telephone Conversation" By Wole Soyinka we can realize the pain of racial discrimination. The poem describes the conversation between a white lady and an African American man which gives a clear picture on the racism and belief which holds the society. The title explains that it is the situation where two people are held on a conversation. A man is talking to the landlady regarding the availability of house for rent.

But self-confession. "Madam," I warned,  
"I hate a wasted journey--I am African."

The terms and conditions are accepted by both parties thus the conversation heads to apposite direction until the lady finds that she is talking to an African man. This creates a sudden silence on the side of the lady and later she questions his colour and asks him to explain how dark he is. The question scrutinizing the colour of the African continuous in varying modulations which makes the African feel that he has reduced to a status of a machine.

"HOW DARK?" . . . I had not misheard . . . "ARE YOU LIGHT

OR VERY DARK?"

"ARE YOU DARK? OR VERY LIGHT?"  
Revelation came.

"You mean--like plain or milk chocolate?"

I chose. "West African sepia"--and as afterthought,

"Down in my passport." Silence for spectroscopic

The man first thinks that he misheard but then realizes that the landlady is asking the questions regarding his colour. The lady wants to know how dark he is, so the questions continue to which the African responds by repeating her question by stating that he looks like West African sepia and she remains silence not to disclose her ignorance. And he gets her clarification as the man states that it is similar to brunette and she immediately clarifies that that's dark.

Facially, I am Brunette, but, madam, you should see

The rest of me. Palm of my hand, soles of my feet

Now the man has lost his patience so to get back the lady he explains that he is not completely black because, the soles of his feet are completely white, his eye his teeth was white and stated that he is foolish to sit on his bottom, so it has turned very black due to friction. Wole Soyinka describes the state of racism and colour discrimination. The pain faced by the discriminated class is well expressed. The main aim of the poem is to make the reader understand the horrible state of being suppressed on the base of colour in a comical manner. Soyinka has shown the way a man is judged his character by his colour.

The racism and its discrimination are completely similar to the Indian Dalit discrimination there is no big difference the first is suppressed on the base of color and the latter is suppressed on the base of caste. The pain is not different both face the same difficulties in the society. Humanism is the key tool to change this feature and drive it out of the minds of the people. The attitude is the one to change and not rules or constitutional amendments can bring change. The ancient period showed direct discrimination but in the present scenario it is indirect no one says anything directly, but you feel it in your heart and thus resembles in your activities.

The same way when we consider the poem of Emily Dickinson "She rose to His Requirements explains the strong view of women in the period of the poet.

She rose to his requirement, dropped the play things of her lifeto take on honorable workof woman and of wife.

The poem describes the state of women when she falls in love with a man. The women start to give up everything in order to make him happy. The poem shows the state of women in the age of the poet as so obedient and was willingly giving herself into the domination of the male. Women are required to give up everything she feels is fun in her life to take the responsibility of being a wife and to fulfil the expectation set in front of her by her society.

It lay unmentioned, as the sea

Develops pearl and weed,

But only to himself is known

The fathoms they abide.

The last three lines of the poem put forth the feeling of the women not to tell her husband about her longing for her past and how she misses her early life, but she consoles herself that her husband knows what's good for her and believes that following her husband is the best decision. This poem obviously showed the inequality between male and female back in Emily's time; where a woman must give up her rights/freedom to satisfy a man's needs.

The discrimination of women on the base of gender is more indirect as racism in the present world. The way women are discriminated has its main part played by women themselves. Women to be the way she is expected to be is made to prevail the same way for generations to come by the fellow women. The male society made them feel that the way women are discriminated is right and on top of it, they made women teach her younger generation to be the same women as she is today. Women worry more about their beauty they never realize that it is a form of discrimination followed by themselves. Being beautiful and pretty is not the actual quality of being a woman and they do not realize that it is just the attractive element for the male.

Race and gender are mandatory it cannot be changed. No one can remove the division of race and gender from the society it is a natural element in which the society is built upon. When we consider bringing awareness against race discrimination, criticizing the origin of race, caste and culture is not the answer. The discrimination based on race and caste system is manmade which

is the area we need to change. Gender is natural, and the gender-based discrimination is manmade women. Both male and female of our society are brought up in the same form to encourage this discrimination.

Humanism is the medicine that cures all the discrimination crisis of our society. The humanist tendency can be turned to the right direction by a collective effort. The parents, teachers, media and the society have to play an effective role to support the change in the society. The position of parents, teachers and media is where the seed of good thought are sowed inside the minds of the future generation. The productivity of a land depends on the quality of the seed that has been sowed. The same way when great humanist ideologies and humanist tendencies are brought to the growing population the

environment of the society will be filled with humanism rather than discrimination and suppression.

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**Postcolonial Ventures and Reimagining the Myth of Humanism in Allan Sealy's *The Everest Hotel* and Michal Ondaatje's *The English Patient*.**

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**Abstract**

Material regarding the analysis of myth in South Asian fiction in English has grown mainly because of the advent of the Indo- Anglian novel. Post colonialism in the 20<sup>th</sup> century in the Indo-Anglian context defines myth as postcolonial narrative that analyses the presence of Hindu myths and post-independence narratives Myth is the postcolonial imaginative space of the indigenous subject. The function of myth is therefore to connect cultural identity in the postcolonial movement.

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*The English Patient* (1992) is one of the best novels of Michal Ondaatje as so is Allen Sealy's novel *The Everest Hotel* (1998).Both the novels are contextually different. They reimagine the legend of the Fisher King to question more narratives of nationhood. The theme that runs simultaneously in both the novels is that of the 'Fisher King'. The central question which the hero has to answer is secular and at the same time mystical. Fisher king originally Celtic mythology of the late 20<sup>th</sup> century. The two novels discuss the love, loss and the betrayal of the individual. In spite of the similarities found in the two novels Sealy's Fisher King Myth is different from Michal Ondaatje's. The researcher in this paper will try to bring out the manner in which the two authors have used mythical story as a means to deconstruct the

growth of secular myth of the nation through a series of archetypal images. Chitra Sankaran converts philosophical discourse into Indian postcolonial impact on Hindu religion. She observes in her book *The Myth Connection: The Use of Hindu Mythology in Some Novels by Raja Rao and R.K. Narayan*:

The most valuable aspect of modern Hinduism reminds its spirit to believe that every human thought has a right to exist. Rama, who is very much a product of the twentieth century and steeped in the spirit of not just Brahminism, but a whole corpus of Hindu ideas, then becomes a representative of this inclusive spirit that is the essential quality of Hinduism. (132)

Michal Ondaatje and Allen Sealy go through the archetypal power of myth at the same time maintaining a critical distance which warns the reader about the ideological aspect of archetypal imagery. Thus a new approach to reading myth coupled with the questioning of ideological power of myth is also taken into consideration. Ondaatje weaves the myth of the Fisher King to highlight postcolonial definitions of community.

Mainly this postcolonial aspect is based on transnational issues. Sealy's understanding of the myth discusses India as a country that rises to the emergence of the postcolonial sense of the individual confined community.The ironic reimaging of the core myths in Everest create alternative narratives that question myth in the text. Usage of irony transforms the interpretation of myth to adapt Sealy's new vision. The sameness and differences in Michal Ondaatje's and Sealy's approach provide a complex example about the way in which two authors writing about different locations and contexts treat the problem of narrating community through the same myth. Michal Ondaatje and Sealy's skillful use of the Fisher King myth through radically different stories

underscore the many directions a myth can take. Thus the researcher can highlight the individual consents of the postcolonial writer. Sealy's novel *The Everest Hotel* appeared many year after Ondaatje's *The Patient*. It highlights the problems of narrating- community that are found within collapsing world orders. Both novels are romances. They underscore the departure of communal values arising due to postcolonial strife. This then shows the rise of the individual as a crucial agent of change.

One will argue that the patient has the appeal to go beyond the confines of local boundary, and it is because of the universal themes of romantic and familial love. Meaning of the universal runs through archetypal images that make big, the themes of the novel. This then renders them individual and at the same time transcendental since the contextualization arises within confined historical and socio-cultural movements. Michal Ondaatje's characters are mythical due to the aesthetic treatment given to each figure. This lifts the character out of the shackles of realism. Some of the aesthetic aspects are the presence of actions which do not synchronize and are the fusion of contradictory images. They effect an affective quality in the flowing narrative making the power of the archetype controllable.

Michal Ondaatje underscores his liking for myth in his own writings, in that aspect he follows the modernists. Also, it seeks to relocate the reader within the mythical moment. Eliot's point of view is the "... a step towards making the modern world possible of art", Ondaatje's mythic vision is intimately linked to the act of narration. (61). The characters represent a global community brought together during times of war. Michal Ondaatje's vision of the Fisher King mythology follows the narrative of the 'English patient'. The researcher observes that they have a lot to do with reconstructions of certain principles in the chaos of war. The grand narrative dominates each character and at the end of the novel, it goes with them to the various communities around the world. This then built a sense of renewal brought about by memory.

Michal Ondaatje's novel concludes with a vision of the sacred marriage in which two young lovers Hannah and Kip are reconciled. This is a figurative union and this union also suggests renewal of the destroyed lands and relationships

which form the core theme of *The Patient*. Michal Ondaatje's historic romance of *The Patient* is a parable. This helps the other characters Hannah Kip and Caravaggio to contextualize their subjectivities in a postcolonial world. The inheritance of narratives thereby plays an important role. The characters Hannah, Kip and Caravaggio are postcolonial remnants of the historic romance of the patient that itself is the parable. Therefore the reimagined myth of these postcolonial characters set themselves firmly in a mythical world.

The novel, *The Everest* is place within the framework of mythical narrative in Indo- Anglian traditional fiction. Chelva Kanaganayakam in his book, *Counter realism and Indo-Anglian Fiction*, "Consciousness about the limitations of linearity coexists with the desire to record the history of those, whose roles have been sidelined by political and cultural circumstance. Hence the experiment, the self-mockery, the constant punning, and wordplay"(185). The researchers study will highlight the archetypal images taken from the Fisher King myth and underscore Sealy's and Michal Ondaatje's critical discourse with the chaotic nature of postcolonial architect. Sealy's novel *The Everest* evokes parallel with Michal Ondaatje's *The Patient* Michal Ondaatje and Sealy construct quest narratives as allegories of postcolonial reality.

In Sealy's novel *The Everest* quest narrative gives an allegory on Indian identity politics. This then examines then position of the new postcolonial subject as female and othered. Sealy's perception is different from Michal Ondaatje. His central characters though they are marginal belong to communities and are all Indian. The central protagonist is a women Ritu and her search for consciousness makes her a woman. In the same way, in *Everest* the question which transforms is the core of the Fisher King myth. It does not pause from the Fisher King figure to Ritu. It rises from her own preoccupation with the socio-cultural issues of the region. Ritu is incapable of renewing. Sealy questions the myth of nachikate and the myth of Fisher king in the Baromasi. This Bengali folk lyric brings out the desire of a woman passionately waiting for the return of her absent husband over a twelve-month period. The Baromasi serves as a postcolonial narrative and accentuates the search for enlightenment as found in the myths of the Fisher King and nachikate. Bhattacharya further argues that this

phenomenon is waning. He writes in his book *The Fiction of St Stephen*:

Creatively, it may be argued, the most important role played by English in the total context of modern Indian literature has been not that some few Indians have written poems or novels in the language, but that it has served as a channel for fertilizing and nourishing literature in all the Indian languages through the visible and invisible influence of the West. Conversely, Indian writing in English has all this while (from Narayan, Anand, Raja Rao and even Jhabvala and Anita Desai, right up to Rushdie in fact) been sustained and vitalized by the fact that though the medium of expression is English, the medium of experience in the life described was by and large not English but one or more of the Indian languages. But now, such implicit symbiotic bilingualism. (5)

Sealy is an Indo Anglian novelist who has experienced the happiness of independence in early youth. His fiction acts as a negotiator for the dialectic between hybridity and nationalized visions of identity within the framework of the Indian context.

Sealy in his *Everest* has given a firm thrust to postcolonial India. He has found an identity for Indian writing which was afterwards turned as Indo- Anglian literature. His rich narrative has given birth to a multivocal thrust to the novel, *Everest* which also draws heavily on magical realism. Sealy himself wears the Stephanian mantle with certain discomfort. In "Notes on the St Stephens School of Literature" he outlines his positions as follows:

The simple division between caste and consciousness allows an outsider to distinguish between the college and the attitude. But the formalizing, stylizing bent of the caste has benefits for the insider too: you are bred to the manner but not condemned to it, you can take it or leave it. (37)

There is a remarkable change in the style of Sealy's third novel *Everest*. In his novel *Everest* Sealy invents a fictional calendar that is based on folk lyric tradition. This raises the question of communal and environmental collapse in an imaginary town in India. Through, the pre-determine legendary structures that are mythical the frames hammer meaning into Sealy's contemporary India. Michal Ondaatje frequently uses the mythical factor of the Fisher King and the romance also is followed in the form of classical sense. Michal Ondaatje's narrative style is derived from narrative experimentation. In *The Patient* Michal Ondaatje takes one into a fictional space in which the narrator is the same as that of the myth of the Fisher King. The minimalist cinematic image therefore glorifies the power of archetypal image in *The Patient*.

The researcher hopes to highlight that genres cannot be generalized in relation to myth. Though on Michael Ondaatje and Sealy can both be called south Asian writers one can see the striking differences in the respective constructions of the Fisher King myth.

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## Postcolonial Reading of Bama's *Vanmam* (Vendetta)

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### Abstract

Bama is a celebrated Dalit woman writer who has contributed a lot to Dalit literature. Her third novel *Vanmam* (2002) which has been translated into English by Malini Seshadri exposes the clandestine act of the Upper-Caste Naickers to instigate enmity between two Dalit sub-castes, converted Christian Parayars and Hindu Pallars. The writer, instead of grieving over and complaining about the sufferings of the marginalized, raises her voice and emphasizes the need for staying united in order to alter their position in the hierarchical society. At one level, the novel describes the motives of the Caste Hindus, incidents of violence, the atrocities against Dalit and the brutalities of police against women and at another level it highlights the willingness of the Christian Parayars to initiate dialogues with the Hindu Pallars and reconciliation takes place. Only Naickers have been elected to the post of President in Kandampatti village for many years. After the union of the two Dalit sub-castes, the joint candidate becomes the President. On the day of unveiling the statue of Ambedkar they vow to stay together ever. Solidarity of the marginalized is emphasized by Bama through *Vanmam*.

**Key Words:** hierarchical society, caste Hindus, Dalits, sub-castes, reconciliation

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Dalit writings emerged as a form of literature in India in 1960s. Soon it came to be recognized as new literary genre and has wide readership across the country. It provides a platform to the oppressed section of the society to voice how they have been victims of unbearable cruelty in the hands of the so-called high society; it records the sufferings and pains of the discriminated, exploited and marginalized sections of the society. It is the literature of protest. The Sanskrit word "Dalit" means "suppressed", "crushed", or "broken to pieces". In the nineteenth century Jyotiba Phule, social reformer used this word to represent the group of people who were

exploited by Caste Hindus. The word does not refer to particular caste; instead it includes people from many castes but who are socially and economically backward. The thematic concerns of Dalit literature is often compared with African-American literature that deals with racial discrimination.

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar was the first national leader who raised his voice against the hierarchal and caste-based social structure; he strongly objected discrimination of the Dalits and fought for Dalit liberation and rights. After him many writers have started depicting the enmity, viciousness, brutality and violence unleashed against the Dalits by caste Hindus down the ages. These writers not only aim at creating awareness among the people but also inspire them to have resistant mind-set in order to establish themselves on par with other communities in the society. The Dalit writers from Maharashtra and Kannada in 1960s were ideologically very forceful and they expressed Dalit concerns and issues strongly in their works. They become prominent and their writings were translated into English.

Dalit aesthetics and Dalit consciousness slowly spread to other regions of the country. New writers from Punjab, Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Bengal have started contributing to Dalit literature. All genres of writing have been used in order to trigger resistance against social exploitation and to establish social justice. In 1990, Dalit literature blossomed in Tamil and new voices emerged to radicalise social and political consciousness of the Dalits. Bama is a representative writer to delineate caste issues such as caste-instigated animosity, caste clashes, and caste discrimination choosing real life incidents from Tamil Nadu. *Vanmam* is her third novel that explicates how the uppercaste Naickers tried to exploit the two subcastes from Dalits.

In the novel, Bama explores the life of the low class society. She illustrates in the novel how they have been crushed by the so called upper class society. This paper makes an attempt to analyse the historical background of the low class society and

to study class enmity portrayed in *Vanmam* (Vendetta). Bama's *Vanmam* concentrates on caste discrimination and marginalisation. The novel portrays the *Pallar* community as Hindus and the *Paraya* community as converted Christians. As the novelist highlights, Naickers, the Hindu upper caste Hindu and agricultural land owners from Kandampatti village blow the fire between the low class people of either communities and seek happiness. Bama remarks, "The Parayas toiled hard day and night to turn even barren land into fertile fields" (6). In Kandampatti village, both the *parayas* and the *pallars* are agricultural labourers; they are destined to work hard from morning till evening in the fields of the landlords for paltry sum. They lead a pitiable life with the husk thrown by the upper caste Naickers. In spite of their hard labour, they have to remain half-fed and sometimes they drink little porridge. The following description from the text underscores the pathetic status of the poor labourers thus:

"Sometimes they would come home hungry after their bath and look eagerly into the kanji pot. But it would be empty because their younger brothers and sisters would have finished off the food" (45). Worse than this is, at times they have to do brain work with empty stomach.

These poor people have to be at the mercy of the Naickers for their existence. They are pinned down to the village; they cannot take up any other job because no one will offer them any job and they have not learnt any other profession. Hence, they live in misery. They lament, "What a life...even dog's life would be better...can't live, can't die either" (113).

Such is the status of the low caste people of the village.

In such hard times, the Christian missionary who came here to India preached fraternity, solidarity, and equality. The people of low castes had natural inclination towards the missionaries since they accepted the low caste people as their equals. Thus, Christianity provided shelter and other basic needs to the people of *paraya* community in Tamil Nadu in 1801. It is significant to know that the term "*paraya*" originated from Tamil means "Traders". In 1881 "census of British India" it was announced that there were eighty three sub divisions in *Parayas*. The arrival of the British colonizers and their East India Company gave a fatal blow to the trading

community. The *parayas* (traders) lost their jobs once the colonizers took up trading. Subsequently, the *paraya* community had to face adversity and even their very existence was in lurch.

Bama's novel show that of the two communities, the people of *paraya* community get educated and they are able to do jobs like teachers, policemen, tailors, masons, drivers, conductors and so on. Since, the younger generation of this community has started earning, the older generation has stopped receiving any kind of offerings from the *odaiyar* people. They have become economically independent and their life styles also get changed. Being influenced by the *parayas* the *pallars* also do not receive offerings from their landlords. This act enrages the upper caste people and they decide to create enmity between the *parayas* and *pallars*. The Naickers do not like the boys of both communities playing volleyball together. Jayaraju who has joined the college is neatly dressed and asks the Naickers the way to R. C. Street. It irritates them. Similarly Seenivasan Naicker tries to stop the boys who have been going to take bath in the lake which is closer to his well, Joseph and other the boys have said in chorus "This is our well. We will bathe only here"(30). Moreover, both the communities have celebrated Christmas, New Year, and Pongal together. They exchange Bama mentions such incidents to show how the people of *paraya* and *pallar* communities have lived in harmony. This unity disturbs the Naickers and thus they scheme out to break the relationship that exists between the two communities. They are scared about the growing closeness of the communities because five years before they jointly won the election to the posts of milk society and co-operative society.

The Naickers are cautious. Somehow they have to snatch the panchayat president post by hook or by crook. If only they destroy the unity between the *parayas* and *pallars* they can win the panchayat president post in the election. Otherwise either a *paraya* or a *pallar* will be the president and the Naickers have to bow before the low caste people. The Naickers tell the *pallars* that they should be together because they are Hindus. All attempts of the Naickers to disturb the unity of *parayas* and *pallars* failed. In the panchayat election Kaalaiyan has been elected as president. Once again both communities vow to stay together forever. The novel ends with a positive chord; "As Ambedkar, the champion of the downtrodden, we

must capture the levers of the government power” (134).

Bama has vividly presented that if the Dalits are united, they proclaim Surve’s immortal lines, “now we alone are the heroes of history, of all the biographies too henceforth... (Qtd. in L.S.Despande 71). Bama believes that education alone can bring change in the society, redeem the lower sections of the society from exploitations; education alone can play a vital role in mainstreaming the marginalised.

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## Orientalistic attitude in Ken Kesey's *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*

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### Abstract

Orientalism is the textual attitude towards the east by west, it is the study of the eastern society by the west they do this in order to suppress them. Edward Said means orientalism as decolonization that means creating interests in their culture, it is nothing but textual and mental colonization they demolish the native culture and they imbibe their culture. Orientals are considered to be authoritative and orientals are considered to be a suppressed one. Here this paper deals with orientalist attitude of the characters who are in the position of orientals in *one flew over the cuckoo's nest*, as orientals have textual attitude towards orientals, the authorities has textual attitude towards the patients, several attitudes are discussed in this paper.

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According to *New World Encyclopedia*, Orientalism is the study of Near and Far Eastern societies and cultures, languages and peoples by Western scholars. It can also refer to the imitation or depiction of aspects of Eastern cultures in the west by writers, designers and artists. Edward Said condemns the concept of orientalism or the difference between east and west, he in his essay says that west has textual attitude towards the east and then he says that there is dissimilarity between reality and what texts says about reality, he uses the word " crisis" to describe orientalist attitude. He says that it is fallacy to assume that the swarming, unpredictable and problematic mess in which human beings live can be understood on the basis of what books –texts-- say; to apply what one learns out of a book literally to reality is to risk folly or ruin (272).

In *one flew over the cuckoo's nest* the mental patients are treated in this textual attitude nurse Ratched the head of the hospital has the textual attitude towards the patient and wants other staffs to have that attitude over the patients, and she has all the medical prescription description of the

patients they will be treated on the basis of that description on that text, they are divided as acutes chronics and vegetables, acutes are curable, chronics are incurable vegetables are locomotives because of that textual attitude. Said says that in textual attitude the fierceness of the lion will be noted not the lion so the text explains fierceness beyond the reality that is actual fierceness. In the novel *one flew over the cuckoo's nest*. If she records a patient suffers from schizophrenia he will be treated in that textual attitude, the reality of the patient is he is a human with normal feelings thought and emotions but they are depressed because of the traumatic situation that they met in their life whereas the description of the patients explains about the patient which is beyond the actual one or reality. According to Said, the text of the westerners shapes the image of the orientals, they are made as orientals, likewise the text that describe the patients shapes the image of the patients. Edward Said says that the orientals are not orientals as it is they are orientalized because of the text , likewise the patients are not mental asylums but they are made as mental asylums their thoughts, functions are perceived differently by the staffs so that they are projected differently.

Oriental peoples accept the textual attitude towards them because a lions can't speak or talk back about their fierceness which is similar to the case of mental asylums they can't speak or talk back about their description, as Gayathiri Chakravorthy Spivak alerts that subaltern can't speak they can't speak because of the textual attitude that is subalterns are not written by a subaltern but by an intellectual or an upper class writer so that they can project subalterns in their own view. Ken Kesey asks the staffs and the doctors who created the norms to distinguish sane and insane, since the characterization or the structure is human made it is unreal so the textual attitude or the description of the patients are unreal.

According to Said the orientals are something to be encountered and dealt with to a certain extent and orientalist overrode orientals (273). Because of the text of westerners the readers will have the same textual attitude and they will be eager to encounter oriental people. Said relates orientalism to colonization he says to colonize meant at first identification- indeed, the creation of interests; these could be commercial, communicational, military, religious, cultural (274). Edward Said says that it is mental colonization, orientalist will create disinterestness attitude towards their own culture, tradition religion etc in orientals in order to control them the textual attitude towards the orientals is to eradicate their identity, if identity lost definitely the lost one will come to their control so they use this attitude in order to control the orientals. It is similar in *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* Kesey says that the modern concept of madness was a cultural invention of control (10) and then he also envisioned the widespread practice of "Therapeutic Community" as a way of forcing the internal soul to fit someone else's idea of the ideal external environment and then he turns the mental ward into a symbol of the tricks of control as found in postwar American society (11) and in the novel the patients are made to confess their life mistakes so that they will be noted in a record all these are done in order to control them, and in the hospital the patients are categorized characterized based on the norms of the staffs, nurses and doctors they are compelled to fit in their ideas and norms that is ideology of mental patients and their characterization is based on staff's idea all these are done in order to have a control over them.

Textual attitude, making some sort of peoples to refuse their identity, culture, religious customs and making them to feel the western culture is the best, posing the idea about someone without knowing them which has no relation with reality and mental colonization all these paves the way to control the others because of these things one can easily have a control over the other without

making them to know that they are being controlled. Since the westerners consider themselves as they are super powers they have this type of attitude towards east.

There is the contrast between the power of the west in orientalism and Foucault's concept of power.

According to him the power is the one which constructs a society it is not the negative one but a positive disciplinary force, power produces reality and it is the major source for social discipline. In shifting attention away from the 'sovereign', Foucault points to a new kind of 'disciplinary power' that observes in administrative systems that are created in 18<sup>th</sup> century Europe, such as prisons, schools and mental hospitals Foucault says that power is the one which is used to create a structure and to manage the structure, but orientalism views power in different perspective, it says that power is what they gained themselves and to make peoples as their slaves they inject textual attitude towards the peoples, they gained power to make the peoples as their slaves or peoples become slave because of the power. Foucault wants power but orientalism rejects power.

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## Crisis in religious identity in Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*

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### Abstract

Religion is necessary for a society to preserve its culture, scientific truths are hidden in religion, most of the religious rituals are done as a culture. This paper deals on the crisis in religious identity in Okonkwo's village. Because of the oriental mindset, westerners see the native peoples as uncultured and think that it is their duty to make them cultured so that they start to educate and to preach Christianity. Before colonization the people, even though their rituals are unruly natives followed it. Colonizers preaches that native god is not a real god, okonkwo understand that it is the act of suppressing so he rebels in the favour of native god and opposes imported god.

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According to oxford dictionary Colonialism is a policy or a practice of acquiring full or partial political control over another country, occupying it with settlers and exploiting it economically and colonization is nothing but a system of power dominates the other surrounding and its component. Colonization is somehow posing an impact on the other, they will eradicate the native culture, policy, religion and identity and they will pose their identity as a real one and true so there comes identity crisis they eradicate these things in order to dominate them. Some sort of people will be looked differently because of their culture tradition hierarchy so it will become their identity, if their culture, religion, tradition is proven inhuman definitely they will question their own culture and they refuse their tradition and religion and they will follow western culture religion and tradition so their identity will be lost, the colonizers not only colonizes the peoples physically but also mentally.

This colonizing attitude can be compared to hegemony a cultural or ideological domination of he majority by minority the majority of the people are controlled by minority they may be ruling class, Antonio Gramsci says about cultural hegemony that is cultural domination by the ruling

class who influence the culture of the society so that their imposed, ruling class world view becomes the accepted cultural norm. Religion influences culture, religion is based on God and many cultural traditions are based on religion for example in Tamilnadu the culture of wearing saree culture of celebrating pongal has its influence from religion so religion forms culture and culture forms tradition, if religion is refused by the followers, it is possible to eradicate the identity of the peoples. Here in this novel crisis in religious identity can be taken in two contexts one is after Okonkwo's exile to Mbanta Christianity begins to spread in his native they say that their God is not real and their tradition is not real what they are following is not real and they asks the people to follow holy trinity, and then they begin to question that how holy trinity will accept them and in order to make the peoples to believe that holy trinity will accept, they began to eradicate their identity by giving them their education so peoples consider their religion as a false one, after the exile okonkwo considers that because of this Christianity their nativity gets exploited so that the begins to oppose Christianity and he kills a messenger of the house and then commits suicide okonkwo opposes it began he doesn't want to be dominated by the others nativity has its own originality then the accepted and the accepted gets some influence from the original so that the accepted lost its identity because of the influence of the original for example in churches the devotion given to the God has its influence from the native people, their prayer has its own identity than the original they questions the Nigerian people's religion in order to control them and according to the colonizer they have the attitude that the eastern peoples are uncultured and unreligious peoples so that they think that it is their duty to make them civilized so that they impose their religion to make them cultured.

In another context the crisis is between the identity of religion and spirituality. Religion is a way to attain God, religion should be enriched with spirituality but all the religions are not considered as religions if it lacks spirituality. Spirituality refers

to a religious process which aims to recover the original shape of man, it should make the man to search the ultimate meaning in life spirituality and religion is considered to be two sides of a coin they will go together. In the novel *Things Fall Apart* there is crisis between the religion and spirituality there is no spirituality in the religion that the peoples are following there is no culture in their culture there is inhumanness in their culture and there is no relation between the culture and religion so that there is no spirituality in religion in umuofia culture they can marry many number of women without age consideration okonkwo marries many wives so their culture does injustice to women they won't give any importance to women their culture refuses women rights so it is inhuman, then they have the habit of buying and selling peoples, Ikemefana and a virgin are brought as a to the okonkwo's town as a sold one, human selling and buying are considered to be inhuman. Ikemefana will be killed because of the blind believe that is oracle. In okonkwo's town they will follow the tradition of killing many peoples in order to survive so there are lot of inhumanness in their culture and tradition there is no spirituality in their religion so that there is the crisis between the identity of religion and spirituality emerges,

The religion of Okonkwo's village does injustice to women okonkwo doesn't consider his wives as humans he see them as a machine who makes a child eventhough there are many things to curse the religion of the town there are some things to be appreciated the one is The Week of Peace in the novel, it is nothing but a week right before the yams are planted every year. During this week, no one is allowed even to utter so much harsh words. Everyone should be completely peaceful with everyone, this is done in the honor to Goddess Earth. In the novel this promise is neglected by okonkwo as he slaps his wife. All the religions are human made but it should lead to spiritual life.

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## Social Discrimination in Arunthathi Roy's *The God of Small Things*

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Literature is an expression of the most initiate consciousness of life and society in which it grows and develops. It also expresses thoughts, feelings and emotions of people in a rational and interesting manner. As far as concern with Indian Writing in English, is a distinctive literature which has achieved a new range and power in contemporary literature. Indian English Literature has witnessed socio-cultural, economic and political changes in the life of the nation. The growth and the development of Indian Novels in English occupy the most significant position during 1980s and 1990s. In this period, the policy of liberation started and social issues are discussed frankly. Especially, the idea of women's liberation centers on the immanence of women in society.

The work of Indian women writers is significant in making society aware of woman's demands, and in providing a medium for self-expression and, thus, re-writing the history of India. Women novelists have arrived on the literary scenes, they have set out making new forays into the world of women. Writers like Kamala Markandaya, Nayantara Sahgal, Anita Desai, Kamala Das, Bharati Mukherjee, Meena Alexander, Shashi Deshpande, Kiran Desai, Jhumpa Lahiri, Anita Nair and Arundhati Roy are writing with a new zeal and confidence, blending social aspects and phenomenal situations in their literary works.

Minority literature is known as a literature of protest against cultural and social category. Minority literature is pitted against the mainstream literature which has a long history while minority literature is a recent offshoot. Thus, Homi, K. Bhabha observed (Location 2). In his view:

The social articulation of difference from minority perspective is a complex ongoing negotiation that seeks to authorize cultural hybridities that emerge in moments of historical transformation. The right to signify from the periphery of authorized power and privilege does not depend on the persistence of tradition to be

reinscribed through the condition of contingency and contradictoriness that attend upon the lives of those who are in the minority; realign the customary boundaries between the private and the public, the high and low and challenge nominative expectations of development and progress. (Location 2)

The word, 'caste' is derived from the Portuguese word "casta" which means pure and unadulterated (sharing a Latin root, with the word 'chaste'). The caste system in India is an important part of ancient Hindu tradition and dates back to 1200 BCE. These different castes fall under four basic varnas: Brahmins-priests, Kshatriyas-warriors, Vaishyas-traders and Shudras-laborers. Today there are about 250 million Untouchables. Although the Government has banned the Caste discrimination since 1950, but prejudice continues. Arundhati Roy discusses this caste discrimination in her novel *The God of Small Things* (1997).

Arundhati Roy, an Indian author, actress, and political activist and known for her best known for the award-winning novel *The God of Small Things* (1997). In her novel, *God of Small Things* she talks about the predicament of the most suppressed sections of her community, the dalit, women and children. She is appalled at the barbarous treatment meted out to the lower section of the society, even in this postcolonial age.

The story *The God of Small Things* is set in the caste society of India, at a time when members of the Untouchable Paravan or Paryan caste were not permitted to touch members of higher castes or enter their houses. The Untouchables were considered polluted beings. They had the lowliest jobs and lived in subhuman conditions. In India, the caste system was considered a way to organize society. Along with the caste system, economic class struggle also discussed. The Ipes were considered upper class. They were factory owners, the dominating class. Mammachi and Baby Kochamma would not deign to mix with those of a lower class. History is the

reason of all sufferings, agony and havoc in *The God of Small Things*. Velutha and Ammu are the victims of age-long disgusting customs and discrimination in the social history of India. Indian Society has seen the evils of caste-system and gender-discrimination from the distant past to the recent times.

Veena Shaukla writes about the characters in *The God of Small Things* as:

The characters in this novel are caught up in a complex web of actions that take place in their lives, and affect each other in one way or the other. Most of the human drama takes place in the novel in the context of the division of India through caste and class. Throughout the novel, we witness it is the one occupying the upper position in the domestic and the social hierarchy, which emerges as a winner. (965)

Estha, (short for Esthappen Yako) is Rahel's twin brother. He is a serious, intelligent, and somewhat nervous child. He wears beige and pointy shoes and has an Elvis puff. His experience of the circumstances surrounding Sophie's visit is somewhat more traumatic than Rahel's, beginning when he is sexually abused by a man at a theater. Roy emphasizes that Estha's two thought in the pickle factory, stemming from this experience.

Estha is the twin chosen by Baby Kochamma, because he is more practical and responsible person to go into Velutha's cell at the end of the book and condemn him as his and Rahel's abductor. This trauma, in addition to the trauma of being shipped (or "Returned") to Calcutta to live with his father, contributes to Estha's becoming mute at some point in his childhood. He never goes to college and acquires a number of habits, such as wandering on very long walks and obsessively cleaning his clothes. He is so close to his sister that the narrator describes them as one person, despite having been separated for most of their lives. He is repeatedly referred to as Silent.

Rahel is the partial narrator of the story, and is Estha's younger sister by 18 minutes. As a girl of seven, her hair sits on top of her head like a fountain in a Love-in-Tokyo band, and she often wears red-tinted plastic sunglasses with yellow rims. An intelligent and straightforward person who has never felt socially comfortable, she is impulsive and wild, and it is implied that everyone but Velutha treats her as somehow lesser than her brother. In later life, she becomes something of a drifter; several times, the narrator refers to her Emptiness. After the tragedy that forms the core of the story, she remains with her mother, later training as an architectural draftsman and engaging in a failed relationship with a European, elements of which parallel the author's own life story.

Arundhati Roy is known to all not only for her new and original style, but also for her thought provoking attitude regarding social discrimination. The writer deals with the caste problem especially faced by the untouchable in an educated society. The theme of social discrimination in *The God of Small Things* is confrontation between class antagonism and class exploitation. Thus, Arundhati Roy exposes the tyranny injustice against women, child abuse caste system and caste ridden social structure through her novel, *The God of Small Things*. The analysis of elements based on social discrimination in India through the work of Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things* pasteurizes the pathetic conditions of the untouchables who are different in birth and cast.

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## Religious Identity and Sufferings of the People in Rohinton Mistry's *A Fine Balance*.

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### Abstract

Since 1975, Rohinton Mistry is an Indian born writer of Parsi descent, living in Canada. Rohinton Mistry's novels reflect interest in the importance of Religious Identities, Sufferings of the People and The State Emergency. The Religious Identities and sufferings of the people helped him to create a sense of loss. He recognizes the consequence of religion and rite in the construction of human identity. The novels, *A Fine Balance* throw light on the dwindling Parsi community in India to which Mistry himself belongs and is well informed of their lifestyles, and sufferings of the people. *A Fine Balance* focuses on the deep structure of the individual's existences of human life. *A Fine Balance* is taken up for analyzing the human sufferings in which Rohinton Mistry ultimately gives a space of endless sufferings of the individuals. *A Fine Balance* is a richly woven novel interweaving the slums of Bombay with the middle-class Parsi lifestyle. Dina, the protagonist, fights for her independence and individuality but she faces the continuous failures and threats by the society. Finally she loses her flat and forced to go to her brother's home as a servant. The novel also illustrates the deeper insight of political, nativity and struggle of suffering people.

**Keywords:** Religious Identity, Sufferings of the People, the State of Emergency

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Rohinton Mistry was born on 3 July 1952 in Mumbai. He completed his BA in Mathematics and Economics from St. Xavier's College, Mumbai. In 1975, he immigrated to Canada and earned a degree in English and Philosophy from the University of Toronto in 1984. Mistry worked as an accountant in a bank for a brief while before pursuing a full time career as a writer. He is a member of the Parsi community and almost all of his fictional works focus on the lives of people from this community. He left Mumbai at the young

age of 23. Most of his works are based in the metropolis, which is recreated partly from memory and partly from imagination. He is preoccupied with the predicament of the Parsi Community. Mistry has often been recognized as a pioneer of the Parsi English novel. In attending the University of Toronto, he won two literary prizes for stories which were published in the *Hart House Review*, and the Canadian fiction magazine's annual contributor's for 1995. Three years after he published his collection of eleven short stories, *Tales From Firozsha Baag*. It was published later, in the US as *Swimming Lessons And Other Stories From Firozsha Baag*. All the eleven stories are set within one apartment complex in modern day Mumbai.

The novel *Such A Long Journey* is his second book and published in 1991. It won the Governor General's Award, the Common Wealth Writers Prize for Best Book, and it was adapted for the 1998 film *Such A Long Journey*. His second novel, and third book *A Fine Balance* (1995), won the annual Giller Prize in 1995. *Family Matters* is a consideration of the difficulties that come with ageing, which returned to in 2008 with the short fiction *The Scream*. This was followed by the publication of *A Fine Balance* in 1995. As opposed to his earlier works, this novel broadens its horizons by including members of different communities as characters. Mistry acknowledges the same in an interview when he says that I made a conscious decision in this book to include more than the Parsi community, mainly because in India seventy five percent of Indians live in villages and I wanted to embrace the social reality of India.

The novel traces the lives of three sets of characters, Dina Dalal and her family, Ishvar and Omprakash who are tailors by profession, and Maneck Kohlah, a student in Bombay who later. His books portray diverse facets of Indian Socio Economic Life as well as Parsi Zoroastrian Life, Customs, and Religion. Many of his writings are markedly "Indo-Nostalgic". His literary papers

are housed at the Clara Thomas Archives at York University.

Globalization intruded into the foothills of Himalaya leading to ecological and economical imbalance. Maneck's very loss is a loss for the Indian middle class, whose morality, hopes and desires he embodies. Before his suicide Maneck learns about the death of his only friend Avinash who is tortured to death by the police for his Anti-Emergency and Anti-Indira speeches. Emergency ensured that the common man was stripped of civil liberties and fundamental rights. The police had become an ally in the Government's depressing record of human rights abuse. Avinash was the only hope to his family, his death resulted in the suicide of his three sisters who saved their father, a retired government employee from financial hardship of giving dowry to get his three daughters' married. The dreams of Ishvar, Om, Dina and Maneck are thwarted by external agencies and political changes. The Parsis and the other minorities underwent inhuman attacks on their identity and physical self leaving them numb and paralyzed. The atmosphere is far more pessimistic and there is little hope for the individual to effectively and positively carve out a personal destiny in the face of political revenge, violence and caste-class divide.

Despite all the hue and cry in the Indian political system about federalism and democracy, the lower middle-class and the poor are always at the receiving end of power politics and economic domination, leaving them victims of oppression and neglect. To the subaltern, "*Living each day is to face one emergency or another*" (AFB 571). The economically upper class people did not understand the sufferings of the poor, to them the Prime Minister was a "visionary leader" and the Emergency "*A true spirit of Renaissance*" (AFB 371). Mrs. Gupta, the proprietor of Au Revoir Exports and Nusswan, Dina Dalal's brother, echo the capitalist attitude. Mrs. Gupta flourished during the State of Emergency paying low wages to employees as there was no fear of union leaders and strikes.

Ishvar and Om were quite forcibly taken to one such work camp where they are forced to undergo sterilization. In the aftermath, Ishvar develops infection and one of his legs is amputated, making it impossible for him to practice tailoring and earn his livelihood. Om who is a youth in his

prime waiting to be married is also sterilized under the orders of the village Zamindar, Thakur Dharamsi. The needless arrogance of the upper class to maintain social supremacy led to the consolidation and Emergence of the Dalit consciousness in the Indian politics. Despite the new laws regarding untouchability, exploitation of the lower castes by the Upper castes continues. Through Thakur Dharamsi, Mistry reveals the silenced histories and suppressed voices in centuries of violence and domination characterized by the Indian political and caste system. Mistry emphasizes the fact it is too difficult to fight against the deep-rooted caste system in India.

After the death of her husband Rustom Dalal, Dina Dalal tried to live a decent and independent life through her tailoring business. She hired Ishvar and Om to work for her and also partially rented her apartment to Maneck Kohlah who stayed there as a paying guest. Because of Ishvar and Om's disability, Dina is forced to close her sewing business. Bankruptcy forced Dina to undergo the worst she feared, she lost her independence and was forced to live with her brother, Nusswan, who treated her like a maid. In the very beginning Ishvar asks,

"Dinabai, what is this Emergency we hear about?"

"Government problems – games played by people in power.

*It doesn't affect ordinary people like us". (AFB 75)*

But the irony is that Emergency intrudes only into the lives of ordinary people. Emergency has an overpowering presence in the novel. It was studded with forced sterilizations, city embellishment programmes, media censorship as well as imprisonment of anyone through MISA (Maintenance of Internal Security Act). *A Fine Balance* concentrates on the terror and trauma that the ordinary common man experienced. The fate of the marginalized and the dispossessed who find themselves at the mercy of the Brahminical and pseudo-secular elites shaping India is explored through the traumatic experience of the chamaars-turned-tailors, Ishvar and Omprakash. Dukhi, the father of Ishvar and Narayan sends them to be apprenticed as tailors under his friend, Ashraf, a Muslim tailor. Dukhi's daring to divert his sons to a different job becomes the talk of the town and he in turn earns the wrath of the so called caste Hindus.

“Indeed was courageous, considering that the prime of his own life has been spent inobedient compliance with the traditions of caste system. Like his forefathers before him, he had accepted from childhood the occupation preordained for his present incarnation” (AFB109).

Through the healthy relationship between Dukhi and Ashraf and the unhealthy bondage between the subaltern chamaars represented by Dukhi and the high caste chaste Hindu, Thakur Dharamsi, Mistry drives home the fact that ideal human relationship should be above all the concept of caste, creed and colour. When Narayan returned to the village to cast his vote, Thakur Dharamsi, the Zamindar felt infuriated. Thakur’s men beat Narayan and his friends to death and in due course the entire family was burnt alive. The subalterns succumb to the arrogance of Thakur Dharamsi who strongly believed that crossing the line of caste was a serious offence and that such people should be stringently punished. Even police do not file an F.I.R calling Ishvar and Om, “*Filthy achool castes*” (AFB 172).

The adverse effect of Emergency was experienced by Ishvar and Om who fell prey to almost all the aspects of Emergency and were reduced to beggary. During Emergency, in the name of beautification people were left, immobile and rootless. The slogan, “*The Nation is on the move*” (AFB 303). It seemed quite ironical because instead of advancement and prosperity all the characters experienced destruction and identity

crisis. The process of beautification introduced slum clearance and sterilization. People were forcefully evicted from the hamlets they lived in and moved to work camps where the living conditions were almost unbearable and deplorable.

Mistry assimilates national politics with the main plot of his narrative which is the fate of the subaltern and the minority in the pre and post independent era. *A Fine Balance* provides a scathing indictment on the power of the elite and the moneyed in which the marginalized and the powerless had no role to play. Most of the marginalized succumbed to the pressure. The society presented by Mistry is not an idealized society. Superstition and violence are rampant. It is also the site of the repetition of caste-based brutality. The lower castes are beaten to, tortured and killed for trivial reasons. The minorities in India do not look for scaling the skies or economic up gradation but for equality, justice, satisfactory basic needs and coexistence.

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## The Unheard Melody of Postmodern Women of Anita Desai

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### Abstract

Moral relativism doesn't have a single true morality. There are a variety of moral possibilities. to understand this there needs to have a clarification what morality is. According to oxford dictionary morality is principles concerning the distinctions between right and wrong or good and bad. As it goes in such definition now there needs a clear-cut idea about good and bad or right and wrong. Again good or right are principles of deeds. The setters of these principles are our pioneers (belonging to old period). This postmodern era argues good for someone may not be good for another. Likewise, bad for someone may not be bad for another. So, moral relativism in this perspective is a term which specifies these distinctions.

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Moral relativism doesn't have a single true morality. There are a variety of moral possibilities. to understand this there needs to have a clarification what morality is. According to oxford dictionary morality is principles concerning the distinctions between right and wrong or good and bad. As it goes in such definition now there needs a clear-cut idea about good and bad or right and wrong. Again good or right are principles of deeds. The setters of these principles are our pioneers (belonging to old period). This post modern era argues good for someone may not be good for another. Likewise, bad for someone may not be bad for another. So, moral relativism in this perspective is a term which specifies these distinctions.

Moral relativism is a postmodern term which means each and every human being has his own yard stick for his morality. For instance two men are given a cup of coffee which is prepared by a single cook and are asked to taste it. After they tasted the coffee they are asked feedback of the coffee. Now the feedback of one of them was positive that is the coffee is great but the other said coffee is bad both of them gives the reason that the coffee contains too much sugar which means one of them likes much sugar and the other dislikes it.

So that the taste of every individual differs as well the more of each individual differs. This is what called moral relativism.

Moral relativism is very much available in Anita Desai's female protagonists. All her female protagonists of the early novels can be put in to a single umbrella MORAL RELATIVISM. Maya a hyper sensitive woman being father obsessed has been living in the world of fantasy. Rejecting realities she has been enjoying air castle's air-conditioning. Maya is not even considering her husband as a living creature. She is not aware of the present situation because of her fantasy. She is expecting a lot from her husband Gowtham and is not ready to change herself for him. If her expectation on him is right then she should also try to change herself. It is the postmodern right of Maya to have her own whims and fancies to revolve round her world of imagination. And she expects it with ease to make it happen in her real life.

Another fine example for her moral relativism is the obsession of death. After the death of her pet dog Toto she takes bath in the tub of sadness and is not ready to come out of that tub as it comforts her. She suffers from Freud's emptiness she pines to be sad and finds fault with Gauthama. Ofcourse death of a pet dog is something to suffer with but not that much a thing as she exaggerates. The license of moral relativism gives courage to Maya to think in that way, that it seems exaggerated to us but to Maya herself it is her idea of living. To her point of view it is normal to behave in such a way. She paints her life with a brush moral relativism with the paint postmodernism. Maya lives in a fantasy world which is created by her own self. She wants Gowtham to enact in her direction without realizing he is also a director and he also has his own film to direct. The death of her dog Toto almost made her an insane. She gazes at the corpse of the dog sits there till Gowthama comes home. when he finished all the cremation work she looks at him with astonishment. When he asks for tea ...

“I sent it away to be cremated, he said. It is all over. Come, won't you pour out my tea?”

“Tea?” she cried

She can't come to reality she still was there with her world of fantasy. Maya lives in the world of fantasy accompanied by moral relativism. She has her own question that why doesn't Gowthama understand her feelings and thoughts. Further her voiceless voice doesn't penetrate into the ears of Gowthama. Maya now is in a condition of dilemma whether to pine for the dead pet Toto or to feel for the ignorance of her husband. Maya shows a lot of agony and feels a sort of absurdity which leads her to murder her husband. She feels the murder is the right of herself as her husband doesn't cop up with her whims and fancies. It is the post modern right to believe that her husband should be the doll of herself.

Nandakaul of fire on the Mountain is yet another character who wants to live in a world which is her passion. She gets tired to serve her family. She wants to desert herself from her family and decided to live in a place where she would be peaceful. She feels a passion of a mother as a duty. She suffers a lot to be a mother, to be a wife. She hates her relationship with human beings and wants to go to a faraway place Kasuali. The world exists still because of the existence of love but Nandakaul rejects love, passion and motherhood. She wants to enjoy nature forgetting the beauty in motherhood she tries to seek happiness somewhere. She draws a picture in her mind and decides the only happy in the world is to imagine the picture and she wants to live like the picture she drew. Hence an aroma of postmodernism that is moral relativism is very much available in her character. She rejects the traditional value of the mother's martyrdom.

Enjoying mother hood is a passion a value and what not but Nandakaul without thinking these spiritual values wants to live in a world of fantasy. She doesn't even want to mingle with the society. She tries to overcome the social bond of human being. She suffers even to manage with her own granddaughter Raka. “She ignored her so calmly so totally that it made Nandakaul breathless”. Nandakaul suffers a lot to accept raka because of her detachment. She even feels happy when Raka doesn't disturb her. This eccentric nature of Nandakaul shows her a staunch postmodernist who sings within her psyche.

Our democratic system is running in this perspective .imagine that a candidate in an election is selected with a majority of votes. This majority doesn't mean that the candidate is the right person for the post. It is all about the moral relativism of the select people who believes that the candidate suits for the post. People with certain mentality think the particular candidate who is going to be the leader of the people is the apt personality to lead them. Further it is their lawful right to choose their own leader( even he is not suitable) . According to Moral relativism the idea of an individual is important than that of the idea of the society. So that in the election it is not the majority of the individual thinking wins rather than the thinking of the society.

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## Religious and Mythological Identities in Githa Hariharan's *The Thousand Faces of Night*

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### Abstract

Myth and literature are entangled with each other and reflect in our course of arduous life. Mythological references become the part and parcel of contemporary literature. In Indian Literature, myth has a prominent role and it reflects the life of human beings through the legendary characters. *The Thousand Faces of Night* had been analyzed in various perspectives which consist of mythological allusions, feminist view points and postmodern thinking. Through the review of myth in this novel, many old stories are retold in different ways and aspects. Githa Hariharan's debut novel *The Thousand Faces of Night* won the Commonwealth Writers' Prize for best first book (1993) evokes such a response. It is the insightful account of women struggling to survive in the world of crushed dreams. Githa Hariharan laces mythological allusions from *Mahabharata* to dismantle the harsh realities of women's lives. They seem to suggest that though dreams are thwarters, a woman can, if she wills, dispel the dismal darkness from the thousand faces of night

**Keywords:** Mythological, allusions, feminist, dismantle and realities.

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Myth reflects human existence and determines the propose which a man should possess. In ancient days, myth belongs to oral tradition- in the form of stories. Now it becomes a common phenomenon. Myth and literature are entangled with each other and reflect in our course of arduous life. Mythological references become the part and parcel of contemporary literature. In Indian Literature, myth has a prominent role and it reflects the life of human beings through the legendary characters.

Githa Hariharan (born in 1954) is considered as a Postmodern Feminist writer. Most of her works are analyzed from a feminist point of view. She belongs to Coimbatore in the state Tamil

Nadu. She grew up in Manila and Bombay then studied English literature at Bombay University, where she extended B.A. in 1974. She then continued her studies at Fairfield University in Connecticut in the USA, where she gained M.A. in communications.

Githa Hariharan's circulated work includes novels, short stories, essays, newspaper articles and columns. Her first novel, *The Thousand Faces of Night* (1992) Her other novels include *The Ghosts of Vasu Master* (1994), *When Dreams Travel* (1999), *In Times of Siege* (2003), and *Fugitive Histories* (2009). A collection of highly commended short stories, *The Art of Dying*, was published in 1993, and a book of stories for children, *The Winning Team*, in 2004. She edited a volume of stories in English translation from four major South Indian languages, *A Southern Harvest* (1993); and co-edited a collection of stories for children, *Sorry, Best Friend!* (1997). *The Thousand Faces of Night* had been analyzed in numerous perspectives which consist of mythological allusions, feminist view points and postmodern thinking. Through the review of myth in this novel, many old stories are retold in different ways and aspects.

Githa Hariharan's debut novel *The Thousand Faces of Night* won the Commonwealth Writers' Prize for best first book (1993) evokes such a response. It is the insightful account of women struggling to survive in the world of crushed dreams. Devi, the protagonist of the novel, returns from USA only to fall prey to the chafing pressure imposed upon her by the old existing order. She returns to Madras with the aim of live with her widowed mother Sita who nurtures the dream of happy conventional marriage for her daughter. But it turns out to be a disaster for Devi. Devi accepts the proposal of Mahesh, a regional manager in multinational company. Devi's perspective regarding marriage emerges through the stories of myth (especially the life of women in Indian myth) that were brilliantly narrated by her grandmother.

But in reality, her dreams and expectations are not satisfied in her nuptial life. All the women characters found in that novel go through many hardships in their lives. The life of Devi is a voyage of her inner self. Her longing for self identity and dignity revolve by deciding to come back to her mother to begin her life anew.

The patriarchal Indian civilization suppresses women with its traditional and cultural norms. The role of women has two different contradicting aspects in our society. Women are worshipped as deities like Lakshmi, Saraswathi, Devi and the like. On the other hand, they are treated like a servant in the home and responsible for all the household works. They are dishonored even to the extent of a carpet in their own "homes". *The Thousand Faces of Night* articulates the problems of women with the help of Indian Mythology. It sinks together the various vicissitudes faced by women of the puranas. The alluring title of this novel clearly and also strongly shows with evidence the lives of different female characters where self- abnegation is involved. Commenting on the theme and structure of this novel, Vijayasree writes: a remarkable rendering of the collective struggle of women for self- liberation through the author's play with narrative structures – framing texts within texts, with text overlapping in curious ways, her carnivalesque accumulation of intertexts ranging from the tales from the Mahabharata to folk stories and her deft interweaving of these with the lives of real women. (1990:177)

Devi, the protagonist heard the stories from her grandmother through which she got enthused and tries to imitate them with her own life. Grandmother's stories are allusions to Gods, Goddesses, superhuman warriors, brave princes, beautiful and virtuous princesses, men and women destined to lead heroic lives. Her grandmother indirectly narrates and interlinks the story for the problem of each character. Devi's mother wants her daughter to get married. Devi's mind is packed with illusions regarding marriage which could be emerged through the stories of her grandmother. She thinks about Damayanti's swayamvara (the beautiful daughter of king Bhima who had the courteous marriage) and pines cherishing hopes on her marriage. She thought that her marriage also would place in a grand splendor. She chose Mahesh, a regional manager in a multinational

company. Later, her marriage leads her towards many hardships like Damayanti's life.

Devi sees her mother's old photos. In those photos she could find her mother having a veena in her hand. Devi enquires about that to her grandmother. She comes to know that of the talent extraordinary of her mother. After her marriage, Sita sacrifices her art of veena, in order to be a good daughter in law. Devi associates her mother's sacrifice with Gandhari's sacrifice. Gandhari is the daughter of Subala (the king of Ghandhara). Gandhari is considered as the incarnation of Mati (the Goddesses of intelligence). Gandhari got married with Dhritrashtra who was born blind. When she comes to know about the dreadful truth she decided to share the pain of her husband. So, Gandhari voluntarily blindfolded herself throughout her post married life. She does not want to see the world which her husband could not see. Thus, the grandmother mentions:

Gandhari was not just willful, proud woman. She embraced her destiny- a blind husband- with a self sacrifice worthy of her royal blood (13)

Devi's cousin Uma got married to a wealthy man. Life moves efficiently for few months. But, later she found the real faces of her husband and father - in - law. Both are captivated to liquor, get drunk and abuse and torture her. She could not tolerate and returns back to her grandmother's home. Uma's terrible marriage was linked with how even Amba, a high born prince becomes a 'victim of disaster'. Prince Bheesma goes to a swayamvara of three beautiful princesses: Amba, Ambika and Ambalika, the daughters of king of Kashi. Amba, the eldest princess chose king Salwa and ornamented him. But suddenly Bheesma kidnapped all the three princesses and took them to his step-mother. When they came to know that Amba had already married, they let her go to Salwa. Salwa also rejected her. Amba felt that she was abducted by Bhishma and wanted to take vengeance on him.

Devi acquaintances the mythology with her life incidents only to find that the characters are changed but the predicament is same. Sita's submissive characteristics can be easily compared with Gandhari's story in Mahabharata. Both are symbol of pride and self-denial. Devi learns from Amba's story "A woman fights her battle alone" and applies this strategy for herself. Thus, these

mythological stories express the bitter truth of unchangeable fate of women, during the past as well as in the present. The revision of myth through grandmother's stories transforms her stoically. Githa Hariharan laces mythological allusions from *Mahabharata* to dismantle the harsh realities of women's lives. They seem to suggest that though dreams are thwarters, a woman can, if she wills, dispel the dismal darkness from the thousand faces of night.

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## An Analysis of Social Exclusion in the select plays of Mahesh Dattani.

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### Abstract

Social exclusion is a worldwide phenomenon. In a multilingual and multicultural country like India, it is a major problem that threatens the Indian society. Factors like caste, religion, community and gender are raised in social exclusion. But social exclusion emerged in the last quarter of the twentieth century, though the Indian society witnessed this right from time immemorial when it was divided on the basis of caste. Neuter sexuality, gay relationship and disease with social stigma like AIDS cause social exclusion in our country. This is a cause for concern in the contemporary society. Dattani depicts these themes in some of his plays like *On a Muggy Night in Mumbai, Do the Needful* and *EK Alag Mause, Mango Souffle* and *Seven Steps Around the Fire*. Heterosexuality sees itself as the authentic form of sexuality by relegating lesbianism and homosexuality to the background and discarding them as inauthentic. If heterosexuality to the background and discarding them as inauthentic. One can be either a heterosexual or homosexual and even both at the same time. Hijras, homosexuals and Aids patients, who suffer from social exclusion in our time, attract Dattani's attention. He portrays them sympathetically in his plays hoping for their inclusion into our society. There are hints and guesses in his plays which whisper results.

**Keywords:** exclusion, multilingual, sexuality, homosexual, hijras, heterosexuality.

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Social exclusion is a worldwide phenomenon. In a multilingual and multicultural country like India, it is a major problem that threatens the Indian society. Factors like caste, religion, community and gender are raised in social exclusion. But social exclusion emerged in the last quarter of the twentieth century, though the Indian society witnessed this right from time immemorial when it was divided on the basis of caste. The

upper caste hegemony was instrumental in causing the exclusion of the lower caste people from the rank of the society.

Mahesh Dattani, the most significant Indian English playwright deals with the theme of social exclusion in his plays not on the basis of caste but gender. He deals with the discriminations against people in our society on the basis of religion, class, gender and sexuality with insight and empathy. How gender relationship based on sexuality causes social exclusion becomes a prime concern for Dattani in majority of his plays. This paper focuses on some of Dattani's plays like *On a Muggy Night in Mumbai, Do the Needful* and *EK Alag Mause, Mango Souffle*, calls for a radical reformation and a change of heart leading to individual as well as social transformation.

Neuter sexuality, gay relationship and disease with social stigma like AIDS cause social exclusion in our country. This is a cause for concern in the contemporary society. Dattani depicts these themes in some of his plays like *On a Muggy Night in Mumbai, Do the Needful* and *EK Alag Mause, Mango Souffle* and *Seven Steps Around the Fire*.

*On a Muggy Night in Mumbai* is Dattani's second and best loved play performed both at home and abroad. It deals with gay personalities. Despite its offbeat subject (gay love), the play manages to convincingly show its moorings in family relationships within its chosen milieu. This play is a celebration of gay life, but it also deals with the middle class Virtues of the family. The various shades of gay are also catalogued dexterously. The play begins with a conversation between Kamlesh and the guard in Hindi Dattani without translating their conversation into English takes recourse to transliteration. Kamlesh orders refreshments for his friends and asks the guards to make necessary arrangements. Later on Ed and Kiran came and began to chat. Since they are engaged, Ed assures his fiance with soothing words, *'Relax, I can take care for you'*.

Then came Sharad, he began to chat with Kamlesh had homosexual relationship. Again Kamlesh had homosexual relationship with Prakash, who is none other than Ed.

Since same-sex love is unusual in Indian context, one can't help asking searching questions. One, is this play a true reflection of human behavior in terms of same-sex relationship? Two, can 'gay themes of love' be a fit subject of contemporary drama? Dattani in course of his introduction to *collected plays (2000)* claims that his plays are the true reflection of the contemporary society. He opines that same-sex love is as natural as heterosexual love.

This view finds support in the following observations of *John Mackae* with reference to the play, *On a Muggy Night in Mumbai*. And the themes *On a Muggy Night* deserve to touch the whole of society and to be touched by it. It is not simply the first play in Indian theatre to handle openly gay themes of love, partnership, trust and betrayal. It is a play about how society creates patterns of behaviour and how easy it is for individual to fall victim to the expectations society creates.

Characters like Sharad, Deepak, Kamlesh Ed and Bunny are all gay personalities. Kamlesh has homosexual relationship with Sharad and Ed who is betrothed to his sister Kiran. In the end the truth is revealed and Ed and Kiran's engagement to broken off. Each character in the play finally goes in search of his/her own identity and seeks to know what he/she has achieved or failed to achieve in life. Finally, Sharad speaking of himself, in a way sums up the feelings of all the characters in the following words:

I ask myself what I have got  
And what I am and what I'm not.....

(CP III)

In this play, Dattani examines the psychology of persons who are by nature 'gays' or 'bi-sexuals' and the desire on the part of some of them to turn heterosexual. This is an unusual theme in the Indian context. But in real life such characters do exist. Hence, Dattani has re-created the characters in their own situations. The question that puzzles the mind is "What makes A Man A Man" (CP III).

Like the hijras, the gay and lesbian personalities suffer from exclusion in the Indian context. They are looked down upon by the society.

Interestingly, gay literature seems to have been beleaguered by unhappy endings. Homosexuals invariably move towards death, isolation or a sham heterosexual marriage of the kind Ed and Kiran are heading towards. But *Muggy Night* ends on an upbeat, significantly luminous note.

A number of questions are thrown up *On a Muggy Night in Mumbai* lifts the veil of secrecy that shrouds the marginalized cultures, sexualities and lifestyles. Can homosexuality change to heterosexuality? Is homosexuality an unnatural abreaction of human society at all? Or is Dattani himself substituting one sexual stereotype with another? What, for example, happens to bisexuals? *On a Muggy Night in Mumbai* attempts to pose these questions, knowing that final answers are hardly possible.

The play is the first in Indian theater to openly handle gay themes of love, affiliation, trust and betrayal, raising serious closet issues that remain generally invisible. The primary audience comprised both gay and straight people mostly middle class.

Dattani obviously seems to have a point to make to his audience. But rather than directly preach, the playwright dramatizes and peoples the performance stage with characters one being to identify with, facing genuine, real life problems.

The play does not altogether eliminate heterosexuality exploring various other aspects of sexuality as it tries to find a voice that will find empathy and resonance with a given audience. *Muggy Night* even dares to lift the façade of sexlessness from male-male intimacy, dealing openly with homosexuality.

*Do the Needful* is built on the theme of 'gay' relationship and as a result the marital relationship is given a new twist to suit both the wife and the husband. This story through appears to be comical reminds us the abnormal behavior of a young couple who are willing to pursue their pleasures independently outside marriage.

Responding to a matrimonial advertisement, Mr. Chandrakant Patel and his wife come to Bangalore to see Latagowda, the daughter

of Devraj Gowda and Prema Gowda for marriage to the son, Alpesh. The Gowdas are desperate to marry their daughter at the earliest. This is evident from their following conversations.

Prema Gowda: Do you think it will work with these patel people?

Devaraj Gowda: Who knows?

Prema Gowda: They seem desperate

Devaraj Gowda: We are desperate

Prema Gowda: He is thirty-plus and divorced

Devaraj Gowda: She is twenty four and notorious.

Since it will be an inter-marriage, the mother worried. And moreover, Alpesh is a divorcee. Devaraj knows the nature of his daughter and therefore, wants her to get married the sooner the better. The conversations between Patils and Gowdas reveal a good deal of things about the society in the present context.

Though Alpesh and Lata got married at the instance of their families, they never consummated their marriage. Lata is involved with a terrorist, Salim and Alpesh has homosexual relationship with Trilok. The title, "Do the Needful" is bionical in the context. That Alpesh and Lata managed to go in their own way not withstanding their marriage proves the point.

Whereas in a play like Muggy Night, Dattani takes on a more radical stance in dealing with the sexuality as a given, rejecting hypovisy and sham, while in 'Do the Needful' it is suggested as the answer to maintain peace and status quo. The compromise that Lata and Alpesh make in marriage is however, a clever and conscious choice, almost tailored to suit both the characters as well as the larger milieu, indeed a 'forced harmony' as Dattani would put it. The crux of the solution also suggests that the spaces between two marginalized groups are now truly shared. The forced harmony has actually brought in a sense of liberation, not guilt.

Dattani wrote "Do the Needful" when commissioned by the BBC to write a 'romantic

comedy', and a comedy it certainly is, with no overtone of morality or shame – merely a sense of glee at having achieved one's purpose that typifies the genre. At the same time Dattani manages to enmesh the dominant issues of homosexuality and gender, arriving at an ingenuous solution that finds liberation in the teaming up to two subversives with different agendas against the hegemony of a common oppressor – the family/society.

Dattani portrays sexuality as an important category of analysis of literary texts next to race, gender and class. Judith Butter, the author of 'Bodies that matter (1993), questions fixed identities like heterosexuals, homosexuals and lesbians. All our identities come from differentiations from other identities. Paradoxically, identities are repetitions based on performances. It is this senses that heterosexuality which takes itself as the only authentic form of sexuality is 'a string of performances'. Heterosexuality sees itself as the authentic form of sexuality by relegating lesbianism and homosexuality to the background and discarding them as inauthentic. If heterosexuality to the background and discarding them as inauthentic. If heterosexuality is the center, other sexualities are the margins queer theorists now say that like gender, sexuality is a social construct. One can be either a heterosexual or homosexual and even both at the same time. What Dattani says is that it is homosexuality which causes to social exclusion. Hijras, homosexuals and Aids patients, who suffer from social exclusion in our time, attract Dattani's attention. He portrays them sympathetically in his plays hoping for their inclusion into our society. There are hints and guesses in his plays which whisper results.

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## Acquaintance of Women between Myth and Reality: An Analysis of Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's *The Mistress of Spices*

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### Abstract

The presence of myth in Indian novel writing is nothing new and while works be plentiful in examples of using cosmological concepts, mythological stories as parallels or allegories, or just simple images. Writers of Indian origin living abroad like Salman Rushdie, Amita Ghosh, Anita Desai, Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni to name a few have explored these concepts and it is true that with Rushdie arrives an awareness of other religious systems interacting with Hinduism or Islam and questioning of the self's own religious tradition. In Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's *The Mistress Of Spices*, the imagery of water and sun or fire, each develops the theme which reaches beyond the frame of the woman's condition when approaching it, as will be shown, in a different manner. Divakaruni uses imagery of water as a medium through which the characters attain the transformation of their identity. In the Hindu cosmology water is primordial for the coming of the universe into existence, with all its particles, including human beings, and for birth and rebirth. Fire and Water both associated with destruction and sacrifice. Realizing the loss of her youth on meeting Raven and the bougainvillea girls, Tilo undergoes an acute sense of despair and yearns to become youthful by using the spices personally. It is inherent in the human nature, perhaps a biological fact, that the sensual things and worldly joy attract Tilo and also give a new meaning to her lonely life.

**Keywords:** cosmological, bougainvillea, destruction, existence and tradition.

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“When I was a child in India, my grandfather would tell me stories from the *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*, the ancient Indian epics, imaginative roots are in India, and always will be.”

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni.

The presence of myth in Indian novel writing is nothing new and while works be plentiful in examples of using cosmological concepts, mythological stories as parallels or allegories, or just simple images. Writers of Indian origin living abroad like Salman Rushdie, Amita Ghosh, Anita Desai, Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni to name a few have explored these concepts and it is true that with Rushdie arrives an awareness of other religious systems interacting with Hinduism or Islam and questioning of the self's own religious tradition

First, a new tendency in the treatment of myth, more precisely, Hindu cosmological imagery appears with regard to the treatment of the women's question. In Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's *The Mistress Of Spices*, the imagery of water and sun or fire, each develops the theme which reaches beyond the frame of the woman's condition when approaching it, as will be shown, in a different manner. Divakaruni uses imagery of water as a medium through which the characters attain the transformation of their identity. In the Hindu cosmology water is primordial for the coming of the universe into existence, with all its particles, including human beings, and for birth and rebirth. Fire and Water both associated with destruction and sacrifice.

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni lets her main character Tilo go through several different identities and each metamorphosis is accompanied by either fire or water. If the fire at her birth cannot be extinguished and fire is put to the village by the pirates when she who was born as Nayan-Tara, an unwanted child because a girl, turns into Bhagyavathi as if to signify that both her existences will be related to sacrifice and self-destruction, her passage through water already brings her nearer to rebirth or transformation in terms of a free self-asserting individual.

On the spice island she lives with her new identity, her re-birth being indicated by her arrival there naked and by the fact she chooses her new name, Tilo, herself. After Mistress were trained

with the art of spices, the Old Mother took them up into the core of the sleeping volcano, to make Shampati fire through which they reached the place where they wished to go. Nevertheless, fire is still the milestone between her 'Island' and 'Store' existence because her task is exactly sacrifice, to help the immigrants in the fulfilment of their needs and desires while totally denying her own.

When the final earthquake comes to mark the end of a world, the order of things which is no longer convenient, their transformation is accomplished through crossing several times the water and fire entity. Even though the earthquake had risen from the depths of the sea, one is led to associate its origin to Tilo's efforts to start Shampati's fire. Divakaruni suggests the idea of being reborn every time after the symbolic death of her protagonist's previous identity just like the mythical bird phoenix which is reborn out of its own ashes.

Myth need to be alive only if it metamorphose in relation to the contemporary times and culture. Thus have several novelists, dramatists and poets who through their ingenious use of myths have constructed a link between the past and the present and between different ages and culture. Thus, Divakaruni in *The Mistress of Spices* collapsed the divisions between the realistic world of twentieth century America and the timeless one of myth and magic to create a modern fable.

*The Mistress of Spices* belongs to the genre of Magic realism. Magic has always been an integral part of different genres like epics, fairytales, adventure stories handed over orally from generation to generation, drama and poetry. Myth might contain magical happenings and events. Magic realism is a natural part of the literary tradition of the Indian mind. The change of form, shape and size between human and animal world and time being elastic is common in the Indian classic mythology. It is absorbed with unquestionable logic. Time is a conspicuous theme, displayed as cyclical instead of linear. Another complex theme in magic realism is the carnivalesque. The concept of carnival celebrates the body, the senses and the relations between humans.

Chitra Divakaruni pays tribute to her ancestral and cultural Indian background by adapting and combining mythology and magic realism in *The Mistress of Spices*. It carries the

image of the island of spices, the timeless first mother, the legend of Shampati, speaking serpents and distortion of time. Tilo, her magical power to command the spices, her travel through continents and time effortlessly, her telepathic relationship with the old one are some of the elements of magic realism. Here, the supernatural is integrated into the fictional world. The presence of the supernatural is associated to the primeval or exotic Indian mentality. The spice power and the social consciousness of Tilo, in solving their maladies, show the life affirming side of the carnivalesque.

Chitra Banerjee's *The Mistress of Spices* blend myth and magic realism to celebrate trans-cultural space in America. The *Mistress of Spices* celebrates female trans-cultural space through immigration into the new 'home' land America. It combines realism, fantasy and magic realism to challenge hegemony, distort time, and to illustrate a deeper and true reality of diaspora today.

This narrative concentrates on an Indian immigrant Tilo, a young woman born in another age and time and trained in the curative art of Indian spices. Snakes take Tilo to the far away magical island of the first mother and spices take her to the 'Spice Bazaar', her home come store in Oakland. In Indian folk belief, spices are used for more than flavourings. They have magical powers all their own and they provide remedies for physical maladies as well as cures for spiritual ills.

The novel written in the first person narrative, Tilo introduces herself as the mistress of spices and 'the architect of the immigrant dream'. Her name signifies Tilo, the sun burnished sesame seed, spice of nourishment, life-giver, restorer of health and hope. Tilo also refers to the extended name Tilottama, the most beautiful apsara of Rain - God Indra's Court. The 'Mistress' is a deliberate gendering of the word 'Master', one who has supernatural powers over spices. Tilottama, the powerful mistress of spices, negotiates a new identity and chooses a name Maya, which according to Hindu terminology, defines the everyday world of desire, pain and joy as the world of illusion, a place of inevitable sorrow from which the Hindu is trying to escape.

Chitra Divakaruni may have been influenced by the mythological tale of Yayati in shaping Tilo. The Yayati syndrome is said to exist when there lays a wish, amounting to a yearning,

for youthfulness when one is on the verge of losing it or has already lost it. Realizing the loss of her youth on meeting Raven and the bougainvillea girls, Tilo undergoes an acute sense of despair and yearns to become youthful by using the spices personally. It is inherent in the human nature, perhaps a biological fact, that the sensual things and worldly joy attract Tilo and also give a new meaning to her lonely life. Geeta herself, nevertheless, cannot be identified as just Indian anymore, "Geeta whose name means sweet song... Geeta who is Indian and America all mixed together into a new melody..."

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## Racial Discrimination Leads into Fictional World: A Study of Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*

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### Abstract

Fantasy has achieved the status of literary genre in the twentieth century. As a literary mode it operates between the marvellous and the mimetic. It combines elements of both. The marvellous depicts supernatural characters and incidents. The narration is unrealistic in that it represents impossibilities. Toni Morrison writes about the life of the black people in contemporary America. She presents the anxieties and aspirations, and the strengths and shortcomings of the blacks. Her fictional world is inhabited by people influenced by racist and sexist values. Sometimes they embrace the values of a culture into which they have been transplanted. Hence, they suffer the consequences. Morrison tries to define the angst and irony of human condition as it leads towards an existential self-realization. This paper proposes to analyse the narrative qualities of the fantastic mode as it operates in the novel. The concept of beauty is an element of fantasy. Pecola Breedlove, living in a real world, desires beauty as the Panacea for all her troubles. Thus, reality is made unfamiliar and problematic. Pecola's fantastic desire exists in the framework of real life. Pecola's desire for blue eyes disturbs her ability to perceive and comprehend reality. It becomes an obsession with her and results in hallucination. She dislocates herself from reality and believes that her desire for the ideal of the white romantic myth of blue eyes has become palpable, that she has really acquired the bluest eyes, which is impossibility.

**Keywords:** unrealistic, contemporary, consequences, obsession and hallucination.

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Fantasy has achieved the status of literary genre in the twentieth century. As a literary mode it operates between the marvelous and the mimetic. It combines elements of both. The marvelous depicts supernatural characters and incidents. The narration is unrealistic in that it represents impossibilities. It creates a super world like Alice's Wonderland. In

the realistic or the purely mimetic mode, narratives imitate external reality. The characters and situations are ordinary and real. Literary fantasy does not escape reality. Instead, it exists in a Symbiotic relation to the real. Toni Morrison's mode of representing reality transgresses the norms of literary structuring.

Fantasy is needed because of man's need to impose significance on the insecurity and stark reality around him. In the modern century man finds himself decentralized. Man's anxiety about his mortality and the transistor of his environment make him more insecure. However, he tries to cope with this by simply denying it through various fictions which in some way enable his love for the cognizable world to conquer death.

Toni Morrison writes about the life of the black people in contemporary America. She presents the anxieties and aspirations, and the strengths and shortcomings of the blacks. Her fictional world is inhabited by people influenced by racist and sexist values. Sometimes they embrace the values of a culture into which they have been transplanted. Hence, they suffer the consequences. Morrison tries to define the angst and irony of human condition as it leads towards an existential self-realization. This universal and rather spiritual quest is explored in the context of the particular reality of the African – American society and especially that of the women therein.

Toni Morrison takes her readers on a journey into black history. Her themes concern themselves with the struggles with alienation; Morrison explores these themes in the light of the unfulfilled promises of the black migrant urban experience. As she develops her narrative from novel to novel, Morrison's concerns become more universal and political. Her fictional world does not marginalize men but her focus is on the sensitive women of the African – American diasporas.' For Morrison each individual is different.

Her first novel *“The Bluest Eye”* was published by Holt, Rinehart and Winston in 1970. This novel explored the issues of black identity, self-love, and self-hatred in a world in which violence of race, gender and class make it extremely difficult for Pecola and for a lot of other characters to find dignity in their lives. *“The Bluest Eye”* had not generated as much of positive and negative critical responses as *“Sula”*. In this novel, Morrison’s focus is on the inversion of conventional systems of thought and values through oppositions between self and other, good and evil, social approbation and community rejection.

The narrator in *“The Bluest Eye”* states that, “A little black girl yearns for the blue eyes of a little white girl, and the horror at the heart of her yearning is exceeded only by the evil of fulfillment” (162). The little black girl is Pecola Breedlove who is dissatisfied with the world around her. She is born into a society that is confused as it shuns its own cultural values and craves for self – gratification in the culture of the whites. In the novel this tendency of the society finds its symbolic expression in Pecola’s quest for blue eyes which represent the western ideals of beauty. The quest results in the suffering and anguish of the blacks. Toni Morrison breaks the ser narrative pattern and presents this in a fantastic mode.

This paper proposes to analyse the narrative qualities of the fantastic mode as it operates in the novel. The concept of beauty is an element of fantasy. Pecola Breedlove, living in a real world, desires beauty as the Panacea for all her troubles. Thus, reality is made unfamiliar and problematic. Pecola’s fantastic desire exists in the framework of real life. So the narration is made to follow an unconventional narrative pattern. The use of strangeness, contraries, and contradictions in the narrative magnify the existential anxiety and subjective dislocation of the characters.

Claudia is the narrator in the opening and the closing sections of the novel. She looks at all the incidents from her point of view, gives the reader her own personal feeling of the story, and introduces the characters. Her styles of narration changes from childish uncertainty at the beginning to dejection towards the end.

The narrative sequence is disrupted whenever Claudia passes on the narration to the author. The flow of the narrative becomes

uncertain, for the plot which is concerned with Pecola’s obsession with and acquiring of the eyes is interrupted by elaborate descriptions of the lives of Cholly, Pauline, Geraldine and Soaphead Church. Dreams, that compensate for the unfulfilled wants of the characters, especially, those of Pauline, Pecola and Soaphead, break the narrative sequence and make the plot complex. *“The Bluest Eye”* is divided into four sections, namely, ‘Autumn’, ‘Winter’, ‘Spring’ and ‘Summer’. This arrangement does not conform to the sequence of the natural cycle of seasons. Each section is named after a particular season. The titles serve as metaphors. The first section ‘Autumn’, deals with the transition in Pecola’s life. The second chapter ‘Winter’, serves as a metaphor for futility. Here, Morrison introduces the distasteful characters in the novels Maureen Peal and Geraldine. Their self-hatred has a very bad impact on the impressionable Pecola. The section ‘Spring’, contains the stories of Pauline and Cholly, of Cholly’s assault of Pecola and also the story of Soaphead Church, all of which cumulatively distort the mind of Pecola. The last section ‘Summer’, exposes the reality of Pecola’s situation. Here one finds her in the violent summer of her life. She is totally mad, isolated from the world around her and locked in constant conversation with herself, admiring her beautiful ‘Blue Eyes’.

Narrative qualities such as strangeness, contraries, contradictions, and the existential anxiety of the characters and the subjective dislocation of the central character are the other vital aspects of the fantastic mode. Idolization of the dominant white culture makes the blacks act strangely. For example, Pauline is happy only when she goes to the movies or spends time working as a servant for the fishers. She is a mother of two children, Sammy and Pecola. But she hates them and showers all her love and affection on the daughter of her white master. Pauline is disillusioned at the birth of Pecola. She instantly hates her infant daughter who she describes as a “cross between a puppy and a dying man” (*The Bluest Eye* 97 -98). She hates her husband, children, and above all, her own physical appearance because she feels that they prevent her from identifying herself with the white film actress, Jean Harlow.

Similarly, Geraldine suppresses the natural instincts of motherhood and love. She meets all the physical needs for only son Junior,

but does not indulge any of his emotional desires. She reserves her 'funkiness' for her cat alone, thus teaching her son hatred instead of love. Unfortunately, the reality of her situation shows through the crack in her demeanors. Unlike normal children, she indulges in obscene talk about men and boys. Imitation has made her vain and destroyed her child like innocence. Natural phenomena, too, seem strange and new.

The story of Geraldine, too, contradicts the myth of the ideal family. Geraldine despises her own culture and tries to imbibe the values of the dominant culture which she takes to be all "order, precision and constancy..... Clean and quiet.... (66). She lives in a beautifully maintained house with her husband, son and a cat like the one in the primer. But unlike the parents of the primer, she does not allow emotion to disturb the precision and order of her family. She is trained to despise her own cultural values.

Geraldine eradicates all signs of her native culture in herself and her family. Whatever she learns is for the benefit of the whites. She is constantly watchful and wary lest the black reality should show through her carefully groomed artificiality. Like Pauline, she imagines herself to be better than the rest of her society. But her imagination is limited and a pointer to the reality of her situation. As a result of their anglophile, Geraldine and Pauline divest themselves of their natural maternal feelings.

Pecola's father, Cholly Breedlove, contradicts the very concept of fatherhood. Cholly's feelings for his daughter are all negative. "The sequence of his emotions was revulsion, guilt, pity, then love" (127). Love is the last emotion he feels for his offspring. Yet he has a strange feeling when he looks into Pecola's eyes: ".....he would see those haunted loving eyes". Cholly's love for Pecola subverts the normal father daughter relationship. It is not even a relationship suffering from the electoral complex. It is a relationship incited by both tenderness and helplessness to provide for his daughter. Thus, love is debased into sex. Cholly loves his daughter, but his touch was fatal because "love is never any better than the love" and "the love of a free man is never safe" (206).

The pain and disillusion of this experience, along with her fervent desire for blue eyes, derives Pecola mad. The reader is made to

believe that madness is a blessing for her. It confines her to her own realm of fantasy and thereby gives her the security she yearns for; "She.....stepped over into madness, a madness which protects her.

Pecola's madness really protects her from the people who call her ugly and treat her with contempt. It protects her from the jeers of the black boys, from the Maureen Peals and Geraldine of her society and also from the neglect of her own mother. The shroud of madness protects Pecola from her psycho pathetic ugliness. It offers to transcend the dissecting and contemptuous white racist gaze.

Pecola carries the burden of internalized white racism. The weight of which becomes too heavy for her. Under the aspirational ideals of whiteness, she knows the deficits of her black body all too well. Standing within the purview of the white gaze, her black self is stripped, as it were, of its capacity for transcendence.

Pecola's insecurity is shared by all the members of her community and causes an existential anxiety in them. For they can neither come to terms with nor dismiss their predicament. Most of them are precariously poised with a foot each in the much desired white value system and the unwanted yet inevitable black culture. They are unbalanced and desperately hold on to the idea of a imaginary superiority inside the black community.

Maureen Peal, a hybrid Negro, is almost a perfect imitation of the white stereotype of beauty. She is worshipped by the old and the young of the community. The grown-ups excuse her faults, while they abuse other black children for their slightest fault.

This attitude of the elders disturbs the young black children and they grow up with a complex that they should be ashamed to being black, they feel slighted. Hatred and Negro phobia are generated in them as they fail to understand the disparity. They grow pessimistic about life and become destructive. The two sisters, Frieda and Claudia, are groomed to respect their won culture. They believe that "our own pride must be asserted by refusing....."(5) the values of another culture, but are shaken when they confront the contradictions in the world outside. They become anxious as they introspect for an answer that they

can use to dismiss the Maureen Peals of the society.

The black children are uneasy because they cannot comprehend what they lack and cannot locate the focus of their “unworthiness”. They do not understand if being different is important at all. They only know that they must fear an invisible “Enemy” that is responsible for their suffering. This invisible enemy disturbs the deep metaphysical stability of life.

This problematic relationship between the individual and the world is exemplified by Pecola. She suffers from subjective dislocation which derives from her existential anxiety. Pecola’s anxiety stems from her inability to separate her ideal from reality. She is bewildered and hurt in a world where everybody rejects her as ugly. She craves for love and happiness and holds her brown eyes responsible for her misery. She strongly believes that if her eyes “were different, that is to say, beautiful, may be cholly would be different and Mrs. Breedlove too. May be they’d say, ‘Why look at pretty eyed Pecola. We mustn’t do bad things in front of these pretty eyes’” (*The Bluest Eye*, 34)

Pecola’s desire for blue eyes disturbs her ability to perceive and comprehend reality. It

becomes an obsession with her and results in hallucination. She dislocates herself from reality and believes that her desire for the ideal of the white romantic myth of blue eyes has become palpable, that she has really acquired the bluest eyes, which is impossibility. Convinced by the godman, Soaphead Church, that God has granted her the blue eyes she most fervently sought, she merges into the self she has imagined. The dividing line between the self and the other dissolve in Pecola’s mind and she steps “over into madness”.

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## Multi-cultural voices in Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's *The Vine of Desire*

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### Abstract

Multiculturalism originates from the roots of alienation in the foreign land. Today the multicultural societies are the result of global immigration. Diasporic literature captures the problematic issues and the concerns experienced by the immigrants. The paper portrays the trauma experienced by the immigrants due to dislocation, sense of disquiet longing for home and homeland. It brings about the emotional predicament and turmoil caused due to displacement. The novel *The Vine of Desire* is a fictitious representation signifying the immigrants' desperation for home and homeland. The comparison and contradiction from the original home with the adopted land digs out memories and nostalgic experience.

**Keywords:** Multiculturalism, Nostalgia, Home, Diaspora, Immigrants.

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Multiculturalism originates from the roots of alienation in the foreign land. Dispersal of their original home brings pain, alienation, identity crisis and Nostalgia. Today, the Multi-cultural societies are the result of global immigrations. The spatial displacements crossing geographical boundaries thus occurring involves de-territorialization.

The consciousness of uprooting from the native environment creates emotional setbacks and raises the question of belonging. The yearning for home and nostalgia for homeland becomes a constant presence as it always seems to ponder the psyche of the expatriates. The Indians living in the alien countries continue to live in a double life refusing to give up their cultural roots. They are sandwiched between the deep rooted native culture and assimilated host culture. The present paper portrays multicultural notion and yearning for home and cultural conflicts in the intricately woven fiction, *The Vine of Desire* by the Indian born American, diasporic women writer Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, who artistically blends the traumatic challenges with optimistic attributes sprouting out

of disheveled tensions experienced in multicultural societies.

Divakaruni's writing is fueled by her own experiences as a first-generation immigrant. She portrays immigrant experience in her writings. She delineates the expatriate young women living in the US, who struggles hard to sustain self identity in fluctuating alien culture. She writes of as an Indian in America and about people migrating to the west and caught between multiple cultures. She depicts the women in special caught in multi-cultural challenges and also affected by such multiple levels by both cultures. Divakaruni exemplifies her own experience. "As a woman and an immigrant myself, I have obviously experienced or at least observed many of the challenges, problems and the gains of immigration that I write about," says Divakaruni (2009).

*The Vine of Desire* successfully depicts the multicultural confrontation of the Indian immigrant women Sudha and Anju. Striving for identity in the postcolonial world, they present the dilemma of the modern day woman covering each and every aspect of their life. They make new adjustments in their new surroundings and they reinvent themselves. In this novel she has mapped the social, political and cultural changes brought about by colonization, postcolonial consciousness and globalization.

*The Vine of Desire* continues the story of Anju and Sudha, the two young women at the center of Divakaruni's bestselling novel *Sister of My Heart*. Far from Calcutta, the city of their childhood and after years of living separate live Anju and Sudha rekindle their friendship in America. The deep-seated love they feel for each other provides the support each of them needs. Anju gets strength after a miscarriage and Sudha gets confidence to make a life for herself and her baby daughter, Dayita without her husband. This bond is shaken to the core when they confront the deeply passionate feeling that Anju's husband has for Sudha. Sudha walks out of the security of her husband and starts a fresh new life in America with

her daughter. In America Sudha does not face the restrictions, which are in India. She comes to America to achieve freedom and independence. She begins to build a new community around her and to fit happily into her new life. She gets acquainted with the American way of life. America becomes her land, the land of prosperity and opportunity. She visits America with a hope to make a life for herself and her daughter Dayita. Divakaruni follows the trend, shows America as the land of opportunities. However, it is significant that Anju refuses to come back to India though her mother and others insist her to come. When she gets separated from Sunil, she refuses any help from Sunil. In this way Divakaruni shows the liberal American notion of feminism and encourages Indian women to struggle for the freedom and independence. Anju and Sudha are well educated and economically independent women in search for their multicultural identity. So in a way the dilemma to exercise choices itself becomes a kind of trope wherein the people in diaspora not just jostle with their traditional beliefs but also make an attempt to combat it. In the words of E.V.Ramakrishnan:

Literature is shaped by the material condition of society. The multiple literary traditions in India which go back to the early part of the last millennium have developed through diverse trajectories, negotiating the hegemonic structures of power that informed the social spheres of which they were a product. Hence, while there are points of convergences, there are also points of departures (1). These words not just highlight the literary traditions but also throw light on the diasporic condition.

Sunil was fascinated by the beauty of Sudha but out of the consideration of Anju's sentiments, he never mentioned this fact to anybody. Sunil admits, "The women he'd been mad for ever since he saw her in a garden tented with jasmine- too late for them, he was already betrothed to her cousin" (VOD 27)

In spite of the diversity of dilemmas, it is difficult to omit that fact that both Sunil and Anju frame the images of their lives with the lingering shadows of past. Divakaruni accepts the past can be ignored but can't be eliminated. The nostalgia of homeland and the realization of 'otherness' distort the wholistic perception of immigrants' conditions. The realization of 'lacking' intensifies the feeling

of turning back to home land. The 'otherness' is not a differential sign but it implies a certain lack of qualities.

Preoccupation with ethnic identity is not merely a symptom of "evolution" but serves as a correlative trend in historical evolution. (Caldeira, 24)

Sudha comes with big dreams to America, but she ends up doing odd jobs there and is dissatisfied with her life in the U.S. She had come to America after defying the traditions of an arranged marriage, and does it at the cost of ostracism, isolation and intense loneliness. Her stay in her cousin Anju's house is terminated by the emotional involvement that grows between Sudha and Anju's husband. However, she does not want to cheat her cousin so she decides to leave the life-long candid relationship of the two sisters.

Sudha after coming to America finds that she is comprised of multiple selves accepting or rejecting certain aspects of both Indian and American culture. Analyzing the unjustified violence and the novel is abounding with many examples of the description of various kinds of pressure on its characters; though the nuances of it may differ due to the physical and cultural placement of their characters. But Sudha does not want to allow anything to come between herself and her professional goals. Here the identity issue takes on another color, that of making a position for themselves in their adopted country. She tries to resolve the matters between their circumstances and environment and put the pieces of fragmented selves together. Her character develops multiplicity of consciousness in viewing herself.

Anju also separates herself from her husband and maintains her dignity rather than live with a man who has betrayed her. Both are modern Indian women who wish to survive independently of the male influence. Anju cannot forget and forgive the infidelity of her husband and does not want to be a prisoner at the hands of men who apparently wish to come to her aid, but would finally exercise complete control over her. She would rather bring up her daughter alone according to her own wishes.

Divakaruni incorporates a whole range of issues related to the lives of the women. These include arranged marriage, unhappy relationship, divorce, female feticide, the conflict between old

values, self-transformation and new female experiences that are both repressive and expressive; the two sisters undergo a catharsis a range of emotions, individually work out strategies of survival and finally emerge as stronger women. Unlike other immigrant narrations, Chitra Banerjee conceives the Indian women's immigration to the US as a journey from oppressed and depressed conditions to freedom and discover of the self with the inspiration of western influence.

Nostalgia or homesickness is a phenomenon most of the immigrants face in their stay in foreign land. As they live in a new land, it is inevitable that they think about their culture, the familiar environment in their homelands. They find themselves unable to adjust in a new culture. Because of alienation from the mainstream American society, most of them become lose their hope. Sudha feels that the old man is not leading his life happily because he stays in an alien land; "In this bed, in this house, in this country, all of which is alien to him" (VOD 278). She senses that he may get peace in his homelands. So, she assumes that he would get recovered, if he is taken to his native land. In the first generation of immigrants, migration creates alienation, nostalgia of the past and rootlessness due to firmly clinging to the cultural beliefs, practices norms of the homeland, of which Makarand Paranjape makes observation. As he says, "there is a clinging to the old identity and a resistance to making a transition". (61)

Divakaruni reveals the condition of Indian women and their mundane roles in their lives devoid of new challenges and career through the character of Sara. Sara is a woman who is completely assimilated into the mainstream culture and cannot think of her native country as her own after a few years. She projects the reality and the feelings of NRI who cannot go back to the past and who have inhabited America as their homes.

Divakaruni's multicultural perspectives are vividly shaped in the fiction of the immigrants.

Lalit, the second generation immigrant, a doctor by profession, he displays modern youth wholly assimilated to host country. Indeed the novel presents diverse immigrant experiences of different characters in the novel.

It evinces that the multiplicity of vision evolved in the multicultural pulls of ideologies have been integrated to constitute a comprehensive vision of the dilemma of existence in the life of immigrant woman. Divakaruni in *The Vine of Desire* ventures to explore how cultural transactions and the shift of geography redefines the very texture of human existence involving the predicament of women, national consciousness, challenges of hybridity, burden of the commitment of femininity and obstacles of the adversity of cultural paradigms. Divakaruni's multicultural perspectives are vividly shaped in the novel.

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## Trauma of Violence and Riot of Minority Women in Taslima Nasrin's *Lajja*

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### Abstract

The well-being of one group is often achieved on a foundation of violence and hatred of one community for another. Two separate nations of India and Pakistan were created in 1947 in the midst of much communal violence. The violence between Hindus and Muslims did not end with partition. The sparks of detestation and brutality were again ignited in 1992 with the demolition of the Babri Masjid in Ayodhya. The sufferings and the cry of the largest religious minority group of Bangladesh, Hindus came to limelight in the form of a novel by a Bangladeshi writer, Taslima Nasrin. She, who has a powerful voices in the literary canon of Bangladeshi English Literature and her epoch making work 'Lajja' is rightly regarded as a perfect example of gendered subaltern narrative. The success of the novel 'Lajja' lies in Nasrin's ability to capture the trauma of the minority community, despite belonging to the majority community. The author interprets the plight of women as a consequence of narrowing of social spaces. She has sharply exposed the differential impact of social agencies on men and women. Women are in the process of describing their identity; a feminist writer denounces treatment of women as objects of lust, physical and psychological violence. Nasrin does the shame with tremendous vehemence as she depicts in *Lajja* how women are sexually abducted and subjected to varied kinds of torture that may even result in their deaths. The novelist has shown the trauma of hate and violence of women. *Lajja* is an account of hatred that runs in the veins of religious fanatics and fundamentalist of the Indian Sub-Continent.

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were again ignited in 1992 with the demolition of the Babri Masjid in Ayodhya. The sufferings and the cry of the largest religious minority group of Bangladesh, Hindus came to limelight in the form of a novel by a Bangladeshi writer, Taslima Nasrin. She, who has a powerful voices in the literary canon of Bangladeshi English Literature and her epoch making work 'Lajja' is rightly regarded as a perfect example of gendered subaltern narrative. The success of the novel 'Lajja' lies in Nasrin's ability to capture the trauma of the minority community, despite belonging to the majority community. The author interprets the plight of women as a consequence of narrowing of social spaces. She has sharply exposed the differential impact of social agencies on men and women. Women are in the process of describing their identity; a feminist writer denounces treatment of women as objects of lust, physical and psychological violence. Nasrin does the shame with tremendous vehemence as she depicts in *Lajja* how women are sexually abducted and subjected to varied kinds of torture that may even result in their deaths. The novelist has shown the trauma of hate and violence of women. *Lajja* is an account of hatred that runs in the veins of religious fanatics and fundamentalist of the Indian Sub-Continent.

*Lajja* is the magnum opus of Taslima Nasrin in which she addresses a large spectrum of threats faced by Bangladeshi nationalism today. The bond formed between national identity and religious identity has led to the formulation of the postulate that anyone who is not a Muslim is an enemy, outsider and non-Bangladeshi. This has led to the rapid exclusion of the minority Hindu population from the cultural scene, striking them off from enjoying any privilege as a Bangladeshi citizen. The shock of being excluded from an ethnical group on the basis of religion is devastating for the Hindu population as portrayed by the Dutta family in *Lajja*. She takes up the cause of thousands of Muslim women in Bangladesh, mistreated in the hands of violent religious fanatics. The primary focus of the novel is the family of Duttas with four central characters – Sukumar

Dutta, Kiranmoyee, Suranjan and Maya, who falls prey to the Islamic fundamentalists in Bangladesh for having been born into the minority community of Hindus. The immediate backdrop of the novel is the demolition of the sixteenth century edifice Babri Masjid, which led to devastating fallout in Bangladesh where temples were destroyed and the Hindu minority community became victims of insensate and barbaric violence at the hands of religious fanatics. Women were raped, men were beaten up, their property destroyed and looted and their lives were made miserable by random terror and orchestrated tyranny. Nasrin dedicated the book to the people in Indian Sub-continent“ beginning the text with the words: “let another name of religion be humanism”. The central theme of *Lajja* is explained by Nasrin by the following words – “Ironically all religions points towards one goal – peace. Yet it is in the name of religion that so much blood is shed and so many people have suffered. It is indeed a pity that even in the close of twentieth century, we have had to witness such atrocities, all in the name of religion” (*Lajja*, 35). The novel follows thirteen fearful days in the life of a Hindu family immediately after demolition. Meaningfully, the thirteen day which signified the end of funeral rituals for Hindus is the day when Dutta’s wrenches themselves away from their beloved country to take shelter in India. *Lajja* adorns a unique position in the history of the Bangladeshi literature for exposing the age old strife between various fractions of Indian sub-continent and voicing protest against the religious fundamentalists for their brute and inhumanly behaviour against minority Hindus. The aggressive reassertion of Muslim identity had an adverse effect on the average Hindu Psyche. Not only communal Hindus, but also secular Hindus were baffled.

Subordination of women is a visible feature of most stages of recorded history, and is prevalent in large parts of the world. The extent and form of that subordination has been conditioned by the social, economic and cultural environment in which women have been placed. Through her book, Taslima Nasrin beautifully portrays the double disability imposed on women of minority communities. She has sharply exposed the differential impact of social exigencies on men and women. Kiranmoyee, wife of Sukumar Dutta, suffers as much as any other women during the freedom struggle of Bangladesh. In addition, she

has to endure the ignominy of deleting her Hindu identity as the family goes on exile to escape from Pakistani persecutors. Maya, Sudhamoy’s daughter, however pays the highest price of being a minority woman. Her double abduction, as a child and as a young woman of twenty one is testimony to this fact. Nasrin’s device of Maya’s ambiguous fate makes her vulnerability all the more fragile. She suffers more than the Muslim prostitute her brother rapes. That women suffer in times of crisis is a foregone conclusion. In Bangladesh, as in any other Muslim majority society, Islamist forces have emphasized on the importance of women adopting traditional practices, such as wearing the veil, as a cultural symbol and a weapon in the movement of Islamization against western modernisation. Modernisation is imagined as “immoral” and “dangerous”. Some activists have also tried to reinvent the religion by adding some elements of modernity into Islamic tradition. In reaction to the image of commoditisation of women’s body in western modernity, the construct women wearing hijab in the public spaces as an image of “modern Muslim women”. Kiranmoyee, the wife of Sudhamoy Dutta, is a quintessential, sacrificing wife-mother who has never learnt to assert herself. Her primary concern is the well being of her family and she is willing to sacrifice anything to keep her family together. She keenly observes everyone at home but she has no voice to raise an argument. She is willing to accept her son’s girl friend though she is a Muslim. She also happily cooks meat in her house when she is asked to do it by her husband. During the time of violence, Kiranmoyee is forced to take up Muslim pseudo names. Kiranmoyee had stopped using *sindur* in the parting of her hair and *loha* and *sankha* on her wrists as was expected of every married Hindu women. But she found it quite difficult to give up her bridal bangles and vermillion. Maya shows the impact of gender disability in a more pronounced way. She pays the highest price for being a minority woman. Her double abduction, as a child and as a young woman of twenty one adds to this fact. Where the case of kidnapping was concerned, there dint appear to be any distinction in the choice of victims, for both Hindu and Muslim women were kidnapped. The emotional trauma that victims like Maya felt were same as that of the pathetic plight of their families, like that of the Duttas, no matter what their religion was. If one closely observes the women in Bangladesh as portrayed in the novel, they have

become complicit in a system which subordinates them. Their life is located at the intersection of class, religion and patriarchy. These structures can all work to oppress them, as in the case of Hindu minority women in Bangladesh. But women belonging to Muslim majority enjoy few privileges and also wield a degree of power. These benefits are available to them only if they conform to the patriarchal codes of their family and communities. Compliance brings them gains, both material and symbolic. Deviance, on the other hand, expels them from material resources of their family, of which they can partake only on condition of “good” behaviour. The compliance of women or the consent they extend to structures that are oppressive is however “invisibilised” under the seemingly more neutral notion of upholding “tradition” or the specific “cultures” of families or of communities, then moving outward to a nation whose cultural repository somehow resides specifically on women.

The patriarchal norms do not let women fulfill their aspirations, as for Kironmoyee she had to repress her deep inner cravings which would eventually turn into virtual “deprivation” and thus become way of life. To quote from the text: “When Sudhamoy’s friends came to visit, and they sat around talking, their shadows would sometimes fall on Kironmoyee’s lap, and almost involuntarily she would wish that those shadows were real. . . . Kironmoyee’s physical cravings did not last very long. Her body soon became used to the deprivation” (*Lajja* 114). By and large, it is at the cost of the family that a woman is conditioned to subdue her desires and fit into the socio-cultural framework. Kironmoyee, therefore, spends her life as a “patriarchal woman,” “who has internalized the norms and values of patriarchy, which can be defined, in short, as any culture that privileges men by promoting traditional gender roles” (Tyson 85). Thus, Nasrin portrays Kironmoyee as a polite, selfless and self-sacrificing wife/mother who is submissive to the demands of her husband and son, for her main concern is only the well being of her family and her personal choices are a non-issue in the environment she is born and brought up in. She takes her celibacy on account of her husband’s genital mutilation as an existential given and never mentions this handicap as an issue. She also submits to the demands made upon her by the communal atmosphere in Bangladesh as she quietly accepts a new identity with an assumed Muslim

name San. At this juncture, it is important to note that both, family and society connive to marginalize women.

The merit of *Lajja* lies in its sublime power to disturb even its best reader. *Lajja* is richly ornamented with activities that took place during the riots and is certainly a good source for those who want to know how the Babri Masjid demolition changed the lives of millions of Hindus and Muslims residing in the Indian sub-continent. Bangladesh has a secular democracy, but the state religion is Islam. “It has been very rare for a person from a majority community to write about the treatment of a minority” says Zaman Habiba, a London based critic and lecturer on post-colonial literature. Nasrin identifies the root cause of violence in Bangladesh as religious fundamentalism. Religious fundamentalists use religion, along with culture, caste, ethnicity and nationalism to further their political goals. It includes spread of an ideology of hatred and intolerance towards those from other religions or who do not agree with their specific religious interpretations.

Taslina Nasrin stands as a symbol of resistance against Islamic fanatics and male oppression. She is rightly called “female Rushdie”. Taslima out and out rejects all the religions including Islam for suppressing the fundamental rights of women. Nasrin uses the techniques of naturalisation in her work. She adopts a direct way of writing as she did not take up esoteric or complicated theoretical issues in her novel. Her language and dialogues centre on the shackles and restrictions that blind mankind in a conservative, religion based society. Her prose style is sharp, incisive, colloquial, marinated in intense passion. Through her writings she fights for the modernisation of the state and society. In her autocratic, patriarchal ideology and methods, she poses a threat to democracy and to women’s rights. Women are central to religious fundamentalist strategies, as they play a dual role both as reproducers of the community and as symbols of family, community and religious “honour”. Religious fundamentalists seek to control the mobility and sexuality of women of other group as one of the most effective strategies of dishonouring that community as a whole. In the recent past, there have been several cases of brutal killings of prominent members of minority communities in the strategic Chittagong and its Hill Tracts, by armed

gang of Islamic fanatics. Taslima Nasrin's book intends to erase the element of fundamentalism and communalism from contemporary society.

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## Treatment of Sisterhood in Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's 'Sister of My Heart'

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Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni is a prolific and acclaimed writer who has written popular novels like *Mistress of Spices*(1997), *Sister of My Heart*(1999), *The Conch Bearer, a Trilogy*(2003-2009), *Palace of Illusions*(2008). Divakaruni is one such Indian-American author who writes out of her own personal experience about the lives of immigrant women. Her focus is mainly on South-Asian women who struggle amidst male-dominated society in search of their own true identity. Nevertheless, her female protagonists are not the silent sufferers. They are the one who adapt themselves according to the needs and the requirements of the others but this should not be misinterpreted in thinking that they limit themselves only to the wishes and desires of others. When situation demands they mould them according to the circumstances and are brave enough to fight for their rights. In this context, Banerjee's *Sister of My Heart* highlights the feministic approach and utopian ideology of two sisters Anju and Sudha who break down the standard conventions and principles of social set up and move forward into their path of freedom where neither patriarchy nor matriarchy boundaries can bind them.

One common theme that runs through all the novels is that Indian-born women living new lives in the United States find independence a mixed blessing that involves walking a tightrope between old beliefs and new bound desires. Though the characters vary, the themes of the novels are essentially the same-exploration of the nature of arranged marriages as well as the experience of affirmation and rebellion against social traditions. *Sister of My Heart*, Divakaruni's novel based on her short story "The Ultrasound" in the short story collection of *Arranged Marriages*, Runu from *The Ultrasound* re-emerges here as Sudha.

Unlike Divakaruni's first novel *The Mistress of Spices*, her second novel, *Sister of My Heart* is written in the realist mode and describes the complicated relationship of a family in Bengal.

*Sister of My Heart* opens with the Chatterjee family already deprived of its male figures and its former economic status. As the three widows (Pishi Ma, the cousins' paternal aunt and their mothers) and two young girls (Anju and Sudha) of this family meander their way through the drama of life, facing marriage, motherhood, divorce, widowhood etc, each stage brings into focus a certain aspect of the upper-class Bengali culture and tradition, which is cherished or criticized from the uniquely feminine and diasporic perspective of the author.

The Indian woman's treatment of sisterhood in fiction, interestingly enough, has not been followed a western pattern of development. Traditional Indian society, which has carefully segregated its men and women, has equally carefully nurtured the social stereotypes that prevent female bonding; the mother-son relationship has been valorized, the brother-sister one privileged, but the mother-daughter one overlooked, and women's friendship marginalized. When Divakaruni declares, then, that she has made sisterhood her theme, she has clearly put herself squarely in the tradition of the West rather than of India. Certainly her fiction is part of the growing corpus of Asian American women's writing, whose major theme is the lonely outsider, the first of second-generation Asian Immigrant in an often hostile, uncomprehending and in comprehensible environment, struggling to assimilate and to keep her ethnic and gender even more than the African American, for whom the USA has always been the only home she has ever known. For Asian or African American women, sisterhood is a strength and succour, enabling them to discover themselves all persons and to nurture their community; friendship with other women becomes, therefore, central to the fiction of all American "women of colour".

In *Sister of My Heart* (like Anju and Runu in "The Ultrasound") are cousins belonging to the same patrilinear family, and in the Indian context would obviously be called "sisters" not "friends". Clearly Divakaruni has addressed her novel to a

Western audience for whom this kind of bonding would be as foreign as this kind of family structure. *Sister of My Heart* exhibits, in fact, many of the features of novels dealing with the bonds between sisters, such as Jane Austen's *pride and Prejudice* and *Sense and Sensibility*, Shobha De's *Sisters*. Alice Walker's *Color Purple*. Most such novels depict sisters as being very different but as sharing nonetheless a deep, primal, nonverbal and inexpressible bond, a bond which makes each a kind of Dostoevskyan double of the other and which somehow survives the continual tension between them over their other relationships, especially if, as usually happens, one of them is prettier, cleverer, more talented, or more fortunate than the other.

Like the sisters in all these novels, Anju and Sudha Chatterjee in *Sisters of My Heart* are very different in appearance, temperament and achievements, and grow up together under similar yet very different conditions; their fathers, cousins themselves, died together in the accident, but where Anju's father was the master of the house, and her mother from an equally aristocratic family, Sudha's father was a poor relation, her mother's background nondescript, lower middle-class. Sudha and her mother continue to live in the family mansion not out of ancestral right but because Indian family ties would not have it otherwise. The girls do everything together and love one another fiercely, demanding to be known not just as sisters but as twins, and not just because they were born on the same day; sisterhood to them is not just a matter of ties of blood but of love. As Anju tells Sudha, "I would love you because you love me. I would love you because no-one else knows us like we know each other." (51). They may be separated by fate and marriage once they reach adulthood, but they let nothing stand in the way of their love for each other, even jeopardizing the love of the men in their lives for each other. It is perhaps this that makes Divakaruni call *Sister*, 'a novel of women's friendship', not of sisterly bonding; similarly, "Affair" and "Meeting Mrinal" are as much about the woman's quest for selfhood as about friendship, but Divakaruni perceives the latter to be their main theme. In Alice Walker's *Color Purple*, there is no conflict between sisterhood and other relationships; but Divakaruni's women however, face a different situation. They love their men, or believe they do, and they suffer agonies of jealousy and misery when they feel they have been betrayed by friend

with husband; but they quickly realize that they love their women friends more than their men, a love that surpasses all other relationships. It is in her short stories and in *Sister of My heart* that Divakaruni most obviously explores this theme; sisterhood is not central to *The Mistress of Spices*, though love and caring are.

In Divakaruni's fiction sisterhood is always a deeply rooted, instinctual relationship that brings together women who are very different from one another in every way. This is especially so in "The Ultrasound" and its novelistic version, *Sister of My Heart*. In the short story Anju and Runu are cousins and neighbours who have always done everything together from their childhood days, so that even after they are both married and living as far apart as Bardhaman (Divakaruni uses its present name in the novel version, Bardhaman) and California, Runu is "still the most important person in Anju's life," (206) not Sunil, her husband. When, therefore, she learns that Runu's in-laws want her to abort her baby because the parental sex-determination test has shown it is female, in spite of Sunil's evident disapproval she urges her to leave her husband and go to Anju's mother in Calcutta- apparently Runu's mother is not sufficiently supportive to start a new life there, promising herself that she would somehow bring her cousin over to America no matter what the cost to her, financially and emotionally.

In *Sister of My Heart* Divakaruni expands and complicates this story with additional details to emphasise the depth of their bonding, but the end-result does not perhaps always have the effect she had intended. For instance, she suggests that the cousins may not actually have been cousins at all, that Bijoy's father had been deceived by Gopal, Sudha's father, about their relationship. This should have helped to establish the fact that their love is far deeper than the ties of blood. Anju, who knows nothing of the tenuousness of their kinship or of what Sudha's father had done, his treachery and complicity in Anju's father's death, is clear that much of her certainly is due to her ignorance. Besides, as the social superior and the more intellectually gifted of the two, it is easy for her to be generous. But Sudha remains consumed by guilt for what her father has done and by her conviction that she must atone for his sins by always putting Anju's sake, it is uncertain whether she does it out of a sense of filial duty or out of love for a sister of the heart. Indeed, when she has to consenting to an

early marriage instead of going to college with Anju, she chooses her mother, although, of course, it is a painful decision for her. Besides, she is always a very passive person, as contrasted to Anju's energy and initiative, and her reluctance to elope with Ashok, the man she loves, seems as much due to her fear of action and her preference for going with the tide rather than her love for Anju, which makes her worry that this elopement might break up Anju's engagement to Sunil.

Slowly the dark secrets of the past are unveiled and test the cousins' mutual loyalty. A family crisis forces Anju and Sudha's mothers to start the serious business of arranging the girl's marriages, and the pair is torn apart. Sudha moves to her new family's home in rural Bengal, while Anju joins her immigrant husband in California. Although they have both been for the pain, as well as the joy, that each will have to face in her new life. In the novel Indian discrimination against women stands exposed; the cousins consider themselves inferior beings because they are female. Feminist view-both overt and covert- are present in many passages of the novel. The story line, however, becomes predictable. Anju saves Sudha from the machinations of her husband and in-laws, who want to kill the girl child she has conceived, and brings her the United States.

*Sister of My Heart* was overwhelmingly positive. The novel provides a new look at female bonding. Divakaruni's impetus is to write about a female centric theme in a South Asian setting. The novel is her perception of an utter lack of emphasis on women's independence in South Asian literary genres. She identifies the novel as ultimately about storytelling. Influenced by her grandfather, who told stories from South Asian epics, she has woven those childhood folktales into her novel. She explains that the "aloneness" of epic heroines seemed strange to her even as a child. She declares that in South Asian mythological stories, the main relationships the heroines had were with the opposite sex: husbands, sons, lovers, or opponents. They never had any important friends. Divakaruni finds herself focusing her writing on friendship with women, trying to balance them with the

conflicting passions and demands that come to us as daughters and wives, lovers and mothers. Divakaruni shares her protagonists and finds in them a mode of feminist expression. In the best friendships that have had with women, there is closeness that unique, sympathy that comes from somewhere deep and primal in our bodies and does not need explanation, perhaps because of the life changing experiences she shares in the novel.

Sudha and Anju must individually grapple with both their inner pain and the outside pressures of frenetic, impersonal city life in America as they journey toward independence. Ultimately, the women are forced to look beyond the destructive circle of love, passion, and hurt and form a new relationship as the antidote to their suffering. Only then they are able to find a way to reconcile their ties to the past and to resolve their sisterhood.

Divakaruni employs a rich and original narrative style. She often switches the first-person narration between the voices of Sudha, Anju, and Sunil. She employs different devices to advance the plot and convey the inner thoughts of her character. The novelist has not realized that her underlying theme is not merely sisterhood but female bonding in all its forms, which constantly makes its presence felt through the lyricism and the romantic fantasy that breathe through her fiction.

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## Transgression of the Tortured Tribal Minority: Mahasweta Devi's Encoding of the Exilic Encounters of the Dauntless *Draupadi*.

K.Rajarathi

### Abstract

Mahasweta Devi is one of the most esteemed activist-writers in India with an unwavering dedication and ardor for the disadvantaged. As an indubitable advocate of Modern Humanism, Mahasweta Devi claims that the sole purpose of her writing is to expose the many faces of the exploiting agencies. The tribal minorities of India are clearly different from the mainstream and dominant society and have been repressed inhumanly in many ways even after seventy years of independence. The insensitive mainstream that remains totally oblivious of the tribal situation angers the author. Her works do not romanticize the tribal life instead they depict the monopoly of feudalism over land and the poverty stricken tribal people's wretched life. As a herald of change, Mahasweta Devi, redrafts the forgotten history and exposes India's tribal and feudal life. Her writings peel the mask off the face of the India which is projected by the Government, to expose its naked brutality, savagery, and caste and class exploitation. Her works are still very much relevant in this context. Her pen plainly paints how the tribes are stripped out of their honour in their own land. This paper explores Mahasweta Devi's *Draupadias* a play of transgression of the tortured tribal minority and how powerfully the author encodes the exilic encounters of the dauntless Dopdi, the protagonist. By subverting the myth of Draupadi, she redrafts a reinvigorating and empowering new myth for Dopdi.

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Mahasweta Devi is one of the most esteemed activist-writers in India with an unwavering dedication and ardor for the disadvantaged. As an indubitable advocate of Modern Humanism, Mahasweta Devi claims that the sole purpose of her writing is to expose the many faces of the exploiting agencies. The tribal minorities of India are clearly different from the mainstream and dominant society and have been repressed inhumanly in many ways even after seventy years of independence. The insensitive mainstream that remains totally oblivious of the

tribal situation angers the author. Her works do not romanticize the tribal life instead they depict the monopoly of feudalism over land and the poverty stricken tribal people's wretched life. As a herald of change, Mahasweta Devi, redrafts the forgotten history and exposes India's tribal and feudal life. Her writings peel the mask off the face of the India which is projected by the Government, to expose its naked brutality, savagery, and caste and class exploitation. Her works are still very much relevant in this context. Her pen plainly paints how the tribes are stripped out of their honour in their own land. This paper explores Mahasweta Devi's *Draupadias* a play of transgression of the tortured tribal minority and how powerfully the author encodes the exilic encounters of the dauntless Dopdi, the protagonist. By subverting the myth of Draupadi, she redrafts a reinvigorating and empowering new myth for Dopdi.

“ The tribals and the mainstream have always been parallel....The mainstream simply doesn't understand the parallel.... They can't keep their land; there is no education for them, no health facilities... they are denied everything....That is why I started writing about the tribal movements and the tribal world....I repay them their honour.”

(Interview by Gayatri Chakraborty Spivak)

The tribal minorities of India are clearly different from the mainstream and dominant society and have been repressed inhumanly in many ways. Even after seventy years of independence, the same plight prevails and they are treated with indifference and callousness. The insensitive mainstream that remains totally oblivious of the tribal situation angers the author. Mahasweta Devi declares that the sole purpose of her writing is to expose the many faces of the exploiting agencies. She indubitably advocates Modern Humanism and vehemently demands for the rights and dignity of the tribal minorities.

Mahasweta Devi's powerful narratives about the dispossessed along with her activism on their behalf have made her one of the renowned,

and most recurrently translated, of India's writers. Her writings focus on the issues of caste and class exploitation and the resistance of the exploited. This paper explores Mahasweta Devi's *Draupadi* a tale of transgression of the tortured tribal minority and how powerfully the author encodes the exilic encounters of the dauntless Dopdi, the protagonist.

“Tribe” is a contested term due to its roots of being defined by outsiders during the period of colonialism. A tribe is viewed, developmentally or historically, as a social group existing outside of or before the development of states. A tribe is a group of distinct people, dependent on their land for their livelihood, who are largely self-sufficient, and not integrated into the national society. Tribal people in India are called adivasi. Though terms such as atavika, vanavasi (forest dwellers), Palangudi, or girijan (hill people) are also used for the tribes of India, adivasi carries the specific meaning of being the original inhabitants of a given region. Adivasi is the collective term for the indigenous peoples of mainland South Asia. Adivasi make up 8.6% of India's population ie, approximately 104 million people according to the 2011 census. They comprise a substantial indigenous minority of the population of India. They are particularly prominent in West Bengal, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha, Andra Pradesh, and some north-eastern states.

One of the prime factors for claiming aboriginal status for the tribes is to enable them to gain territorial, land rights and control over natural resources. But contrary to that, there are vicious forces in the country that are overtly active in not conceding these rights. The police and army units, who raid the Naxalite prone zones, become the perpetrators of rape and other atrocities. Social hierarchy plays a vital role in the rape of Dalit and tribal women, who are inhumanly, ill-treated because of their lower social standing. The humiliating tradition of branding a tribe as a criminal, which was first introduced by the British, is still rampant in the hinterlands of India. They are framed, tortured and raped by the police forces and become specimens of brutal mistreatment.

As Salman Rushdie records/registers, while narrating the childhood of Geronimo in his *Two Years Eight Months and Twenty Eight Nights*, “Majority rules and minority, look out. So we become outsiders in our own place...” the tribal

minorities, the indigenous sons of the soil, become outsiders and exiles in their own place without any territorial rights that are due of them.

Mahasweta Devi was profoundly concerned in the welfare of the tribal minorities. She writes about the everyday life and problems of tribal folk. But unlike the other writers of the contemporary Bengali literature, she was standoffish. Her works do not romanticize the tribal life instead they depict the monopoly of feudalism over land and the poverty stricken tribal people's wretched life. As a herald of change, Mahasweta Devi, redrafts the forgotten history and exposes India's tribal and feudal life.

Mahasweta Devi is crossed by the gross indifference meted out on these mute minorities and she justifies their occasional violence where the system fails to do justice. Her pen plainly paints how the tribes are stripped out of their honour in their own land. She speaks against the denial of reality in literature and drafts a bloody picture of reality in her works where the sons of the soil emerge alive. She immerses herself in documenting the exploitation of the innocent tribals. In the politics of power and hegemony, tribals are regarded as insignificant particles. She vows to write on the same themes and proclaims in her foreword to *Rakasi Kora*:

“...as long as hunger, poverty, naked exploitation by the rich and the landed, oppression by the government machineries continue, I will continue to write the same things.” She reflects the impact of cruel state machinery and industrialization in her works.

*Draupadi* first appeared in *Agnigarbha* (Womb of Fire, 1978), a collection of loosely connected, short political narratives of Mahasweta Devi. One among the ‘terrible’ tales of Mahasweta Devi, *Draupadi*, which distinctly differs from the mythical counterpart, prominently features the subjugation of the tribal woman Draupadi and her rebellion against the forces of the government. *Draupadi* articulates the agonies of ‘the dispossessed’ and ‘the disinherited’ minorities. Satyanarayana in his Introduction contends, “These ‘shadowy named’ characters have plausible being when the subalternist historian imagines a historical moment supported by some counter insurgent or revolutionary feminist textual material.” (21)

In *Draupadi*, Mahasweta Devi maps the struggle, eventual capture and brutal rape of the twenty-seven year old female revolutionary, Dopdi Mejhen, who is wanted by the military for her involvement in the Naxalite rebellion against the bourgeois, nationalist government and the landowners in the 1960s and 1970s. Surja Sahu, a land-owning money lender, is assassinated because he refuses to share water with untouchables. Dopdi's husband Dulna Majhi, is killed during the military encounters and a reward of two hundred rupees is announced for her head.

To Spivak, *Draupadi* "is a moment caught between two deconstructive formulas: on the one hand, a law that is fabricated with a view to its own transgression, on the other, the undoing of the binary opposition between the intellectual and the rural struggles." (D 386) "Draupadi is the name of the central character. She is introduced to the reader between two uniforms and between two versions of her name: Dopdi and Draupadi. It is either that as a tribal she cannot pronounce her own Sanskrit name (Draupadi), or the tribalized form, Dopdi, is the proper name of the ancient Draupadi. She is on a list of wanted persons, yet her name is not on the list of appropriate names for the tribal women." (D 387)

Senanayak, an army official, moves with the tribal as their friend and identifies Dopdi and apprehends her. His principle, "If you want to destroy the enemy, become one" bears fruit for his wide search for the accused. As the translator of *Draupadi*, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak in her Foreword opines,

"..... On the level of the plot, Senanayak is the army officer who captures and degrades Draupadi. I will not go so far as to suggest that, in practice, the instruments of First-World life and investigation are complicit with such captures and such a degradation.' .....Hence in practice, Senanayak must destroy the enemy, the menacing other. He follows the necessities and contingencies of what he sees as his historical moment. There is a convenient colloquial name for that as well: pragmatism. Thus his emotions at Dopdi's capture are mixed: sorrow (theory) and joy (practice). Correspondingly, we grieve for our Third-World sisters;" (D 381)

Dopdi strives hard to escape his hands and decides not to enter the forest to save the hideouts of her other comrades from the eyes of him. In the

verge of defeat, she vows, "I won't go in the forest, I won't lose him that way. I won't outrun him. You fucking jackal of a cop, deadly afraid of death, you can't run around in the forest. I'd run you out of breath, throw you in a ditch, and finish you off." (D 400) But when caught, she doesn't fail to raise alarm to her friends in the hideout.

"Now Dopdi spreads her arms, raises her face to the sky, turns toward the forest, and ululates with the force of her entire being. Once, twice, three times. At the third burst the birds in the trees at the outskirts of the forest awake and flap their wings. The echo of the call travels far." (D 401)

Then the episode of exploitation begins. The female body becomes the prey to be hunted down by the dominant male. Colin Mac Cabe asserts, "The force of Mahasweta Devi's text resides in its grounding in the gendered subaltern's body, in that female body which is never questioned and only exploited. The bodies of Jashoda and Dopdi figure forth the unutterable ugliness and cruelty which cooks in Third World kitchen to produce the First World feast that we daily enjoy." Senanayak, the representative of the dominant and aggressive male power, directs his men to humiliate Dopdi.

"Draupadi Mejhen was apprehended at 6:53 P.M. It took an hour to get her to camp. Questioning took another hour exactly. No one touched her . . . Senanayak's dinner hour approached, and saying, "Make her. Do the needful," he disappeared . . . Opening her eyes after a million light years, Draupadi, strangely enough, sees sky and moon . . . Trying to move, she feels her arms and legs still tied to four posts. Something sticky under her ass and waist . . . How many came to make her? Shaming her, a tear trickles out of the corner of her eye" (D 401)

Later in the morning Draupadi is summoned at Senanayak's tent. Draupadi fixes her eyes on the tent with a firm fortitude. This brutal act of disrobing her to nakedness and custodial rape makes her dauntlessly face her oppressors and empowers her instead of cowering spirits. She reacts with self-assertion and resilience, and registers her resistance vehemently.

Her empowerment begins when she decides to rise against the forces that subjugate her thus changing the existing hegemony. She arms herself against the perpetrators with her naked

body and avenges for her humiliation and wins back her honor.

“Draupadi stands up. She pours the water down on the ground. Tears her piece of cloth with her teeth. Seeing such strange behavior, the guard says, She's gone crazy, ..... Senanayak walks out surprised and sees Draupadi, naked, walking toward him in the bright sunlight with her head high. The nervous guards trail behind. What is this? He is about to cry, but stops. Draupadi stands before him, naked. Thigh and pubic hair matted with dry blood. Two breasts, two wounds. What is this? He is about to bark. Draupadi comes closer. Stands with her hand on her hip, laughs and says, The object of your search, Dopdi Mehjen. You asked them to make me up, don't you want to see how they made me?”

Her actions dazzle Senanayak. The uncovered and subversive Dopdi's final moment of resistance against the military commander, Senanayak paints a different History. He is threatened by her very demeanor. He frantically shouts, “Where are her clothes?”

“Draupadi shakes with an indomitable laughter that Senanayak simply cannot understand. Draupadi.....in a voice that is as terrifying, sky splitting, and sharp as her ululation, What's the use of clothes? You can strip me, but how can you clothe me again? Are you a man? .....There isn't a man here that I should be ashamed. I will not let you put my cloth on me. What more can you do? (D402).

The epic Draupadi is infinitely clad by her omnipotent God during the episode of ‘disrobing’ whereas Mahasweta Devi's Draupadi is gang-raped by the all powerful police personals, the guards of the public, and declines their offer to clad herself again. In Draupadi, what is looked at as an erotic ‘subject’ – the naked feminine body, gets transformed into an ‘object’ - a powerful weapon of torture and revenge, dissolving the boundaries of sexuality and gender violence. The myth that is constructed around the feminine body and gender boundaries get shattered by the revolting Dopdi who sends a strong message to the dominant gender that they can unclad her and rip her out of her modesty but no one can ever cover her nudity or clad her now. Thus, the daring and dauntless Dopdi Mehjen, the mute minority victim, the ‘other,’ emerges as a successful symbol of retaliation and fights back against her suppressors.

Resolved to remain publicly naked, she gets back her modesty since her oppressors are intimidated even to face her. Here Patriarchal authority loses its power and matriarchy gains control where male dominance and leadership faces utter defeat and disgrace.

There is nothing for Dopdi to go back and live over or fix, neither her beloved husband nor her land, yet she vows to claim back her honour and avenge the inhuman cruelty meted on her by the men around her. Women's mind becomes the hardest prison to escape from the patriarchal cannons construed around her femininity. As Simone de Beauvoir argues in “*Woman: Myth and Reality*,” men have made woman the “Other” in society by application of a false aura of “mystery” around them. Masculine nakedness and its public display is praised by the society for its embodiment of his strength and valour whereas Feminine nudity is revered only if it is presented before her man. When it is displayed publicly by force without the consent of the woman, it brought shame only to the woman and not to the man who strips her out of her honour. Thus society instills in the mind of woman that she is the one who is dishonoured and not the man who performed the act of dishonouring her. She is forced to believe and view it as a shame to her femininity.

History has recorded tales of rapes and abuse of women's body during wars and invasions. The female body becomes the non-combatant prisoner of war that is held in custody by a belligerent male power immediately after the armed conflicts such as wars and battles. Male military ethics justify the plunder of property and the rape of women, a wanton destruction, without any resentment but with all pride. Particularly in ethnic conflict, the phenomenon has broader sociological motives. Rape and abuse is frequently used as a means of psychological warfare in order to humiliate the enemy. Rape can also be recognized as genocide or ethnic cleansing when committed with the intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a targeted group. Man feels that he robs his opponent of his honour when he captures his women and abuses the female body.

Betty Friedan states, “Women should emerge out to break free the mental chains of the Feminine Mystique in order to achieve greater self-realization to become complete. Dopdi achieves this self-realization and breaks through all the

cultural barriers and mental chains construed by the society around her female body and emerges as an empowered woman answering Friedan's call.

Dopdi's transgression questions the implied power structures and hierarchies and interrogates assumptions of feminine integrity. Through the insurgency of the protagonist Dopdi, Mahasweta Devi lays bare episodes of discrimination, egalitarianism and the politics of exclusion of the tribes perpetrated by the Indian democracy before her readers. By subverting the myth of Draupadi, she redrafts a reinvigorating and empowering new myth for Dopdi. Thus Mahasweta Devi's writings shatter the traditional narratives of the typecast role of women. Her powerful, haunting tales of exploitation and empowered emergence from the same serve as affluent source of feminist discourse.

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## History of Morichjapi Incident in Amitav Ghosh's *The Hungry Tide*

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### Abstract

Amitav Ghosh's '*The Hungry Tide*' is a prophetic novel. It is a historical novel also. History can also refer to the academic discipline which uses a narrative to examine and analyses a sequence of past events, and objectively determine the patterns of cause and effect that determine them. *The Hungry Tide* (2004), the novel sets in the Bay of Bengal, lies the immense labyrinth of tiny islands known as the Sundarbans. The novels of Amitav Ghosh deal with the major events that have shaped the history of South East Asia. The effect of these historical changes on the individuals is the main focus of his writings. In his widespread focus on the events that have shaped the subcontinent, Ghosh traverses a vast landscape of time and places, unfolding a broad spectrum of socio-political, cultural and historical changes that result in the individual's peculiar predicament. In *The Hungry Tide*, he shuttles between the Morichjhanpi incidents from Nirmal's point of view, and the present day travels of Piya Roy, Kanai and Fokir. The novel highlights not only place but, crucially, dynamically evolving human relationships, cross cultural barriers and communication and the relationship between past and present. History is an important and inalienable aspect of much of Amitav Ghosh's fictions. The Morichjapi incident elaborates the Migration and Refugee Resettlement in West Bengal.

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Amitav Ghosh's '*The Hungry Tide*' is a prophetic novel. It is a historical novel also. History can also refer to the academic discipline which uses a narrative to examine and analyses a sequence of past events, and objectively determine the patterns of cause and effect that determine them. *The Hungry Tide* (2004), the novel sets in the Bay of Bengal, lies the immense labyrinth of tiny islands known as the Sundarbans. The novels of Amitav Ghosh deal with the major events that have shaped the history of South East Asia. The effect of these historical changes on the individuals is the

main focus of his writings. In his widespread focus on the events that have shaped the subcontinent, Ghosh traverses a vast landscape of time and places, unfolding a broad spectrum of socio-political, cultural and historical changes that result in the individual's peculiar predicament. In *The Hungry Tide*, he shuttles between the Morichjhanpi incidents from Nirmal's point of view, and the present day travels of Piya Roy, Kanai and Fokir. The novel highlights not only place but, crucially, dynamically evolving human relationships, cross cultural barriers and communication and the relationship between past and present. History is an important and inalienable aspect of much of Amitav Ghosh's fictions. The Morichjapi incident elaborates the Migration and Refugee Resettlement in West Bengal.

Amitav Ghosh's '*The Hungry Tide*' is a prophetic novel. It is a historical novel also. History can also refer to the academic discipline which uses a narrative to examine and analyses a sequence of past events, and objectively determine the patterns of cause and effect that determine them. Historians sometimes debate the nature of history and its usefulness by discussing the study of the discipline as an end in itself and as a way of providing "perspective" on the problems of the present.

Historical fiction rose to prominence in Europe during the early 19<sup>th</sup> century as part of the Romantic reaction to Enlightenment, especially through the influence of the Scottish writer Sir Walter Scott, whose works were popular throughout Europe.

*The Hungry Tide* (2004), the novel sets in the Bay of Bengal, lies the immense labyrinth of tiny islands known as the Sundarbans. The novels of Amitav Ghosh deal with the major events that have shaped the history of South East Asia. The effect of these historical changes on the individuals is the main focus of his writings. In his widespread focus on the events that have shaped the subcontinent, Ghosh traverses a vast landscape of

time and places, unfolding a broad spectrum of socio-political, cultural and historical changes that result in the individual's peculiar predicament.

In the novel *The Hungry Tide*, The arrival of Kanai Dutt, a 42 years old bachelor who runs a flourishing business in translation in Delhi and that of Piyali Roy, a cetologist of Indian origin settled abroad in settled, in the Sunderbans provides a necessary link to the chain of events of the past and also determines the course of future. E.H Carr Says: "History acquires meaning and objectivity only when it establishes a coherent relation between past and future" (E.H. Carr-What is History-68).

Kanai's uncle and aunt, Nirmal and Nilima Bose from Calcutta had settled down in Lusibari, a remote island in the Sunderbans in the year 1950. Nirmal, a Leftist intellectual had got in trouble due to his political involvements hence he had left the job of a college lecturer in Calcutta and become a teacher in the Lusibari School. Nilima popularly known as 'Mashima' in Lusibari had founded the Badabon Trust, the Women's Union, which in the course of time had blossomed into a big organization.

Nirmal had died after his retirement as a schoolteacher and it is at the behest of his aunt that Kanai goes to Lusibari to retrieve the journal that Nirmal had left behind for him. Piya has come to the Sunderbans to study the rare dolphins unique to the islands. She hires a young man, a local fisherman Fokir, from the island, to help her in her exploration trips for the dolphins.

The past figures prominently in all the novels of Ghosh. His historical insight into past, his deep sense of its understanding helps him focus on the realities and complexities of the present. This becomes a means of revisioning the past, to live its experiences, to question the Western erasure of history and to universalize personal history. E.H.Carr remarks: "The function of history is to promote a profounder understanding of both past and present through the interrelation between them." (E.H. Carr – What is History -13)

Ghosh's major concern in this novel is to universalize subaltern history. These subaltern figures therefore are made the real heroes who by their sheer power of resistance to unbearable odds and adversities rise to the status of the real makers of history.

As Kanai reads Nirmal's journal, he gets an insight into the past. In the journal, Nirmal takes Kanai on a journey to the 70's – a period that witnessed serious political crises, with the partition of Bengal. The communal riots forced many to leave Bengal. It was in the early 70's that refugees from Bangladesh, escaping political persecution and atrocities perpetrated by the government in the resettlement camp, started pouring into Morichjhapi – an island reserved for tiger conservation by the government in the Sunderbans.

The novels of Amitav Ghosh deal with the major events that have shaped the history of South East Asia. The effect of these historical changes on the individuals is the main focus of his writings. In his widespread focus on the events that have shaped the subcontinent, Ghosh traverses a vast landscape of time and places, unfolding a broad spectrum of socio-political, cultural and historical changes that result in the individual's peculiar predicament. As the Partition of India in 1947 and its related themes are the major concerns of the postcolonial writers.

As the Partition of India in 1947 and its related themes are the major concern of the postcolonial writers Ghosh refers also to the history of the creation of Bangladesh in 1971 and the separation of East Bengal, a major event that shaped his insights into history. A large number of people became homeless as a result of these political events. These suffering masses, refugees as they are called, figure prominently in Ghosh's novels.

In *The Hungry Tide*, he shuttles between the Morichjhapani incidents from Nirmal's point of view, and the present day travels of Piya Roy, Kanai and Fokir. The novel highlights not only place but, crucially, dynamically evolving human relationships, cross cultural barriers and communication and the relationship between past and present. History is a recurring theme of Amitav Ghosh. History is expanded to encompass all of reality. Everything has a history-ideas, people, cultures, things, nature and so on which ultimately takes its place in the larger scheme of things which the historian Robert Berkhofer has called 'The Great Past'. He articulates the suppressed history.

Amitav Ghosh has accepted that:

Part of the idea behind *The Hungry Tide* was to shine light on this area that is little known within India. But even within Bengal, the Sundarbans is really a kind of area of darkness. People don't think of it, they don't write about it, they don't look at it. This is such a strange thing. For the ordinary tourist, the Sundarbans doesn't offer much. You will never see the tigers; there is no wildlife to be seen. Sometimes you may see a crocodile, a few birds, but it is not like going to the Serengeti or some resort; it offers nothing to tourists as such. But, at the same time, it is a place of incredible beauty and presence. (UN Chronicle 22)

The novel is set in Sundarbans. The Sundarbans is an archipelago of islands in the Bay of Bengal, known as "tide country". The novel discusses two temporal narratives. One of the narratives is 'Morichjhapi Massacre' through Nirmal's diary. The other narrative is Piya's research on the Irrawaddy dolphins (*orcaella brevirostris*). The two narratives are the conflict between human rights and animal conservation. Kanai is a nephew of Nilima, who works in NGO Organisation. Nirmal, a journalist, is a husband of Nilima. Kanai explores his late uncle's diary about a historical incident. Ghosh takes us back and forth in time and space to recreate the horror of Morichjhapi - a tragedy conveniently marginalized in Indian historiography.

Following the partitions, Bengali Hindus from East Pakistan enters to West Bengal (1947) for their better life. These people are called 'Refugees'. The refugees' plight in the first place was the product of partition. The Government of West Bengal was of the opinion that refugees were a burden to be shared jointly among the federal government and those of the neighboring states.

Then, the refugees migrated to Dandkaranya in 1961 deep in the forest of Madhya Pradesh was conceived as a long lasting solution to the problem of rehabilitation of Bengali refugees. In Dandkaranya, the refugees felt alienated. It was a semi-arid and rocky place, an area culturally, physically and emotionally.

In 1960s, the main party of opposition (CPI (M) provided voice to these refugees from

Bangladesh and promised to house them in West Bengal, suggesting it might be in the Sundarbans if and when they come to power.

Morichjhapi.... Was a tide country island.... In 1978 it happened that a great number of people suddenly appeared in Morichjhapi. In this place where there had been no inhabitants before there were now thousands, almost overnight. Within a matter of weeks they had been no inhabitants before there were now thousands, almost overnight. Within a matter of weeks they had cleared the mangroves, built badhs and put up huts. It happened so quickly that in the beginning no one even knew who these people were. But in time it came to be learnt that they were refugees, originally from Bangladesh. Some had come to India after Partition, while others had trickled over later. In Bangladesh they had been among the poorest of rural people, oppressed and exploited both by Muslim communalists and by Hindus of the upper castes.

Most of them were Dalits, as say now, Harijans, as we used to say then (THT 118).

In 1977, then the Left Front Government first came to power in Calcutta, the refugees sold their belongings and land and decided to move back to West Bengal. Fearing that the influx of refugees might jeopardize the prospects of the state's economic recovery, the government started to forcibly send them back. An approximately 1, 50, 000 almost all of Dandkaranya refugees arrived to West Bengal in 1972.

A few hundred refugees made their way to Morichjhapi and started settling down there. Morichjhapi was renamed as "Netaji Nagar". An approximately 40,000 refugees went south and camped for few months in Hasnabad settled in Morichjhapi, a protected place under Reserve Forest Act. The government considered it as an unauthorized occupation of reserved forest land.

They had found Morichjhapi as a place where they were no longer at the mercy of the local people or even the government, initially. The government tried to pursue them to return to their respective place, but with little effect. On 24

January 1979, the government of West Bengal clamped some prohibitory orders under section 144 of the CRPC around the island of Morichjapi.

The government announced that all movements in and out of Morichjapi was banned under the provisions of the Forest Preservation Act (THT 252).

What was more section 144, the law used to quell civil disturbances, was imposed on the whole one: this meant it was a criminal offence for five people or more to gather in one place. As the days wore on dozens of bloods has encircled the island, teargas and rubber bullet had been used, the settlers had been forcibly prevented from rice and water to Morichjapi, boats had been sunk, people had been killed (THT252).

There had been a series of confrontations between the settlers in Morichajpi and the police. The police started patrolling the island and prevented anyone from providing food or water to the residents of the island.

On 31 January 1979 the police started gun fire on the settlers of the island when the settlers attacked the police camp with traditional can weapons. The death county was never confirmed. Official statistics put the deaths due to firing at two, but multiple sources put the total death between 100 to 1000. The Sundarban islanders

witnessed this brutal eviction as the massacre of Morichjapi.

But the government had proved unbending in their determination to evict the settlers. Over a period about a year there had been a series of confrontations between the settlers and government forces and the final clash... was in mid May of the year 1979 (THT 119).

History is an important and inalienable aspect of much of Amitav Ghosh's fictions. The Morichjapi incident elaborates the Migration and Refugee Resettlement in West Bengal.

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## Jayanta Mahapatra's Poem Gives Reimagining in Humanism in Orissa through Beyond The Postcolonial Structure

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### Abstract

Jayanta Mahapatra poetry: "Today, The Day- The False Start," "The Captive Air of Chandipur-on-sea –Life Signs," writes their title. The poet voluntary writes his native place nature exposure compare to other areas. For that time reason for all exposition and thoughts he also mentally affects and then full of pain his hearts. He writes about rain from his area. Mostly writes rain poem. It is rain affects natural calamity an Orissa. **Chandipur Sea** waves flow on the level. Sea air and shells and rumples the seashore sands. He says through this poem baffle and double space of lives our surrounding. Living public smell of feel paralysed centuries. It is agric-deltas hard and white that stretched. The women bidding their men said goodbye. Salt light is that dark and provocative eyes demanded, their shoulders drooping like lotuses in the noonday sun.

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Jayanta Mahapatra poetry: "Today, The Day- The False Start," "The Captive Air of Chandipur-on-sea –Life Signs," writes their title. The poet voluntary writes his native place nature exposure compare to other areas. For that time reason for all exposition and thoughts he also mentally affects and then fulls of pain his hearts. He writes about rain from his area. Mostly writes rain poem. It is rain affects natural calamity an Orissa. **Chandipur sea** waves flow on the level. Sea air and shells and rumples the seashore sands. He says through this poem baffle and double space of lives our surrounding. Living public smell of feel paralysed centuries. It is agric-deltas hard and white that stretched. The women bidding their men said goodbye. Salt light is that dark and provocative eyes demanded, their shoulders drooping like lotuses in the noonday sun. It is like the lurking madness in a tyrant eye is the whim of another day. It is dark wings shut and unmoving in the blue. I cannot escape that day lives in the coming night; day would begin its darkening. It is

round the corners of your memory the dispersed belief atop an abandoned temple. It is shape beside in my body, a presence, flouring. I keep wanting long into the night, calling for that moment of feeling. I kept trying to touch. It places, things, hoping for those people. They would touch of my backs. I have not seen before. Now, the ground seems only a memory torn breath. People are waiting for when the tide to flood the mudflats. While his song reaches our own ears. The fishermen cries become drifting through the spray, music. The world people have last at all. The poets always think about his village and status. He only emerged out of his state's status and views of society and cultures.

Today? In the blank moonlight

of night and day, today is a small knot

tied up in my vein, ready to burst. (**Today, Book Volume-The False Start, 15**)

Monsoon light in the blank of moonlight of day and night, today is a small knot. Today is useful for present but isn't utilized waste of thought. Be always bees work and its life very hard.

Ignore it? Can one?

Memories come like the wind, and today

peers from the years: over unbridled waves

and tenacious skies, and I know

that you can never be lost

because their secret nets of pain

would always be there to bring you in....(**Today, Book Volume-The False Start, 15**)

It is ready of to burst memories come like the wind and today peers from the years. I know that a message of my feeling because their street nets of pain.

Time faces me; and there

like the lurking madness in a tyrant's eye

is the whim of another day,  
dark wings shut and unmoving in the blue. **(Today, Book Volume-The False Start, 15)**

It is like the lurking madness in a tyrant eye is the whim of another day. It is dark wings shut and unmoving in the blue.

This day is an instant which possesses me,  
from which I cannot escape: who knows  
what part of this day lives in the coming night,  
who knows when the day would begin  
its darkening, for him? Today  
leads me, round the corners of your memory,  
as time flutters like a prayer-flag  
in the dispersed belief atop an abandoned temple;  
**(Today, Book Volume-The False Start, 15)**

I cannot escape that day lives in the coming night; day would begin its darkening. It is round the corners of your memory the dispersed belief atop an abandoned temple.

only the loss of an innocence  
stretches the heart out of the present  
and sizes this day; to put me down,  
an unknown pilgrim on that road  
where voices echo from the damp vein walls  
and you a sleep, whose silence waits for me.  
**(Today, Book Volume-The False Start, 15)**

They are only the loss of their innocence.  
The heart out of the present sizes that day. It is voices echo from the damp vein walls.

Like some shape beside my body; a presence, flourishing.

Whiles I keep wanting long into the night,  
calling for that moment of feeling. **(The Day, Book Volume-The False Start, 53)**

I want to feel long sleep of my life time. In presence of his mind actually diverse in timing.

I keep trying to touch its places, things,  
hoping they would touch me back,  
perhaps open me up to what I've not seen before.  
**(The Day, Book Volume-The False Start, 53)**

It is shape beside in my body, a presence, flourishing. I keep wanting long into the night, calling for that moment of feeling. I kept trying to touch. It places, things, hoping for those people. They would touch of my backs. I have not seen before.

I wonder if what I'm doing is right,  
if the day is all,  
is that which holds me firmly to my world. **(The Day, Book Volume-The False Start, 53)**

I wonder, doing right aspects. It is hold mine firmly to my world.

At times a day of my past  
stands in front of me, ethereal as a ghost.

And my body wanders to the dark ends of my story.

**(The Day, Book Volume-The False Start, 53)**

At that past pain of thoughts stands in front of me. Ethereal as a ghost in my body wanders to the dark only of my story.

Such days are always happening.

And if I had learned from one  
all that I was likely to learn, where would it have led me?

**(The Day, Book Volume-The False Start, 53)**

Daily events are always happening. I had learned from all events of Orissa. I was likely to learn. It had led me.

No day ever knows the lasso of the sun on my door,

how the darkness races round the edges of the light to strike a patch across the skies I've never owned.

**(The Day, Book Volume-The False Start, 53)**

Now day everybody known's about our society and routine life style. Here poet mentions sun light touch and push their feelings. Light only touch in every one life but their life cannot change each and every movement.

Day after the drunk sea at Chandipur  
spits out the gauze wings of shells along the beach  
and rumples the thin air behind the sands.

Who can tell of the songs of this sea that go onto baffle and double the space around our

lives? Or of smells paralysed through the centuries, of deltas hard and white that stretched on to lure the feet of women bidding their men goodbye? Or of salt and light that dark and provocative eyes demanded, their shoulders drooping like lotuses in the noonday sun? .

**(The Captive Air of Chandipur-on-Sea, Book Volume-Life Signs, 1)**

**Chandipur sea** waves flow on the level. Sea air and shells and rumples the seashore sands. He says through this poem baffle and double space of lives our surrounding. Living public smell of feel paralysed centuries. It is agric-deltas hard and white that stretched. The women bidding their men said goodbye. Salt light is that dark and provocative eyes demanded, their shoulders drooping like lotuses in the noonday sun.

And what is it now that scatters the tide in the shadow of this proud watercourse?

The ridicule of the dead?

Susurrant sails still whisper legends on the horizon: who are you, occupant of the silent sigh of the conch?

The ground seems only a memory now, a torn breath, and as we wait for the tide to flood the mudflats the song that reaches our ears is just our own. The cries of fishermen come drifting through the spray, music of what the world has lost. **(The Captive Air of Chandipur-on-Sea, Book Volume-Life Signs, 1)**

Now its scatters of the tide shadow proud water course. Settle of dead. Susurrant sails still whisper legends on the horizon. The silent is sigh

of the conch. Now, the ground seems only a memory torn breath. People are waiting for when the tide to flood the mudflats. While his song reaches our own ears. The fishermen cries become drifting through the spray, music. The world people have last at all.

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## The Colour of Apartheid Africa Through the Eyes of Nadine Gordimer

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‘Apartheid’ is a policy or system of segregation or discrimination on grounds of race in South Africa from 1948 to 1991. Nadine Gordimer (1923- 2014) who lived in South Africa during the Apartheid period has experienced the effect of it and portrays the real colour of Africa through her writings. Unlike other writers she never feels afraid or bad to speak the reality. In spite of many restrictions and rules, she calls a spade a spade and never hesitates to do so.

“I have failed at many times, I have never been afraid”- Nadine Gordimer

Speaking the truth became a herculean task for people in Africa because if they portray the harsh reality through their writings, then their works were banned. These types of works will definitely be censored before it reaches the people because according to South African governments, these works would spoil the minds of African people. The state of writers is in a pathetic condition. The oxygen of creativity is freedom and this freedom of expression is not provided to writers

The Apartheid period made a few unfavorable laws which made blacks life even more difficult. ‘Prohibition of Mixed Marriage Act’ (1949) is the first law under which whites and blacks were restricted to have sexual relationship. Government got involved even in the private life of black people. The next act was ‘The Population Act’ (1950), which divided people in South Africa under four different categories. Namely, Black, White, Coloured and Indian

“A fair skin is the equivalent of a golden spoon in the child’s mouth”

- (Living in Hope and History pg 110)

People of each type had different advantages and disadvantages. People those who came under the ‘black’ group had to face lot of problem that they sometimes even wanted themselves to be identify as ‘Coloured’ so that they

can get more privileges like better jobs, house and freedom than that of being a black.

Gordimer in her essay, ‘1959: What is Apartheid?’ says that the answer for the question ‘what is apartheid?’ differs from the person whom we ask. For the South African government, it is separate and parallel development of white and black. For a white man, it is the way of keeping South Africa white. Apart from all these answers, the real answer which comes from a black man is with a different shade and in different dimensions according to the sufferings they have faced. Blacks were made to do all the physical work that whites hesitate to do. Black people lived in almost all the white people’s house not as inhabitants but as servants. White people were in need of blacks to do all the physical work that they considered as undignified. They wanted black butcher’s boy, black grocery boy, Black milk boy, etc because they thought that labour work was framed to be done by black people and whites should either monitor them or do some intellectual work. They got all the work done by blacks but refused to allow them inside any museum, theatre, zoo.etc. Blacks and whites had different places to live and most of the blacks had to live a life like in slum. Each and every city had divisions in which the whites live in the main place and the blacks were pushed to the outskirts. Even in Johannesburg, the place where Gordimer lived, there was a black Johannesburg towards the west side of the original Johannesburg. No black man was allowed to have his house in the white city. These black cities had only minimum facilities that even daily life became a struggle to black people.

Lorraine Hansberry’s drama “*A Raisin in The Sun*” we see such the Younger’s family suffer to buy a house in the white neighborhood. Their wish was restricted from several ways that even the white people in the neighborhood were ready to offer more money for not getting the house because to them living with a black as their neighbor was a prestige problem and so they tried their best to get rid of the Younger’s family.

Gordimer in her essay, 'How not to know the African' explains the various ways in which black writers and people are getting recognized and she condemns over it. The best way to know the history of a country or about the problems of the people is to hear the voices of the unheard. Gordimer gives a reference of a news paper in which there were news on the series of lectures titled 'Know the African'. Should there be any special lectures to know about a particular group of people? Are they any kind of creatures to learn how to handle them? This was the state of Africa during the period of Apartheid. Whites were learning to handle black people so that it will be easy for them to have a recognized relationship among them. Recognized relationship is nothing but an acquainted level of relationship and to create this white people needed lectures.

"If we want to know- not 'the African', that laboratory specimen, that worker bee of fascinating habits, but the black men and women among whom we could learn."

(Living In Hope And History pg 117)

In 1965, under the Suppression of Communism Amendment Act, a list of Black writers was banned. African and some of the coloured writers' works were banned and became non-existent. These voices of the marginalized were purposefully kept unheard. Unless it is heard direct from one who had experienced it, the news would not be completely true. It is human nature to create any work of art with a slight touch of their personal experience. Gordimer says, "If one wants to know more than a few poor facts, these autobiographies, novels, stories, essays and poems are the place to find the inner world where men learn the things worth knowing about each other."

Writers like Alex La Guma and Dennis Brutus who never accused the practical politics but wrote more on their personal experience were also banned. And the reason for them being banned is not that they are against the political practices but just because they were blacks.

"And can South Africans boast of a literature while, by decree, in their own country, it consists of some of the books written by its black and white, Afrikaans and English-speaking writers?"

(Living In Hope and History pg 120)

The history of any country is carried out to the next generation through the contemporary writers' works. When most of writings of the people who suffered is not let out, then the history is not complete and Africa cannot say that they are having a complete literature because is not possible to have a complete literature without incomplete history. However after the end of apartheid in 1993, South Africa became democratic and lifted all the restrictions against the press. Everyone was given freedom to express their thoughts. But still the unrecorded history remains hidden to the future generations. Few writers like Nadine Gordimer throw some light of the Apartheid Africa.

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## Echoes of Disaster in Ayi Kwei Armah's *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born*

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### Abstract

Ecocatastrophe refers to the man-made disaster which affects the environment. Even the thoughts of man are really a disaster for it affects his surroundings. Nature is being rearranged by the hands of man and everything in our society is being corrupted and the pity is that no one has the time to stand and stare. Corruption is one among the disaster made by man and it is satirically exposed in the novel *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born* by Ayikwei Armah. The protagonist struggles to remain clean when everyone else around him has corrupted. He experiences rejection and isolation, for being a responsible citizen. Every time those who were thought to be the beautiful ones, they then indulge in corruption. The society crushes the beautiful ones and they are nothing but a day dream in the corrupted society. Corruption is the root cause of all the evils in the society. Though every individual knows this they have no reason to lament for they are enjoying the fruits of it and there is no place for humanity in this materialistic world where everyone craves for artificiality. Man is demolishing his own soul by rearranging nature.

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“There are disasters that are entirely man made, but none that are entirely natural”.

- Rebecca Solnit

Man cannot alter his destiny if he creates filth around him by corrupting nature and mankind. Disasters caused by humans are painfully portrayed by Ghanaian writer Ayi Kwei Armah in his novel *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born*. The dream of Africans is to end racism. Their ultimate aim is to build a race less society and of their own society without the footprints of their colonizers. African literature seems to be complicated for it faces multiculturalism. They had endured nearly for 300 years in the hands of their colonizers. Creativity and aestheticism are lacking in African literature for they are in conflict often. Their voices have been silenced for the ages. Black writers are often deprived of their rights; they are not allowed to

express their wish. Even after the independence, the writers are expressing not the nostalgic thoughts but about the things which are happening even now in their post colonial country, for the scars are still there. Just because they write against the whites their literature is termed as protest literature.

African writers focused the conflicts in culture, nature, race, generation, power, and values, religious, psychological and so on. Apart from these aspects the people in the post colonial country are very much attracted towards the western way of life and in their longing for the sophisticated life they are losing their own identity without knowing the value of it and these blind thoughts of Africans are exposed painfully in the novels of Ayi Kwei Armah.

Armah is concerned with African history and identity and tries to diagnose social maladies by analyzing the contemporary situation. He tries to rediscover Africa's past to restore to the society in its pristine glory. His novel *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born* is a sad commentary on the state of affairs, where a man who cherishes the norms and values of life and recognizes the role of a responsible citizen is isolated and the person who blatantly violates the norms of social welfare and hankers after personal comforts is adored for his meteoric rise. He describes a society where in order to obtain something in life, one need to accept bribes and one should worship the politician to get a position of prestige. The writer in this novel attacks the money-minded people and he exposes the corrupted society. The protagonist of the novel is a man who has a job in the railway service, a family of his own and a modest house. He is very straight-forward and when he is approached with a bribe, he refuses but this was disliked by his wife, mother-in-law and everyone around him.

Koomson, a former classmate of him who has become a minister is very much involved in the bribery. Koomson wants to go into business with him, so he is invited to dinner with his wife Estelle. Oyo, wife of the protagonist, does everything

possible to honor the guest. She gives them the best food, uses the best plates and glasses in the house in order to impress them. Money plays a vital role and of course it is true that money makes many things. The man in this novel appreciates Koomson's money and power but not how he got it. He hates to get his hands dirty. Being very good, the protagonist experiences isolation and rejection and his family accuses him of being disloyal because he fails to provide adequately for them. Though everyone rejects him, he never loses his determination and he is saved while the politician is accused of bribery. Then the protagonist's wife too realizes the good nature of her husband and feels very proud and grateful. This novel attacks both the colonialism and the black leadership that replaced the white administration after independence. This novel expresses the frustration of many citizens of the newly independent states in Africa felt after attaining political independence. One could find the traces of disaster caused by mankind in general.

The novel divides into two large parts. The first, which moves in a slow pace, traces the daily routine of the man through a typical working day, beginning with the usual bus ride to the railway administration building where he is a traffic central clerk. The day is boring, uneventful but Armah gives his narrative with depressing descriptions of the environment, sights and smells of human excrement, spittle, filth relieved only occasionally by the beauty of some natural phenomena, the sky or the sea, as yet uncontaminated by man's touch. In the afternoon, a timber man comes to offer the man a bribe, but leaves unsatisfied. After work, the man meets an old acquaintance from school, now a government minister, Joseph Koomson and his wife Estella and their visit will initiate the events in the second part of the novel. It opens with an introduction to the type of dishonesty that exists within Ghana.

The bus conductor is corrupted to the core; he cheats the passengers of their money. But, being a passion week, where everybody was hard-pressed for money, 'passengers held out exact fare itself, no more, no less' and he could not cheat them of their money. He smells the cedi, which the passenger was given and likes the odour, which expresses the pleasure of people who indulge in corruption.

The first chapter deals with the inversion of moral values. In this chapter focus is made on how people are giving importance to money and how they are degrading humans for their values. The man in this novel is a follower of moral values and he is rejected and isolated for his morality and goodness, whereas his friend Koomson is praised like anything for his rise even though he is corrupted to the core, people are not bothering about values they are in need of money and fame. Everything in this materialistic society is corrupted and nothing is perfect, everything is inverted. Thus one could hear the disgusting voice of the society and its expectations in this chapter.

The predicament of characters is due to their attachment with money, fame etc. The main characters in this novel suffer from attachment. The man in the novel endures a lot because of his attachment with the society and family, if he has no attachment then there may not be conflicts in him. Koomson, in the end is undergoing struggles which are due to his attachment towards worldly pleasures and luxuries. Every conflict arises because of the desire and only a detached, desire less action will lead to virtue or else society will be under threat. The title *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Born* does not portray direct meaning, rather shows that in our societies beautiful ones are being born every day, but they are being destroyed by their societies in engaging themselves in filth. Every time those who were thought to be the beautiful ones they then indulge in corruption. They earn themselves luxurious things hence the masses are left to suffer poverty. This novel comments on the circle and cycle of corruption in African societies, majority Ghana. This novel presents a situation of a society filled with stench, rot, filth and decay. In this novel, everybody seems corrupted and it is a direct comment on human essence. The society is exploited because of the corruption and with that exploitation the beautiful one will remain a day dream, in a corrupted society like Ghana.

Value plays an important role in our life; it is the one, which leads to the destiny. The values that we follow in our life will make our life a brighter one. Value deals with right conduct and good life. Nowadays people are not giving importance to values and that really causes disasters in our society which in turn affects mankind. The values which we follow in our present day will save us in our future. This is what happened in this novel by Armah. In this novel, the

hero struggles to remain clean when everyone else around him has succumbed to rot. He never loses his determination and that very determination paved him the way for his salvation and that very determination is his saving grace while the corrupted ones are being accused. The man's value saved him at last. Thus, honesty breeds salvation and the effect of karma is exposed in this novel. Rather than values, there are only inversions of moral values given in this novel. The writer has exposed how far the society is affected with the immoral values. The society crushes the beautiful ones and encourages the man with no values for he has money and power.

Money and power matters a lot and there is no place for values here in the corrupted society. We could sense this idea when we come across certain incidents in this novel. The man in this novel says to his wife about the timber contractor who tried to bribe him and his refusal to it. The wife never appreciates him for his good nature rather she hates him for his honesty and she makes a statement that, "Everybody is swimming toward what he wants. Who wants to remain on the beach asking the wind, "How...How...How?" (BONYB 44). We could hear the lamentation of the man over the loss of values and he understands the topsy-turvy value system and he is of the view that to be honest in the eyes of society is to be not only stupid and naïve but also uncooperative and ungracious and insensitive to the needs of others.

"You are the creator of your own destiny", says Swami Vivekananda. Whatever we do comes back to us and the man believes in this fact and he believes that only values will lead to a greater destiny and he tries to instill this belief in the mind of his wife, but she rejects the voice of his husband. The society is lacking in its values and we could sense this idea throughout this book from various incidents. His difficulties are only increased by the fact that his job confronts him with numerous opportunities to improve his lot by accepting bribes. The timber contractor tries to bribe him and he says that 'If you work in the same office you can eat from the same bowl'. [BONYB 29]. This sentence itself reveals the rottenness prevailing in the office. Thus, the morals and values have no place there in the corrupted office. In chapter four, the irresponsible citizens are exposed, the man after finishing his work returns home. On the way to his home, he notices the happenings in the society. The passengers are

waiting in the bus but the conductor walks away down the road. In a few moments the waiters can hear the sound of his urine hitting the clean-your-city can and then the diver in his turn jumps down and follows the conductor to the heap and for a long time they stand by the heap laughing and talking.

These two people, the driver and the conductor are irresponsible to the core, it is not the attack for these two men in particular but the author tries to expose the irresponsible, immoral and valueless comes home, his wife nags him for not getting the bribe from the timber contractor and his wife advises him to adjust with the society. His wife mocks at him by comparing him with a chichi dodo bird. His wife says that 'Ah, You know, the chichi dodo is a bird. The chichi dodo only feeds on maggots, and you know the maggots grew best inside the lavatory. This is the chichi dodo'. [BONYB 45]. This is the prevailing situation in the society. The men who are honest are labeled as waste and they are often condemned for their value. They are considered as cowards and fools. It is revealed in the fifth chapter. "The whole world never tired of saying that there were only two types of men who took refuge in honesty-the cowards and the fools"[BONYB 51]. Thus, the values are totally in inversion and in that society, honesty could only be a social vice.

The good ones are often condemned and they are being isolated from the society. They are considered as strangers in the eyes of the society. The voice of values has not reached yet. Like the man, the beautiful ones are crushed every day. In the society like Ghana, the value of an individual is not counted by his morals but rather a man's value could only be considered as high as the cost of the things he could buy. The man thinks of the slogans to end for it was all for the name sake and he exposes his anger towards the society by saying that "End bribery and corruption. Build socialism, Equality, Shit" (BONYB 154). Throughout his life, the man notices only the immoral values. Often he feels lonely for being a good one. When the new government takes place in Ghana the man feels there was a diffuse uncertainty. He is of the view that one man with the help of people who loved him and believed in him, had arrived at power and used it for himself. Now other men, with the help of guns, had come to this same power. What would it mean? He questions himself. This world is filled with selfish people and everyone works for their

own life and never thinks of their fellow human beings.

“He who is everywhere non- attached, neither joyously excited by encountering good nor disturbed by evil, has an established wisdom”- (Bhagavad Gita 2:57). It was desire which bound man to attachment which in turn leads to frustration and conflict and it in turn leads to disaster. The society will be rewarded only when it refuses to accept certain things which breed vice or if the society runs behind materialism, it will be exploited. It is in the hands of the individual to make or mar the society.

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## Gender Discrimination in Post colonialism – Toni Morrison’s *The Bluest Eye*

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### Abstract

In *The Bluest Eye* Toni Morrison explores the issue of African American female identity. The female Bildungsroman scrutinizes the problem of growing up black and female in a society which equates beauty with blue-eyed whiteness. Morrison points out how the internalization leads to racial self-loathing and eventually to self-destruction. The novel explores the extremity of black poverty in the urban slums and rural America. It chronicles the tragic, torn lives of Breedloves, a poor black family in 1940s in Ohio. Pecola Breedlove, unlovely and unloved, prays each night for blue eyes like those of her privileged blond, white schoolfellows. The Purpose of this paper is to examine suppression through a Post-Colonialism lens in the novel *The Bluest eye*. *The Bluest eye* shows the inner battle of social norms versus minorities. This theory has been chosen because throughout the book, it is seen how blacks suppress other blacks. Many people suppress others for their own self pleasure. To make themselves feel more superior. By this suppression, some of the characters identity was taken away from them. Even the social norm of White is beauty has stripped some of the characters of their identity; this causes confusion and self-conflict among the girls.

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In *The Bluest Eye*, Toni Morrison explores the issue of African American female identity. The female Bildungsroman scrutinizes the problem of growing up black and female in a society which equates beauty with blue-eyed whiteness. Morrison points out how the internalization leads to racial self-loathing and eventually to self-destruction. *The novel* explores the extremity of black poverty in the urban slums and rural America. It chronicles the tragic, torn lives of Breedloves, a poor black family in 1940s in Ohio. Pecola Breedlove, unlovely and unloved, prays each night for blue eyes like those of her privileged blond, white schoolfellows. The Purpose of this paper is to exam suppression through a *Post-Colonialism lens* in the novel *The Bluest eye*. *The Bluest eye* shows the inner battle of

social norms versus minorities. I choose this theory because throughout the book, it is seen how blacks suppress other blacks. Many people suppress others for their own self pleasure. To make themselves feel more superior. By this suppression, some of the characters identity was taken away from them. Even the social norm of White is beauty has stripped some of the characters of their identity, this causes confusion and self conflict among the girls.

In *The Bluest Eye* Morrison’s characters act, interact, suffer, alleviate or dominate in tune with their economic status. It is the economic status of Pauline Breedlove and her limited options in life that prompt her to slap her own child to please her white master’s child. It is their financial status that pushed Breedloves to outdoors. It is not Pecola’s ugliness but her poverty that makes her accept meekly the disgrace from a petty shopkeeper to that of Geraldine, the rich black woman who treats her like an untouchable animal. The insecurity of the female gender in this story and its degrading effects on the tender mind and resultant tragic insanity is more economic oriented rather than societal conditioning.

As a reason that blacks came from abysmal poverty, though fathers dominate, their primary preoccupation is economics rather than family. In this light only one can understand Morrison’s creation and expression of characters. Though the people of the community have felt the effect of classism and racism in varying degrees, the worst victim is the Breedloves’ family. The world in which they live, maintains not only Anglo-Saxon standards of physical beauty but also middle class life style as a norm. It sprouted the hunger for property and for ownership and thus the rented blacks are like weeds and amidst row of weeds the propertied blacks’ houses are like hothouse sunflowers. And they are always the poor neighbors’ envy. This economic marginalization drives Cholly to put fire to his own home and eventually his family is put out doors.

“Cholly Breedlove, then, a renting black, having put his family outdoors, Had catapulted

himself beyond the reaches of human consideration. He had joined the animals; was, indeed, a nold dog, a snake, a ratty nigger.” (TBE 12)

Race, a term which originated in the 17th century, can be assigned manifold meanings, ranging, for example, from linguistic and religious to ethnic groups. Hence, it is more useful to define the aspect of race most relevant to this analysis, which understands race as a cultural designation categorizing a group based primarily upon its common visible features. In other words, this particular aspect of race has formed racial classifications based on biological differences that mask the reality of race as a social construction. The racial ideology of the United States attributed an inferior social position to African Americans and Native Americans. This “myth of black inferiority,” which white people cultivated and institutionalized, resulted in racial segregation, oppression and discrimination in all domains of everyday life, including literature.<sup>5</sup>

*The Bluest Eye* deals in this unconscious desire and shows, in a manner reminiscent of Fanon’s “Black skin, White masks, how under severe white cultural imposition the black person can undergo, in Fanon’s words, „a kind of scission, a fracture of consciousness.” Black culture, helplessly isolated by economic deprivation, is infringed by dominant white culture. This cultural hegemony on uneducated helpless human beings naturally creates identity crisis. The crisis degrades to such an abysmal point that they doubt whether they are alive or dead. Morrison’s characters Pecola, Cholly, Sethe, and Son are only a few to name. These represent the extremity of cultural bankruptcy. The Breedloves lived in a house which is nothing but a shabby abandoned storefront. They virtually share a common bedroom and Pecola witnesses her parents fighting “each other with a darkly brutal formalism that is paralleled only by their love making.” (TBE 43)

Gender can be regarded as a socially constructed dimension of being male or female; men and women are associated with distinctively different roles, representations, values and beliefs. The Oxford Companion to African American Literature points out the magnitude of gender at this time and states that “[t]he politics of race [...] assumed the inveterate inferiority of women in general.” Hence, the black woman, burdening a double jeopardy, was placed at the

very bottom of the chain of being. From the impetus to counter real, literary, but overall negative stereotypes of African American women, black feminist literature emerged. The works particularly explore the intersection of race and gender by emphasizing its detrimental impact on the black women’s strenuous efforts to gain acceptance and respect in society.

Morrison uses her art to call attention to the historical and continuing plight of African Americans, and examines concepts such as community, individuality, and moral responsibility. Interestingly, Morrison’s parents and their attitude towards the racialized world are said to have been of crucial importance for their daughter’s writings. In looking at her family background, her father’s hostility towards white people coupled with her mother’s sanguine attitude, Mobley notes that “[i]t is no surprise [...] that her novels reflect both the pessimism that racism produces and the optimism that has empowered African American people to survive and thrive in spite of racism.” In light of the loss of some black traditions such as storytelling, black fiction increased in importance for Morrison. She is not only a writer, but also an editor with heart and soul. In the latter role Morrison has paved the way for a good many other African American and feminist writers by promoting them. However, Morrison has not always been heaped with praise only. Based on misinterpretations of her novels, critics accused her of confirming, rather than challenging, stereotypes about African American people.

Morrison’s first book of literary criticism, are of considerable relevance since they reveal Morrison’s perspective on race. Morrison argues that “race” (which she herself often puts in quotation marks) has always been an integral part of American culture and literature, or as she phrases it, “[F]or both black and white American writers, in a wholly racialized society, there is no escape from racially inflected language.” She vehemently disagrees with the consensus among literary scholars who claim that “race” was not meaningful to the construction of American identity. Morrison makes clear that the concept of the blacks’ inferiority not only adversely affected black people, but also reciprocally affected white people and the way they imagined their roles in society.

Furthermore, Morrison implicates American literature in disregarding and misinterpreting African American female characters. In this context, she quotes the following scene from Hemmingway's *To Have and Have No*, Marie: "Listen, did you ever do it with a nigger wench?" Harry: "Sure." Marie: "What's it like?" Harry: "Like nurse shark." Here, she proves that the black woman stood even further outside the margin of the marginal groups and is presented as "the furthest thing from human, so far away as to be not even mammal but fish." To Morrison, the plight of non-white Americans continues; she labels "declarations that racism is irrelevant, over or confined to the past" as "premature fantasies." While "race" generally remains "a virtually unspeakable thing," Morrison ventures into speaking the unspeakable in *The Bluest Eye*.

Sigmund Freud clearly insisted that since mothers indulgently protect their off-springs any slightest deviation could ignite hostility between mother and child. This is very much evident in the case of Pauline Breedlove and her daughter Pecola. When loneliness and boredom drives Pauline to frequent the movies, she allows herself to subscribe to the standard of beauty of the white actress, which eventually leads her to collect self-contempt. As Morrison puts in the AfterWord" to her novel, *The Bluest Eye* copes with „racial self-loathing.“ Not only is Pecola exposed to cultural stereotypes common in all multi-ethnic societies but also through her Morrison dramatizes "the damaging internalization of assumptions of immutable inferiority originating in an outside gaze." Morrison's persistent interest is in what she calls "unspeakable thoughts unspoken," a phrase that resonates for her with the silence surrounding many things repressed in the African American unconsciousness, or distorted beyond recognition in the American Africanist discourse.

Morrison proposes that racial pride and connection to African American roots can be more successfully achieved through traditions that 50 come from the community, such as music (blues and jazz, for instance) and storytelling (seen in oral traditions such as call-and-response and in acts as signifying and testifying). It is not an accident that Claudia, who learns about Black traditions through listening to her mother's blues, and who receives support in her self-confidence from her sister Frieda manages to survive and grow up healthily in the story. However, Pecola, who is only exposed to aspirations of white values and does not learn to

connect to African American traditions, cannot find peace or love. Morrison reaffirms her idea of healing coming from a strong community in her novel *Home* (2012). In *The Bluest Eye*, that community is the African American one, since that is the position of the main characters. After all, the bluest eye does not refer exclusively to Pecola's wish. The "eye" can be read as "I": self, subject (Moses 126). The bluest may be understood as a reference to blues: a strong African American tradition. If Pecola imagined her healing would come from possessing the bluest of eyes, Morrison seems to think that a truly healed identity will more probably come from connection to community and to others, and that is the message her novel gives.

African Americans might have failed on many fronts in American soil. The oppression, suffering and the resultant defeat as a race has epic dimensions. Their magnificent struggle to survive, to overcome the impediments imposed by an alien culture and their continuous effort to assert their self-identity brings serenity and nobility to their collective will and vision. Their tenacity in handling the dark truths about the ruthless racial suppression and marginalization by the wider world made them heroes in the modern fiction. Every great work of art espouses the magnitude of defeat and the glory of the vanquished. Toni Morrison's achievement of high pedestal in the gallery of Nobel laureates is a fitting reward as she bravely stands up against the racist and sexist killer waves.

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## Ideological Dislocation of Political Apparatus: Naxalite Insurgency in the Novel *The Mother of 1084*

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### Abstract

It is a phenomenal task to govern a nation where a million people live; the leaders have to embrace impartiality in order to run a democratic government. The reason behind civil wars and the formation of rebellious groups are the prejudiced politicians and their embedded corrupted system. The act of expelling a marginal group will cause a dreadful chaos and instigate those people to form an unshakeable community. The Naxalbari Movement is the backdrop of the novel *The Mother of 1084* written by Mahasweta Devi. *Mother of 1084* is an English translation of a Bengali novella, *HazaarChaurashir Maa*. It was written by Mahasweta Devi in 1973-74 and translated by Samik Bandyopadhyay into English in 1997.

It is a very sensitive and stimulating novel which endeavours to explore the urban phase of the Naxalite Movement. Mahasweta Devi was enthusiastically associated with many grass root level social movements -the dilemma of united labour, persisting feudalism in rural politics, state negligence especially towards the marginalized section of the society that includes untouchables and tribals. It was a significant breakthrough in her literary career. Mahasweta Devi was an eye witness and writer of the Naxalite Movement of Post-Independent West Bengal. She liked to be true to the historical Naxalite Movement in the urban background particularly in Calcutta. My paper is an attempt to probe into the psychological and emotional trauma of an upper middle-class apolitical mother, Sujata Chatterjee, against the socio-political environment.

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Mahasweta Devi in her preface to *Shrestho Golpo*, she marks, "*I have never had the capacity nor the urge to create art for art's sake. Since I never learnt to do anything more useful, I have gone on writing. I have found authentic documentation to be the best medium for protest against injustice and exploitation*". From the above

given statements, it can be understood that Mahasweta Devi was an extraordinary writer who worked and fought for the marginalized people untiringly for the past six decades. She was a blend of an activist and writer who carried out both duties meticulously all her life. She worked silently for the welfare and betterment of the marginalized people.

There was a great social mayhem in India, particularly in Bengal. Great Bengal starvation happened during the year (1942-44). Mahasweta Devi studied in a college during the starvation. She and her classmates extended relief work-distributing food, picking out the dead bodies in the streets to find those still alive, feeding them and bringing them to the Relief Centres. She remembers one particular occurrence when they found a baby still alive beside her dead mother only to discover; as they carried the infant to the Centre, unfortunately the baby died.

In 1946, the Great Calcutta riots broke out. The Communal riots took place in Calcutta and elsewhere in Punjab and Bengal, because of the strengthening conflict between the Hindu-dominated parties and the Muslim League. After that, India got freedom in August 15, 1947, the victory of freedom led to nowhere but to the tragedy of partition between India and Pakistan. The saddest part is that Eastern Bengal became a part of Pakistan; many families were split even though they didn't want to move. Mahasweta Devi's family was also one among them. The partition was marked by violent, large-scale communal disturbances, a toll of many thousands of casualties and the migration of several million persons. It was a tumultuous and violent time.

The sight of suffering and death deeply affected Mahasweta Devi. Being very young, energetic rational minded woman, she felt something fluctuating within her. It was during this time of uncertainty and violence, Mahasweta Devi came out of her relatively protected middle-class life. After her completion of college graduation in 1946, she was married to Bijon Bhattacharya, a

playwright, and was one of the founding members of the Indian People's Theatre Association. He was also a member of the Communist Party of India (CPI).

When the CPI was dominant, in 1928, Mahasweta Devi was in the University. The party had legal status and was active in establishing publicity and polling work. The days with her husband Bijon were problematic in her life; Communists and their supporters harassed them and Bijon could not find a decent job to support the family; as a strong woman, Mahasweta Devi herself took up the responsibility of caring the family; she sold dye powders to earn money. She also worked as a teacher in Puddopukur Girl's school, taught students in private and then gained employment as an upper division clerk in the Regional Office of the Deputy Accountant General of Post and Telegraph. Accused of being a Communist, she was retrenched from her government job after someone placed the books of Marx, Engels, and Lenin in her office drawer. It was at this time that she turned her skills into writing. She wrote for Sachitra Bharat, a Bengali Weekly, under the pen name Sumitra Devi, producing light fiction, romantic stories, ghost stories and family stories.

Mahasweta Devi visited almost all kinds of binary places in India; wherever she went and witnessed the savage impact on indigenous society. Landlords took control of the lands of almost every peasant; and they despoiled the peaceful environment. She subsequently observed the same dismal conditions everywhere. In many of the states, there was no education, no health care, no roads and no income. Manipulation and negligence had reduced the people to a subhuman existence. Mahasweta Devi had long been fully aware of the presence of tribal people.

The thought of extending social awareness and literary maturity jointly in her watershed novel of 1974, *Hajar Chaurashir Ma (Mother of 1084)*, which is one of Mahasweta Devi's most widely read works. Written in 1973-74, it charts out the emotional struggles of a mother as she tries to understand her son's involvement in the Naxalite Movement, a revolt that began in 1967 in the village of Naxalbari, northern West Bengal, and soon spread to urban areas in the region until the middle of 1970s. A Naxal or Naxalite is a member of the Communist Party of India (Maoist). The

term Naxal is derived from the name of the village Naxalbari in West Bengal, where the movement had its origin. In a career of sustained creativity, she produced a stream of narratives, fusing indigenous oral histories with contemporary events to uncover the bitter and often bloody relationship between tribal communities and India's dominant classes and systems.

The Naxalites raised their voice against the established order, and started fighting for the cause of the poor, exploited by the landlords, industrialists and bureaucrats. The oppressive and stubborn attitude of these High-headed men forced a group of young men to take up the cudgels against them. The revolt of the farmers of Naxalbari added fuel to the flaming sense of anger against capitalist economy. They were not only annoyed, but they felt aghast at the fact that the different political parties and intellectuals implicitly agreed to such tyranny and oppression. The arrival of refugees from Bangladesh further made the situation worse.

The Naxalite movement spread to the other parts as well. When East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) moved towards a rupture with West Pakistan, the Naxalites in India formed political unions with the secessionists in East Pakistan. However, when the Indian army moved to help Bangladesh, the then Prime Minister, Mrs. Indira Gandhi, took the opportunity to crush all the possible Naxalite revolts. While Naxalites can be seen by historians as ruthless terrorists, Mahasweta Devi's focus was on the young intellectuals who were drawn to the cause because of their idealism and on the peasants and tribals, who were drawn to it, because they were victims of centuries-old oppression. The criticism against the Naxalites is that, despite their ideology, they have over the years become just another terrorist outfit.

Ideologically, the Naxalites claim that they are against India as it exists at present. They believe that Indians are still to acquire freedom from hunger and deprivation from the hands of the rich classes, landlords, industrialists, traders, etc. Their final aim is the overthrow of the present system; hence the targeting of politicians, police officers and men, forest contractors, etc. At a more local level, the Naxalites have invariably targeted landlords in the villages, often claiming protection and money from them. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, the Naxalite movement was popular. There

were reports of brilliant students, including from the famed IITs, drop outs from colleges to join the struggle. But as has been the case with many movements founded on high principles, the Naxalite movement has lost its vision and compromised its principles over the years. Nevertheless, the endless supply of men and women joining its ranks shows that many still believe in its cause.

Sujata Chatterjee, is the Mother in this Novel who awakens one morning to the earth-shattering news that her beloved son Brati Chatterjee is lying dead in the police mortuary at Kantapukur, and reduced to a mere numerical: corpse no. 1084. This incident itself declares that Brati has no identity at all. It pushes her on a journey of discovery; in the course of which, she struggles to understand her Naxalite son's revolutionary commitment, a morale rationale for her son's rebellion; and she finds the entire social system cadaverous and no justice for Brati's death. Sujata also begins to recognize her own alienation as a woman and wife from the complacent, hypocritical, and corrupt bourgeois society her son has rebelled against. Mahasweta Devi presents Sujata as a symbol of the noblest idea of motherhood. Sujata in *The Mother of 1084* in a similar situation, being an apolitical, introverted high class woman, is confused by the contradictions in her life. She has hardly understood the consequences of what has happened to her son. Sujata sets out on her quest for him, the missing half of her true self. She goes through the painful process of discovering the true Brati. It is two years after Brati's death she comes to know a part of her son's sacrifice she has never known. She is now entirely conscious of the condition she lives in. The more she learns about her son, the closer she gets to him. And her meeting with the followers of Brati provides her with an insight into the reality of the struggles of the oppressed.

The barriers between the unlucky mothers, whose sons have also been killed along with Brati, and Sujata seem to be falling away, as she frequents their huts. She can find an echo of her silent cry of torment and anxiety in their unending sufferings. Having realised the significance of Brati's sacrifice, she feels no regret at her being classed with him. The emptiness created by his death is thus filled and she decides to take on the fight against the present time, represented by the

likes of Dibyanath Chatterjee, her husband. In fact, her discovery of Brati helps her rediscover herself and her cause as a mother and human being. At the end of the story, Sujata, shorn of all prejudices, finds herself drifting towards an association with her son's ideology as she bursts out angrily at the weariness of the audience and then collapses down.

The entire story unfolds within the time frame of a day. The chapters are divided into the four phases of a day: "Dawn", "Afternoon", "Evening" and "Night". The narrative may look linear because of this division, but it is not a linear and chronological narrative. Sujata drives back in time over her recollections and this upsets the linear narrative. As opposed to a linear, clock time, the story shows a different notion of time. The time, which Sujata experiences in the novel, is not a direct one, but a circular one, that has no starting and no end. She moves in and out of present reality and visits her past through flashbacks and recourse to her memory.

The four chapters in the novel mark a new juncture in the progression of Sujata's consciousness, as it allows her to re-order her fragmented and frenzied life in search of a cohesive identity. Every time she visits her own past or that of Brati, Somu's mother or Nandini, her long-suppressed personal loss is slowly released into the ever-widening, twists of betrayal, guilt and suffering. From a spiritless, hopelessly dependent and non-assertive moral coward, Sujata is transformed into a morally firm, politically enlightened and socially rebellious individual.

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## Religious Harmony for Conflict Prevention: A Study on Tariq Ali's *A Sultan in Palermo*

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Tariq Ali is indubitably one of the most renowned Pakistani British novelists of the postcolonial era. A proclaimed atheist, he is a left-wing political activist and harsh critic of US hegemonic and imperialistic policies. Ali confronts the saga that Islam is incompatible with the west in his novels with reference to the Muslim world and Europe. Moreover, politicians have been falling over themselves to demonise Muslims in Britain. Now university lectures are expected to spy on Asian- looking students in order to spot potential terrorists. In addition, parents are warned to be on the lookout for fundamentalist tendencies among their children. As a result, Britain seems to be in the grip of an anti-Muslim hysteria that has been gathering pace for some time. Nevertheless, in these times, Ali's novels on Islam and its relationship to Europe provide not only welcoming relief but also an antidote.

Since September 11, 2001, inequality and unevenness have been on the rise in Europe, the United States, and elsewhere in opposition to Muslims, particularly those of Middle Eastern and similar descent. Such individuals are suffering from increased security screenings, unfriendly media attention, repressive laws, as well as localized acts of violence and extensive disrepute. Thus, the increasingly pessimistic perception of Muslims both at home and overseas has added a religious facet to international relations. The purpose of this paper is to emphasize the opportunities for engendering respect for spiritual dissimilarities in multicultural society. In addition, to illustrate some of the ways in which Christian- Muslim- Jew and other religious people harmony can be promoted with reference to Ali's *A Sultan in Palermo*, which reconstructs the history of the Muslims, their quest for learning, religious tolerance and their relationship with the western nations using postcolonial paradigms.

A primary characteristic of postcolonial literature is the rejection of existing history and its renovation in fictional narratives. Ali, a postcolonial writer through this novel recapitulates

and renovates the record of Islam to deconstruct the western philosophy about Islam. A postcolonial textbook not only forefronts rapport between centre and margin but also, as Meenakshi Mukerjee has pointed out, "foregrounds the need for recognizing identities, voices and situations that were not granted by the colonial power..." (4); in this challenge, marginality is frequently valorised, and subjugation almost turns into empowerment.

Edward Said describes the western idea about the east in his *Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient* as, "European culture gained in strength and identity by setting itself off against the orient as a sort of surrogate and even underground self"(3). Through this work, Said examines the huge tradition of western constructions of the orient. This custom of orientalism has been a corporate institution for coming to terms with the orient, for authorizing views about it and controlling over it. Fundamental to Said's scrutiny is that the orient is essentially a production of western discourse, a means of self-definition of western culture as well as of justifying imperial supremacy of oriental peoples. Said's concern has been to examine the historical production and motivations of western discourses about the orient in general and Islam in particular. Considering America's twentieth century relations with the Arab world, Said suggests the electronic postmodern world reinforces dehumanized portrayals of the Arabs, a tendency both annoyed by the Arab- Israeli conflict and intensely felt by Said himself as a Palestinian. Like Said, Ali in one of his interviews talks about how the negative image of Islam has taken place in the west and he feels compelled to challenge these western notions through *Islam Quintet. A Sultan in Palermo* is the fourth novel in the *Islam Quintet*. Initially, it is not the design of the author to write a complete series. However, when Edward Said has read the first novel of the series, he liked it and encouraged the author to write the complete series: "Don't stop now. Tell the whole bloody story" (qtd. in www.3quarksdaily.com).

Religious tolerance guarantees the encouragement of fundamental human rights to life. It also promotes tranquillity, unity, progress and ensures one to choose and practice his/ her religion without fear and force. Many people are ignorant about such huge benefits of religious tolerance. Religious tolerance is a vital subject in every society. As religious principle and practice vary, there is a need to synchronize the differences for nonviolent coexistence. Religious tolerance therefore makes a clarion call to respect the differing opinions without which the marginal stands the threat of being victimized. Interfaith discussion should be accomplished without recalling early atrocities of Christians or Muslims, which have been committed against each other. Jihads or medieval crusades are not justified and interfaith dialogue should give up from describing such eras in defining each other. Muslims and Christians must widen working relationships with each other as explained in *Quran* and *Bible*. Correspondingly, Ali underscores the necessity of interfaith dialogue for religious tolerance through *A Sultan in Palermo*.

Through the discussion of Idrisi and King Roger in *A Sultan in Palermo*, the significance of inter faith dialogue is clear. Harmony among different religions is possible, in Palermo because of King Rujari's secular ideas. King Rujari respects other religions though he belongs to the Normans. Rujari prefers the Muslim intellectuals than his poisoned barons, thus maintains the friendly atmosphere among different civilization. As a good friend, King Roger motivates Idrisi, who is the one of the great Muslim minds, to complete the task of map making and least bother about the crooked plans of bishops against the Muslims. The good quality of King Roger is portrayed in the text as,

Rujari's sympathies were not concealed. Like his father, he preferred to ignore the Pope and rely, instead, on the loyalty of his Muslim subjects. They knew that left to himself, Sultan Rujari would not harm them. It was his Barons and Bishops who filled his ears with poison. They were determined to either convert all Believers or drive them off the island. The talk in the bazaars of Palermo, Siracusa and Catania suggested that the English monks, on papal urging, were advising Rujari to clear the woods and valleys of Believers and join the holy crusade against the

followers of the false prophet. According to some, the most detailed planes had been made to burn Noto to the ground and bury the survivors alive. (11)

King Roger, though he is a Christian ruler, following his father's instructions he treats all other religious people in a respectful manner, and didn't torture Muslims and Jews like the previous Norman ruler and he is known for religious cohesion and it is reflected in the novel through his promise towards Idrisi as, "one thing I promise you, Master Idrisi. As long as I am alive the church will not be allowed to kill or burn a single person simply because he believes in your prophet and not mine" (150). King Rujari is firm in secularism and as a result, like his father, he did not allow his soldiers to take part in crusade. The blood sacrifice in Palermo in the novel reveals the breakup of King Roger's promise, which leads to massacre in Palermo. After the death of King Roger, ethnic cleansing has taken place in Palermo. All the incidents related to the decline of Roger's empire are reflected through Idrisi's powerful words.

The barons and bishops emotionally collapse the strong mind of King Roger. King Roger's affection towards his son William has been used as a tool by Normans to defeat the secularism in Palermo. The dual nature of King Roger projects both the benefits of religious tolerance and the atrocities of religious violence. The serenity of Palermo is crestfallen because of Norman's narrow-mindedness; as a result, peace mongers like Idrisi and Rujari are broken. Sultan Rujari is known for his altruistic nature; unfortunately, to safeguard his heir from the clutches of power, he breaks up his secular bond and allows for the blood sacrifice of the believer, Philip and this paves the way to great massacre in Palermo. In the tribute to King Roger, Idrisi illustrates the twofold nature of the sultan as,

I would say that Sultan Rujari of Siqilliya was for most of his reign a wise and considerate ruler, who protected all his subjects regardless of creed.... When he was ruler and people reminded him of the massacre of Believers in this city, just before it surrendered to the Franks, he expressed remorse and regret. He was a skilled administrator and a statesman who could outflank the Pope and the Emperor.... It was in his last days, racked

by a disease that made it difficult for him to breathe and affected his heart that he weakened in mind, body and spirit. He allowed the Barons and the Bishops to convince him that a blood sacrifice was necessary to strengthen his family's claim to this island.... Thus began the decline. (198)

Ahmad Ibn Rumi, the Amir *al-bahr* has substituted Philip as commander of the armada. He worries for Philip's death and discusses his plights regarding Philip's sacrifice to Idrisi as, "He is the only leader we have capable of uniting the Believers after Rujari's death" (136). In addition, according to Ahmad, Philip's military and political skills have forbidden a blood path on the island.

Philip's response towards the charges against him before his death reveals his concern for humanity as,

I was too lenient to prisoners....I treated them as I would treat any human being....The Bedouin whom I paid to fight on our side wanted to loot the city indiscriminately and take their pleasure of any woman, young or old... I gave firm instructions that this should not happen. When these were disobeyed I had three Bedouin and six of our own soldiers flogged in public for rape. (154-155)

Thus through Philip, Ali gives importance to humankind than any other issues. Moreover, through his murder, the vulgarity of politics in the name of religion is vivid and it leads to the great carnage in Palermo. Thus, Ali scrutinizes the history of the carnage in order to teach the consequence of religious bigotry.

Most religions from the very foundation have been great supporters of broadmindedness, adjustment, and peaceful co-existence. They advocate equal rights to all people and do not discriminate human beings on the base of colour and race. There are numerous commonalities amid world religions, therefore the better way to attain peace, harmony, peaceful co-existence, and above all co-operation would be through these commonalities; and the first device that religious communities can use is civilizational dialogue to

erect trust and compromise among themselves. Religious hatred, communal feelings, and intolerance are the major challenges for the modern world. Religious communities have to study from past mistakes and to value multiculturalism and pluralism. Religious directors can become the torchbearers of harmony and cooperation and they can instruct the same in their respective religions. Religious tolerance is required to be started from top to bottom at a public level so that world religions can be able to preserve peace and respect one another. World religions can utilize all means to teach societies about mutual respect and religious harmony. However, civilizational dialogue and its importance through writing are the major alternative, which can be used to prevent religious hatred and religious extremism. Here, the function of all stakeholders become very significant, such as the role of religious scholars, writers, political leaders, common schools, and technological means, which can reinforce religious tolerance through various mediums in the public.

In this way, Ali drives home the thought that hybridity and multiculturalism have become important features of our world today through his novel, *A Sultan in Palermo*. Thus, Ali communicates the need for commonalities that survive beyond class, race and culture, thus bringing together the requirement of universal humanism.

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## Existential Humanistic Paradigm in Alice Walker's *The Color Purple*

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Literature is concerned with human's

### Abstract

Personal, socio-political world, their adaptation to it and their desire to change it. The belief system that challenges or negates the existence of other beings is the one which claims superiority over other beings in existence. But humanism places human as primary in range of importance. This suggests that the central point of humanism is humanity itself. It deals with concreteness of the world and existence of human beings rather than the temporality of the world and non-existence.

Alice Walker, an African American, is a humanist who brings forth to limelight the existential angst of women through the characterization in her novels. *The Color Purple* is a song of joy and triumph from such an existential trauma: triumph of a woman's struggle against racism, sexism, and social determinism ultimately leading to the wholeness of her being. Alice Walker explores the various dimensions of the humanist philosophy and way of life in the character Celie. Celie's tortuous journey from her teenage to middle age is a sketch of a poor girl's life that lost her self-identity only because of the social system. Walker puts her utmost effort to show how Celie gains identity, earns a place in the society, gains economical liberty and of how she turns to a person from nothing. Thus the paper is an attempt to reaffirm the power of the self to deal with experience both existentially and humanistically.

**Key Words:**Existentialism, humanism, angst, self, trauma, wholeness

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Literature is concerned with human's socio-political world, their adaptation to it and their desire to change it. The socio-economic-political scenario is quite alive in the literary work. It is inseparably connected to religion, culture, history and philosophy of the people. Shivaji D. Sargar is of the opinion, "Literature is an artistic expression of the relationship between the thoughts and

feelings of human mind and the social conditions surrounding it. When some new stream of thoughts and feelings begins to flow continuously with its uniqueness, quality and quantity, it becomes a small stream of literary work flowing towards the great ocean of literature" (Sargar 1). Novels, in a specific way, are representation of human life. Novel can be studied as a faithful attempt to recreate the social world of humans and their concerns with their family and other social institutions. It delineates their role within the family and other institutions, the conflict and tensions between groups and social classes.

Alice Walker, an African American, is a humanist who brings forth to limelight the existential angst of women through the characterization in her novels. "*The Color Purple* is a song of joy and triumph from such an existential trauma: triumph of a woman's struggle against racism, sexism, and social determinism ultimately leading to the wholeness of her being" (Diwakar, 86). Alice Walker won both the Pulitzer Prize and the American Book Award for her novel *The Color Purple*. It is the novel written in the form of letters, tells the story of Celie, a young woman who is sexually tortured and abused by her stepfather and later she is physically abused by her husband through a forced married life. This novel aims to show the existential and humanistic struggle of Celie's and her meandering mere existence in the male dominated patriarchal society from her the age of 14 to 44.

Alice Walker explores the various dimensions of the humanist philosophy and way of life of African women in America through the character Celie. Celie's tortuous journey from her teenage to middle age is a sketch of a poor girl's life that lost her self-identity only because of the social system. Walker puts her utmost effort to show how Celie gains identity, earns a place in the society, gains economical liberty and of how she turns to a being from nothingness. Thus the paper is an attempt to reaffirm the power of the self to

deal with experience both existentially and humanistically.

Before analysing the character of the novel in existential and humanistic perspective, it is apt to get to know the terms. To exist as a human being is mysterious and sometimes wholly absurd. Each of us simply exists here, or is thrown into this time and place, as phenomenology call it, to make meaning and purpose in life using the freedom and responsibility given to each one.

Existentialism as a branch of philosophy maintains that man is the free agent responsible for his own action and it is about the concrete individual. Existential philosophers who claimed this view are: Edmund Husserl, Edith Stein, Martin Heidegger, Max Scheler, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Gabriel Marcel, and Jean-Paul Sartre, in which some are theists and some are atheists. "Existentialism is a movement in philosophy and literature that emphasizes individual existence, freedom and choice. It is based on the view that humans define their own meaning in life, and try to make rational decisions despite existing in an irrational universe" (Wikipedia). Alice Walker as an African American emphasizes the importance of individual existence, freedom and choice in America and her works define the meaning of life in a world which is full of non-existential elements.

The belief system that challenges or negates the existence of other beings is the one which claims superiority over other beings in existence. But humanism places human as primary in range of importance. This suggests that the central point of humanism is humanity itself. It deals with concreteness of the world and existence of human beings rather than the temporality of the world and non-existence. "Humanism is considered as the system of thought, which believes people are able to live their lives without the need of religious beliefs, and in one sense, existentialism is humanism- as it is very much concerned with the human and personal values and also with the authentic existence of the human being. Roger Shinn has made a useful distinction between „open humanism and closed humanism" (Macquarrie 28).

Martin Heidegger stresses on 'open humanism' which refers to the pursuit of human values in the world, and in his "Letter on Humanism" he says: "Man does not create being, but rather receives his existence from being, and becomes responsible for being and to be being.

Before he speaks, he must let himself be addressed by Being" (Macquarrie 29).

The existential-humanistic philosophy is considered as a person-centered philosophy. It focuses more on the human being than on nature, on the individual's pursuit of identity and meaning in his/her life. This aspect of existentialism is related to the alienation and rootlessness in an individual's life as in the case of Celie in *The Color Purple*.

W.E.B. DuBois observes in *The Souls of Black Folk*:

Black in America possessed a peculiar sensation, this double consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his two-ness ... An American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder. (45)

Seoidal Deena says, "With the increase of Black female voices, gender marginalization and oppression became the target for destruction. Alice Walker launched the first major and full attack on patriarchal domination within the black community itself, and her revolution has emerged as a unique decolonization of traditional love" (107).

Celie in her husband's home has to toil a lot. Celie gets married to Mr. Albert who had already three daughters and a son. His son Harpo is elder than Celie. The very day she got married with Mr. Albert, Harpo throws a stone on her head and it breaks Celie's head. In such a condition, there is no one to nurse Celie and to care her. She has to manage all the domestic chores tying a bandage on her head. Along with that she has to manage his unruly children. At the night time, Mr. Albert lies on her top not at all asking her why she is wearing a bandage. Celie in her husband's house leads a monotonous stereo typed life what she led in her house with her pa. Like her father, her husband beats her for no particular reason, "He beat me like the children. Cept he don't never hardly beat them. He say, Celie, get the belt. The children be outside the room pecking through the

cracks. It all I can do not to cry” (*The Color Purple* 23).

Celie delivers two babies through her so-called father. Her father sells those babies and harasses her to look decent. Celie, as an innocent young girl of 15 can't understand the reality of life. Her babies are sold by her step father. But Celie's breast leaks milk for those children due to her motherliness. But her step father scolds her for such reasons. Celie cries:

He act like he can't stand me no more. Say I'm evil as always up to no good. He took my other little baby, a boy this time. But I don't think he kilt it, I think he sold it to a man and his wife over Monticello. I got breasts full of milk running down myself. He say Why don't you look decent? Put on something. But what I'm sposed to put on? I have nothing. (*The Color Purple* 5)

Regarding a number of issues such as gender-discrimination, humiliation and a sense of insecurity, N. Quanta Christine voices her concern for African women's existential and humanistic paradigm in a male dominated society as: “The enemies of African women are colonialism and imperialism, white racism, class oppressions and sexual oppression. The first step towards true emancipation must be defeat of colonialism, neo-colonialism and imperialism. The next step is to eradicate all the effects of exploitation based on race, nationality, class and sex” (15). The stepfather or stepmother in the life of Celie is a colonial and imperialistic syndrome of the white race which subjugates the mere existence of African and dehumanize the being-in-itself. The step father's makes Celie's existence as non-existent by using her as sexual object and throws away her to the outside world with the tag. He says, “Fact is, he say. I got to git rid of her. She too old to be living here at home. And she a bad influence on my other girls. She'd come with her own lynch. She can take that cow she raise down there back of the crib” (*The Color Purple* 10).

Celie, the victim of the circumstances, is trained to obey and accept any kind of miseries as her own fate. Her existence becomes mere object and not humanism as Sarte would say, “Existentialism is a humanism.” She thinks that she stays alive as she has the opportunity to stay with her husband unlike Nettie who fights her ways. Celie says, “... I think bout Nettie, dead. She fight,

she run away. What good it do? I don't fight, I stay where I'm told. But I'm alive” (*The Color Purple* 22). Celie has to remain silent accepting all the torments done by her husband. She has to remain silent unquestioning his act. Celie explains her condition, “It all I can do not to cry. I make myself wood, I say to myself Celie, you a tree. That's how come I know trees fear men” (*The Color Purple* 23).

Sofia, another character, has to suffer a lot in the prison since she reacted against the white mayor who wants to marry her. Celie explains the condition of Sofia in the prison thus: “When I see Sofia I don't know why she still alive. They crack her skull, they crack her ribs. They tear her nose loose on one side. They blind her in one eye. She swole from head to foot. Her tongue the size of my arm, it stick out tween her teef like a piece of rubber. She can't talk. And she just about the color of an egg plant” (*The Color Purple* 82).

Celie, a woman muted and silenced by society, patriarchy and system, has to lead her life as a slave. Her step children bully her, her husband beats her. On seeing this, her sister Nettie advises her to fight, “You got to fight” (*The Color Purple* 18). Walker reveals Celie's desperate condition repeatedly in her plot. Celie who is tired to lead a mere role-playing life as daughter, wife and mother, she has a sense of guilt that she is ugly. When she happens to learn about the ultimate truth of female body through mirror with the help of Shug, she finds a dramatic change in her attitude. Her ignorance says adieu to her and she feels orgasm with Shug which give her tremendous confidence to masturbate. She comes out of her wood like nature and she also learns from Shug that it is possible for her to lead an independent life freeing her away from all psychological troubles.

Celie prepares mentally to liberate her own self from the confined walls of her husband's house. Walker's black women characters that depend on their husband are depicted to be devoid of any sense of self. Walker wants to create a strong sisterhood which empowers these once weak women. Walker expects her women to forgive her men if they tend to change the way of their life. She wishes to create such a world of black men and women based on equality and mutual understanding and peaceful co-existence which is full of happiness and prosperity. Walker wishes to create a New World order which is defined and

determined by the female of her community. She expects her women to walk as new born women in all spheres of life.

Walker gives positive ends to her novel through which she wishes to sow the seeds of confidence in the minds of black women. She succeeds in her attempts too. Walker's enthusiasm towards the progress of her people is seen in *The Color Purple*. Walker ends her novel *The Color Purple* thus: "Dear God, Dear stars, dear trees, dear sky, dear peoples, Dear everything, Dear God. Thank you for bringing my sister Nettie and our children home" (*The Color Purple* 249). Celie, the downtrodden, dehumanized, dishonored, detested, abused, misused one is transformed into an independent, existential, humanistic and liberated woman. As Trudier Harris observes:

From a used and abused woman, Celie emerges as an independent, creative businesswoman. She moves from being ugly duckling to a figuratively beautiful swan. She moves from being Hurston's mule, the beast of burden, to physical and mental declarations of independence, to a reunion with her children and her sister. She moves from being a strait-laced church woman to being a reefer smoker. She moves from being Albert's footstool to demanding his respect and teaching him how to sew. (14)

It proves that Celie's tortuous journey from her age 14 to 44 has come to an end and a new life smiles at her promising her hope and joy. Walker regenerates Celie into a new woman who is shown as an innocent young girl in the beginning of the story who does not even know why her stomach grows big, becomes a full-fledged

character and self-sustained woman by earning on her own and shows her mercy by forgiving her husband. Her existence is proved worth with the humanistic approach. She embodies the authentic existence and genuine humanism.

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## Feminist Discourse in the Novels of Manju Kapur: A Study

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Feminism is a word coined in the late nineteenth century. It defines as advocacy of women's rights movement or the advancement and emancipation of women. The term feminism has several meanings and changes according to time and place. Feminism is based on concrete realities and levels of consciousness, perceptions and actions both historically and culturally. It aims for individual freedom by mobilizing sex solidarity.

In the society as the problem to women in the family is not new. Women in our society have been the victims of humiliation, torture and exploitation from time immemorial irrespective of the fact they were also idolized and worshipped. But she could not enjoy the fruits of education, socio-economic and political rights. Women in society acted much social constraints upon the personal freedom. In general women in Indian society suffered much in the name of tradition and religion. Women are considered as a neglected entity in our male dominated society. A woman is deprived of nutrition, education, health and other basic needs. Women should be given special opportunities to ensure her.

Feminism, besides being a political crusade, attempts to study and solve the various gender-based problems. It questions the pre-conceived assumptions about the roles that men and women should have in life. In literary text, feminism brings to scrutiny the portrayals of gender roles which tend to impose social norms, customs, conventions laws and expectations on the grounds of gender discrimination.

Feminism emerges as concept that is based on a critical analysis of male privilege and woman's subordination within any given society. It opposes woman's subordination to men in the family and society. Feminism is a global and revolutionary ideology that is political because it is concerned with the question of power. A feminist is one who is awakened and conscious about woman's life and problems. The objective of the paper is to make an earnest attempt to bring out how these postmodern writers have captured the

very essence of postmodern tendencies prevalent in the contemporary world and how effectively they use them in their fiction. A broad study of the novels of Manju Kapur's *Astha* shows some psychological elements playing a vital role in the inner workings of some of the major characters of the novel.

Manju Kapur, a powerful exponent of feminism has denounced the Indian women's socio-cultural predicament caused by their entrapment in male-dominant socio-economic culture and political hegemony of patriarchal society. She has expressed such feminist views in her second novel *A Married Woman* in the context of post-modernism. Kapur has successfully enabled her woman protagonist Astha in *A Married Woman* to construct a femino-centric protest and help her wriggle out from the stifling patriarchal institutions like family and married life. She becomes fully aware of the enormous burden of gender discrimination in her respective culture and society. She understands that all over the world all history is male-centered. He has used her to promote his physical and material comforts. Kapur conveys the message to the traditional Indian society that there should not be any sort of in general violence against women.

*Indian woman do not have the power to think. But they have an infinite capacity to suffer (Tharu 575). The only moment she expresses herself is at her father's death when she laments by saying "Babuji, in whose care have you left me?" (576).*

Astha, the female protagonist of Manju Kapur's *A Married Woman* gives a stiff resistance to patriarchy by helping her "metamorphosed into a feminist odd ball" (162). Astha, the daughter of an educated father and an orthodox mother, she is discriminated against and subjugated at her in law's house. Her marriage with Hemant, the son of a government official in Delhi, does not prove to be based on mutual co-operation and understanding. She is compelled to be an enduring wife and

sacrificing mother, like a holy cow in the status of married woman.

Astha initially finds love and companionship, but following the birth of her two children, she begins to find that she has sacrificed her own identity while striving to satisfy the traditional duties and family values. As a married woman she becomes an enduring wife and sacrificing mother. "Her temperamental incompatibility with her corporate thinking husband compels her to play the role of mother and father of her children. This denies her self-fulfillment and leads to the collapse of the institution of marriage. Discontentment leads her to defiance and restlessness. Her mother is very protective of her and she expects her to conform to traditions. She often tells Astha that the real meaning and worth of a woman lies in getting married happily and having children and serving husband as a God. She tells Astha, *When you are married, our responsibilities will be over. Do you know the shastras say if parents die without getting their daughter married, they will be condemned to perpetual rebirth (A Married Woman. P.1)*

It is important to note that Manju Kapur allows patriarchy to operate through the mother. Astha understands a married woman's place in the family to be that of an unpaid servant or a slave and thought of divorce brings social and economic death in her Indian status. She is *always adjusting to everybody's need (227)*. She has no emotional freedom from the domestic affairs. She has to please her husband and for pleasing him, she must be *a willing body at night, a willing pair of hands and feet in the day and an obedient mouth (231)*.

Astha is thus torn between her duty and responsibility, faith and fact, history and contemporaneity, public ethos and personal ethics. She struggles for an emotional freedom from the scourge of family. She develops psycho-somatic symptoms of stress and depression balancing between existing and living. There, she is supposed to have a willing body at night, a willing pair of hands and feet in the day and an obedient mouth. It leads to her physical exploitation and emotional starvation. Being deprived of her emotional fulfillment, she frantically searches for it and turns to lesbianism.

The *Difficult Daughters* realistically depict women of three generations, focusing on

Virmati, the difficult daughter of the second generations. An Indian girl is in instability as parents today instruct their girls and want them to be bovine, homely and an ideal Indian wife. Besides educating and making her self dependent modern lady first she is thought of managing the home well and remains underneath the foot of man. This liberty of education has entwined her life and put her into a sadistic circle. This liberty of predicament of modernity and traditionalism is very much pointedly projected in Manju Kapur's novels.

Home is a masterful novel of the acts of kindness compromise and secrecy that lie at the heart of every family. The novel covers three generations- the old patriarch and his sour-faced wife, his two sons, their wives and children and the son of the deceased daughter. With answering attention, Kapur follows the members of a traditional family into the uneasy world they come to inhabit. She excellently explores the pros and cons of extended family, exposing the good and the bad, the benefits and the challenges in it. Yashpal's marriage is the only love marriage that takes place in the family. The convention is sacrificed before the interests of a business family. Nisha, the docile central character of *Home*, claims her space halfway through the novel. She has a clandestine romance with the boy whom she decided to marry him ignoring his caste and creed. But she is forced by her family to give him up, starts a business and eventually relinquishes control or what is held up as the most important thing in a woman's life-starting her own family. Thus, Manju Kapur, the Indian woman novelist attempted an imaginative between the traditional forces of Indian patriarchal joint family system and the new demands of modernity.

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## Religious Identities in the Select Works of V. S. Naipaul

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### Abstract

In the whirlwind of globalization the people of Third World nations are desperately engaged in searching their potential for a political and economic growth on the one hand and for a social stability and search for identity on the other. The postcolonial literature primarily deals with the experiences of the colonized people and in the context of the Caribbean countries, too, there has been substantial contribution to it. As an exile enmeshed in the cultural collisions of his epoch, Naipaul does not escape the disintegrating and alienating effects. His dislocation from his roots enables him to treat his own alienation as an instance of his quest for identity of colonial and postcolonial peoples. His works have become the paradigms of the entire modern world's experiences of exile, desolation, dereliction, deracination and floating existence. In Naipaul the process of writing is seen to be a progressive creative endeavour leading to self-knowledge and nourishment of the sensibility to survive amidst the oddities of the postcolonial situations of the world. It is therefore, obvious that self-actualisation, audacity and self-appraisal are the answers to the people of the Third World either in their own country or in their floating existence as ever exiled immigrants on any parch of the earth. It is only then that their cultural parasitism and second-rated intellectual status could be removed and their decolonization in its real sense could be possible and this operation is a must to free them from all the stressing pressures of their wrecked past culture and distorted identity. His exploration of religion is incisive.

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In the whirlwind of globalization the people of Third World nations are desperately engaged in searching their potential for a political and economic growth on the one hand and for a social stability and search for identity on the other. The postcolonial literature primarily deals with the experiences of the colonized people and in the

context of the Caribbean countries too, there has been substantial contribution to it. As an exile enmeshed in the cultural collisions of his epoch, Naipaul does not escape the disintegrating and alienating effects. His dislocation from his roots enables him to treat his own alienation as an instance of his quest for identity of colonial and postcolonial peoples. His works have become the paradigms of the entire modern world's experiences of exile, desolation, dereliction, deracination and floating existence. In Naipaul the process of writing is seen to be a progressive creative endeavour leading to self-knowledge and nourishment of the sensibility to survive amidst the oddities of the postcolonial situations of the world. It is therefore, obvious that self-actualisation, audacity and self appraisal are the answers to the people of the Third World either in their own country or in their floating existence as ever exiled immigrants on any parch of the earth. It is only then that their cultural parasitism and second-rated intellectual status could be removed and their decolonization in its real sense could be possible and this operation is a must to free them from all the stressing pressures of their wrecked past culture and distorted identity. His exploration of religion is incisive.

V.S. Naipaul, with London as the base of his creativity, has contributed voluminously and qualitatively to the mainstream of British fiction. It is equally well known that London remained the land of his literary exercises and craftsmanship but it is his journeys to various countries including Trinidad – his birth place, and India – his ancestral homeland, which have given him stuff for his literary works. The West Indian literature is one of the major groups today in New Literatures written in English Language and V.S. Naipaul is an extraordinarily important name in bringing this literature to its full blossoming.

*Among the Believers* (1980) based on his travel to Pakistan and non – Arab Muslim countries, narrates his understanding of Islam. *The Mystic Masseur* is set in Port of Spain and the rural

areas of Trinidad amidst Indians. It is a comic study of the postcolonial political rise and expatriate Indians' response which smacks of mutual self-deception. Ganesh, the hero of the novel, is a representative figure of East Indians in Trinidad in their move towards city life and their subsequent Creolization. The novel is an allegory of the history of the Hindu community and Ganesh represents the first generation of the East Indians to come under the influence of the western education which acted as a potent force for cultural colonization. The degradation in the religion of East Indian, which has been reduced merely to rites without philosophy, becomes evident during Ganesh's initiation ceremony, his practices as mystic his marriage and his behavior at the temple that is constructed in Fuente Grove to attract the American soldiers. When Ganesh undergoes the initiation ceremony to become a real Brahmin as per Hindu custom his head is shaved and he is given a little saffron bundle and asked to go Benaras to study. The dichotomy is further exemplified during Ganesh's marriage. In a traditional Hindu marriage, the groom is not supposed to see the bride before marriage. However, Ganesh and Leela have already met each other. So Ramlogan, Leela's father and Ganesh have to pretend that Ganesh has never seen Leela otherwise in Trinidad they shall no longer be looked as good Hindus.

The cultural confusion and the breakdown of traditional values and religiosity are aptly described in the novel *The Suffrage of Elvira*. All this is exposed in the passages like the following:

"Things were crazily mixed up in Elvira. Everybody, Hindus, Muslims and Christians, owned a Bible; the Hindus and Muslims looking on it, if anything, with greater awe. Hindus and Muslims celebrated Christmas and Easter. The Spaniards and some of the Negroes celebrated the Hindu festival of lights. Someone had told them that Lakshmi, the Goodness of prosperity, was being honored; they placed small earthen lamps on their money – boxes and waited, as they said, for the money to breed. Everybody celebrated the Muslim festival of Hosein. In fact, when Elvira was done with religious festivals, there were few straight days left."(17)

*A House for Mr. Biswas* (1961) is the masterpiece of Naipaul as it presents the classic

struggle of a third generation Indian for an authentic selfhood within the alien environment of Trinidad.

The novel is a tragic – comic dramatization of the self – assertion of a man against the evils of fluid life through the detailed activities of a household of Indian origin in the second and third generation of decadent Hindu cultural legacy in the alien world. The disintegration of Hindu culture and odd assimilation into the Creole culture is complete when Mrs. Tulsi starts sending Sushila to burn candles in the Roman Catholic Church puts a crucifix in her room and has Pundit Tulsi's grave cleaned for All Saint's Day.

Naipaul's next work *In a Free State* (1971) is set in an unnamed African country and it came out in the year in which Naipaul bagged the Man Booker Prize. The story 'Tell Me Who to Kill' takes us to the West Indies, the familiar Naipaul territory. Christianity is held up as the hallmark of progressiveness and the narrator's role model is his Christian uncle Stephen who is well educated and sends his son to Montreal for higher studies.

The novel *Half a life* opens with the beginning of Willie Somerset Chandran's search for his roots as he awakes one day to the realization that his middle name sounds alien. He asks his father; why is my middle name Somerset?(16) This question regarding the very essence of a person's existence brings into light the irony of Willie's background of his half – life in half made societies with the people who are themselves leading a life which is half – realized, half – discovered and half – lived . Willie's quarry unleashes a torrent of memories unfolding before him a complicated picture which relates to his roots. A probing look reveals that this man is as much an amalgam of drastically different traits as is his name an admixture of different and even antagonistic streams. It is his destiny that half of his name does not belong to him; it is borrowed from the famous writer Somerset Maugham; his first name proclaims him as a Christian whereas his surname signifies his mixed ancestry. In search of his identity in this strange world Willie adopts the defence mechanism of projecting a borrowed, make – believe identity and ventures to live with this superficial image once again:

"...he adapted certain things he had read, and he spoke of his mother as belonging to an ancient Christian community of the subcontinent, a community almost as old as

Christianity itself. He kept his father as a Brahmin. He made his father's father a 'courtier'. So playing with words, he began to re-make himself. It excited him and began to give him a feeling of power." (24)

In his Indian trilogy he describes various occasions when he found Hinduism more mysterious than real. In *An Area of Darkness* he describes his pilgrimage to the Cave of Amarnath. He was encouraged by Karan Singh, the Maharaja of Kashmir to undertake the pilgrimage. He is curious about the discovery of the Cave and the formation of its mystery without bothering too much about its religious significance. He found the Cave a mystery like Delphi. His detached observation of Hinduism is embodied in these words.

It was a mystery, like Delphi, of the older world. It had survived because it was of India and Hinduism which, without beginning, without end, scarcely a religion, continued as a repository and living record of man's religious consciousness. (164)

*Among the Believers* opens a new territory in Naipaul's writing. It is the account of a journey which is dedicated to the study of the minutes of Islam. Naipaul explores the effect of religion on individuals of various kinds. In Pakistan, Naipaul found a different scene. It was a country which was newly formed and which still had to develop itself as an independent nation. Islam was becoming a greater force everyday. Several of the young men of the new generation are reasonable about religion. In every religion it is believed that there will be the second coming of the Messiah for the purification of the faith. The Hindus believe that God comes on earth whenever religion is in peril. The Christians believe in the second coming of Christ. The Ahmadis also believe that Ahmad will return to purge Islam of all its impurity. Thus, there is an underlying similarity among all religions. Naipaul explores Islam both as a philosopher and a man of practical approach.

In *Beyond Belief* Naipaul continues his study of Islam. Naipaul's visit to the Islamic countries was inspired by the happenings in Iran. His comments on the Iranian phenomenon are particularly thought provoking. Yashoda Bhat remarks that Iran is at the centre of his Islamic journey.

...Naipaul also sympathizes, paradoxically enough with the modernizing revolution and the spread of Marxist ideology. Within a span of seven months, Naipaul travelled to several Islamic countries – Iran, Pakistan, Malaysia and Indonesia, although the idea had originated when he was to think about the happenings in Iran. (Introduction 123)

Although Islam is the identity and strength of the Malaysian people, their past can easily be traced with all its Hindu and Buddhist associations. To be a Muslim is to belong to a big and powerful group. It provides a sense of security which is of a rare kind. But the past still lives in Malaysia. Its presence is felt in various customs and rituals. The Malaysian marriage customs are derived from the Hindu past. Thus, Islam has not eradicated the past in Malaysia:

The marriage customs of Malays are derived from old Hindu customs. At an early stage gifts have been exchanged between the families. If the girl's family sends five gifts, the boy's family has to send seven; there always has to be a difference of two Symbolic things are sent: sweets, money. (403)

Naipaul's objective and pointed observations make *Beyond Belief* a rare document. His criticism of Islam is free from bias.

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## A Study on Patriarchal Domination and Free Will in Anita Nair's *Ladies Coupe*

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### Abstract

All human beings 'by virtue of their membership in humanity and as part of this natural order, enjoyed certain natural right, such as a right to freedom', so states the Natural law of the universal laws of Nature, whereas the major religions of the world, particularly Hinduism, have special laws and customs relating to and regulating women's lives at various stages. Anita Nair, a prolific postmodern Indian woman writer in English, has an eye in all her novels for the endless war waged by man at woman, both physically and mentally. Though Nair refused to bear the stamp of being a feminist, one can find in her writings the kinds of violence – premarital, marital, post marital – which are on the rise against women, particularly present-day middle-class Indian women.

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Indian Women novelists have given a new dimension to the Indian Literature. They are known for their bold views that are reflected in their novels. Female novelists like Kamala Markandaya, Shashi Deshpande, Shobha De, Anita Desai and Anita Nair have chosen the problems and issues faced by the modern women in today's male dominated society as the main theme of their works. In India, the woman writers have portrayed the plight of Indian women in their novels.

Anita Nair, a living post modern Indian women writer in English is one of India's remarkable female writers. She concentrates on the inner turmoil of her women characters. She tries to bring alive the world of Indian women in the novel *ladies coupe*'. She has succeeded in presenting the world of women, their pangs and their quest. She tries to explore the problems and conflicts of women in a patriarchal society.

In Hindu mythology, women are mostly found as consorts to the male gods and do not have their own identity. Hindu mythology is found on the mighty triumvirate male gods namely Brahma, the creator, Vishnu, the Preserver and Shiva, the destroyer. The fate of the Universe rests on the

three gods. Manusmriti, an ancient Hindu law giver is instrumental in shaping the characters of the Indian male and female, but ascribed a superior role for men. The Indian male is largely exposed to a set of beliefs in which male supremacy is unchallenged and female subjugation is taken for granted. Men are always in position to dominate women in any relationship. In modern era unbalanced gender equation is challenged with more and more women being emancipated through education. Thus, women's independence put the Indian male in a complex situation in which he is compelled to embrace new ideas but is unable to give up the traditional roles.

In the novel *ladies coupe*' Nair discusses how women survive the male dominated society by their wits. All the women are winners in their respective spaces. They are given to understand and realize their inner power, using their innate strength, they challenge their male counterparts and emerge as winners.

In the novel *Ladies Coupe* Prabha Devi was groomed to be a good wife. She served, cooked and was all women. She walked with "... small mincing steps, her head forever bowed, suppliant..." (LC 170). She was married at the age of eighteen; she waited first for her husband to come home and then waited for her babies until one day after her fortieth birthday she realized that she had forgotten the sound of her own voice.

"What do I sound like? Is my voice shrill or harsh? Doesn't pitch low or high? Does it float like a wind or fall like bricks? She opened her mouth and spoke her name: pra-bhaa-de-vi. A sound emerged that was little like a bleat and more like a mewl. So this is my voice, she thought. Between an irate sheep and a kitten being strangled" (LC 168).

Her life has been comfortable when she is wed into a rich family and enjoys her role as wife and daughter-in-law. Her trip to New York makes her crave to be like those women "with swinging

hair and a confident stride. They seemed to know exactly where they were going and once they got there, what they had to do. Their lives were ruled by themselves and no one else. Such poise, such confidence, such celebration of life and beauty” (LC 177). She changes and becomes aware of her physical charm. She starts to read magazines and visits parlour. Prabha Devi, becomes modern with a certain tilt in her walk.

Marikolunthu, a victim of rape and forced motherhood suffers all through her life. Confined in the mirror image of patriarchy, marikolunthu is too tired to fight against the norms that prevailed in the society. Carole. J. Sheffield observes, “under patriarchy men are entitled to sex, it is a primary vehicle by which they establish and signal their masculinity (421). She comes from a poor background employed in a chettiar household. She is raped by Murugesan and as a result she is pregnant. She gives birth Muthu who is born after many attempts at abortion. Though the rapist is known he is not punished life-long. She mortgages Muthu at one of Murugesan’s looms for five thousand rupees, which she uses for her operation at Kancheepuram. When she sees the dead body of Murugaesan burning at the pyre all the hatred she had felt went up in the flames. She feels guilt and love for her child Muthu. Her resolution to bring up her child shows her forming into new character.

In the view of Ebenezer Paulraj Margaret Shanthi his wife is another possession, which he is proud of. He repeatedly refers to her in the novel as “my little girl”, “my darling child” as if to affirm his ownership. In place of an understanding and meaningful relationship that marriage can be, Paulraj wants an unequal relationship that would make Margaret his proud Possession. He says : “ I love it when you call me Ebe, Ebe, just like you did now. Like a little girl. I like you like this,’ Ebe murmured. ‘So untainted and clean. My little darling. My lovely girl with no big bouncy breasts and horrible woman’s bush. I never want you to change. I want you to remain like this all your life”(LC111)

In a patriarchal society a woman had no wish of her own. Margaret is not even allowed to have a child. She is jolted out of this role when she has to go through an abortion of her first pregnancy due to Ebenezer’s compulsion. He controls her completely, she is forced to do B.Ed, though she wished to do Ph.D. He begins to nag her and finds

fault in her house keeping and cooking. She has to work wherever her husband works.

Simon de Beauvoir speaks about this masculine trait in *The Second Sex*: “...subordinated economically and socially to her husband, the good wife is the man’s most precious treasure. She belongs to him so profoundly that she partakes of the same essence as he; she has his name, his gods, and he is responsible for her. He calls her his ‘better half’. He takes pride in his wife as he does in his house, his lands, his flocks, his wealth and sometimes even more; through her he displays his power before the world; she is his measure and his earthly portion”.(207)

The idea of possession is an integral part of Paulraj’s identity and his stature grows in proportion to his wealth. He does not want an assertive woman as a wife. They are in compatible in many ways and Margaret shanti feels suffocated in her marriage. She classifies herself as water. “Water that moistens, water that heals. Water that forgets. Water that accepts. Water that flows tirelessly. Water that also destroys” (LC 96). She keeps on changing till she finds a state where she is happy. Paulraj loved her but she is prevented from being an individual. She is like a little girl who says ‘Yes’ to whatever he says and is out to please him always. She decides to win him intelligently. Ebenezer Paulraj loves food and so she pampers him with food such that he became fat, lost his vanity and cruelty and sought her more and more. She who had always been controlled by him, now had him completely in her hands.

Of all the stories of the women in the *Ladies Coupe* the most fascinating and most compellingly beautiful story is that of Akhila. When Akhila’s father dies, the family responsibility falls on the shoulders of Akhila. She has been offered her father’s post as a clerk in the Income-tax department. Nair says, “when Akhila’s father died two things happened: Sunday became just another day of the week and Akhila became the man of the family” (LC 75). Even her mother is not willing to think for her well-being. Her younger sister Padma grows up, her marriage is planned, but no one thinks about Akhila. She serves as the bread-winner of the family “who would chart and steer the course of the family’s destiny to safe shores”(LC 76). Akhila is branded a spinster and a sacrificing elder sister. After the death of her

mother, she is forced to live with Padma her younger sister. Akhila has no peace in the house.

Akhila painfully remembers how her mother loaded her with the burden of the family. "She was always an extension of someone else's identity-Chandra's daughter, Narayan's Akka, Priya's aunt, Murthy's sister-in-law. She wished for once, someone would see her as a whole being" (LC 201). She realizes that she has missed valuable moments in her life. Infact she is the only unmarried person in her office. All these years, she is a mere shadow as marriage, motherhood and childrearing are infinite possibilities for her and she had nothing in common with them. What would she understand of a father's anguish when his child was persistently ill? Or a mother's joy when her child took its first step? The world of the householder was not hers. From the Gurukula stage the of life, she had moved directly yo world wanted no part of someone the Vanaprastha. And she wanted no part of someone else's karmic flaw" (LC 85-86).

Feeling suffocated and stifled by family pressures, Akila decides to undertake a train journey all alone. After listening to the stories of Janaki, Prabha Devi, Margaret and Marikolunthu, she realizes the importance of self gratification. She is able to compare and contrast her life experience with that of her fellow passengers in the coupe. She re-examines her life from a newly acquired point of view enriched by the travel experience. She tests her new found confidence by taking a lover. She feels the urge to have a physical and emotional bond with a man. After that she comes to a conclusion that she needs a man to complement her life and so she dials Hari's number. Her decision to have a contact with Hari may be a rebellion against society. But She is concerned about her journey towards self discovery.

Anita Nair in an interview observed: "there is a lot of strength in a woman that does not come out naturally, it has to be forced out of them" (qtd. in sinha 151). Akhila is neither ashamed of herself nor she cares much for the disapproving gaze of patriarchy. She forms herself and starts a new life. Shedding silence and inhibition, Akhila appropriates the voice and the will province of men and takes an active part in life.

All the six women presented in *Ladies Coupe* have realized that they are independent individuals and they can face the challenges of the society. They feel that a woman has all potentials like a man. The women of modern era think on different lines and that is what is depicted in Nair's *Ladies Coupe*. On the whole, Anita Nair's *Ladies Coupe* is a deep probing into the psyche of the women characters. She paints her women as of possessing high degree of strength. They struggle for distinct zone and they are aware of their power. They survive their ordeals and find an answer to the very mystery of their existence in a patriarchal society.

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## Discrimination and Indignities of Colour Bar in Wole Soyinka's Poem *Telephone Conversation*

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### Abstract

Colour bar is an unjust action against the victims. It is a total attack against a particular human race. It lays pavements for inequality and untouchability. Differentiating people with the colour of their skin strengthens social discrimination. Wole Soyinka is one of the postcolonial African figures who in his poem *Telephone Conversation* explains the problems and sufferings that an African faced due to the colour of his skin. This article attempts to support Wole Soyinka fighting for his people against colour bar and racial discrimination.

**Keywords:** colour bar, unjust, victims, attack, human race, inequality, untouchability, social discrimination and postcolonial.

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Wole Soyinka, a Nigerian literary legend, has written many poems, novels and plays. His works generally express traditional-minded Africans to modern lifestyles. Especially his poems bring to light the sufferings of Africans due to apartheid. In all his writings he brings out the antagonism between the whites and the black people. Soyinka penned this poem when apartheid was at its extreme core in America. Africans could not live with the Americans and the children of African people were not allowed to study in the same schools with American children. Wole Soyinka is an open-minded writer who does not bother about the consequences of his writings. Soyinka was awarded the prestigious Nobel prize for Literature in 1986 and he was the first African writer to have been honoured in that category.

Wole Soyinka's poem *Telephone Conversation* details a conversation between a white lady and an African man which casts a ruthless light on the racism and prejudice which grips the society. The poem starts with an African searching for a house who is finally able to opt for a house owned by a white lady. The tenant is happy that the rent required by the house owner is affordable. The house is located in an ideal place. As the man can have the benefit of his privacy, the

land lady does not live under the same roof. The African man is ready to accept the offer. But he does not want to hide from her about his nationality and his colour. He phones her up and reveals his nationality. The white lady gets shocked on hearing the nationality of the caller. She cannot make herself to accommodate a black skinned man into her house. At the same time she does not want to create the impression of being ill-mannered and racial minded. So she remains silent for a while.

. She makes some stuttering sounds. The tenant is able to visualize her lip-stick coated mouth, smoking from a gold-plated cigarette-holder. She must be rich. Soyinka expresses the appearance of the white lady as follows:

“... Voice, when it came,  
Lip-stick coated, long gold-rolled  
Cigarette-holder pipped”

- T C

Then she slowly gears up to the African asking him about the colour whether he is thick black or light black. The tenant is confused and perplexed to give a satisfactory answer. He also guesses that the landlady does not really ask him about his blackness. He thinks it is a fantasy. He looks around and sees objects like Button A, Button B, the bad smelling public telephone booth, a red post-box hanging in a pillar, a red-coloured omnibus, squelching tar, etc.

He realizes that like all these things around him, his conversation with the landlady is also true. He is ashamed of his foolishness and which is the result of his shock and surprise. Somehow he breaks the silence by requesting the landlady to ask him trouble-free questions. But the landlady does not simplify her questions; she repeats the earlier questions, merely varying the tone and the accent. She asks if he is dark or very light.

“HOW DARK?... I had not misheard....’  
ARE YOU LIGHT OR VERY DARK?...”

- T C

The house owner's irresistible hatred of black is completely revealed to the tenant. With the

view of clarifying the doubts of the house owner, the tenant compares himself as sexually attractive. But the tenant's techniques and tactics do not satisfy the house owner. She is very 'clinical' in her mind to know exactly how dark is the tenant. The tenant tries with another answer telling the landlady that he is of the complexion of 'West African Sepia' which is the brown-coloured substance used in the preparation of inks and paints. He also admits that he is not telling a lie and his sepia complex is rightly mentioned in his passport.

"You mean-like plain or milk chocolate?

Her accent was clinical, crushing in its light impersonality.

Rapidly, wave-length adjusted

I chose. 'West African Sepia' and as

Afterthought

'Down in my passport'...."

- T C

The landlady does not understand what sepia complexion is like. She thinks of a variety of colours and tries to identify the colour of sepia. But she cannot get it. She thinks that the tenant is uttering a lie. She vehemently gets angry and shouts on the tenant. To help her out, the tenant tells her that he is like a 'brunette'. As the landlady does not know the meaning of this word too, she says that the word 'brunette' also means black.

"....'DON'T KNOW WHAT THAT IS. Likebrunette'. 'THAT'S DARK, ISN'T IT?'"

- T C

In order to satisfy the landlady, the tenant explains that only his face that is exposed to wind and weather is brunette but the rest of his body, being unexposed, is 'peroxide blond'. Actually peroxide is a colourless liquid used to bleach hair. He feels proud that his palm and the soles of his feet are blond. He continues to explain to the landlady that his buttocks are shiny black because of friction. This is an indirect euphemistic reference to his genitals.

"Facially, I am a brunette, but madam you should see the rest of me. Palm of my hand, soles of my feet are a peroxide blond. Friction caused- Foolishly madam- by sitting down, has turned My bottom raven black..... "

- T C

Earlier the tenant had tried to tempt the lady's sexual interest by comparing himself to chocolate. In the same way, the present representation of his private parts is also considered to kindle her eroticism. But the tenant's intention misfires. The landlady is offended and provoked by his suggestive talk and hangs her receiver with a loud bang. This sounds like thunderclap to the tenant. The tenant's invitation the landlady to 'see for herself' has a mischievous tone as it has an element of sexual approach.

"Her receiver rearing on the thunderclap About my ears- 'Madam', I pleaded, 'wouldn't you rather see for yourself?'"

- T C

She is highly puritanical. The tenant's sexy talk only fills her with revulsion and she abruptly ends the telephonic conversation. The landlady is a representative of many whites who have erected a barrier between themselves and the Africans.

The poem deals with a foul subject, that of racism and prejudice, in a lighthearted, almost comical manner. A most important device which Soyinka has used to highlight this sense of racism, which was previously widespread in western society, is that of the telephone. The abrupt breakdown of the conversation is a symptom of the inexplicable racial tangle in society.

Thus the poem ends on a miserable communication. Neither a personal relationship nor an impersonal tenant – landlady relationship becomes possible. It directly shows that the white Americans and the black Africans cannot be equal and united in any way. But conditions have changed vastly in America as the black people have become citizens of America and they are now called as African Americans.

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Registered with the Registrar of Newspaper of India vide MAHENG/2010/35012

ISSN 0976-299X

ISSN 0976-299X

[www.literaryendeavour.org](http://www.literaryendeavour.org)

## **LITERARY ENDEAVOUR**

**UGC Approved Under Arts and Humanities Journal No. 44728**

**INDEXED IN**

***GOOGLE SCHOLAR***

***SCOPUS***

***EBSCO PUBLISHING***

Owned, Printed and published by Sou. Bhagyashri Ramesh Chougule,  
At. Laxmi Niwas, House No. 26/1388, Behind N. P. School No. 18, Bhanunagar, Osmanabad,  
Maharashtra – 413501, India.