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From the Editors

The Department of Russian and Comparative Literature humbly present before you the 2rd[d] issue of our departmental research journal Assonance – A Journal of Russian and Comparative Literary Studies. It is indeed a matter of pride for us to share that our journal has received tremendous support from different universities and has been widely read by the scholars from the fields of Russian studies and comparative literary studies. We are grateful to each and every contributor for contributing their valuable research articles for this issue.

The current issue has total sixty-nine articles in Russian, English, Hindi and Malayalam contributed by scholars of eminence as well as emerging scholars on various issues of Russian studies, comparative literature, comparative study, genre study, thematic study of different authors and their texts, translation studies, linguistics, culture studies, travelogue, folklore, et al.

We express our deepest sense of gratitude towards the administration of the University of Calicut for their continual financial support and patronage in our endeavour of publishing this journal. We as well appreciate the timely input provided by the Board of Referees with respect to quality of the articles and publication of the journal. Last but not the least, we are thankful to all those who rendered their support towards bringing out this issue successfully.

- The Editors

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УПОТРЕБЛЕНИЕ ОКСЮМОРОНОВ В КУЛЬТУРЕ РЕЧИ РУССКОГО ЯЗЫКА

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USE OF OXYMORON IN RUSSIAN SPEECH CULTURE

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Аннотация *– Язык с веки веков является социальным явлением. Он возникает и развивается в обществе и меняется со временем. Язык всегда остается в своей потенциальной форме и физически проявлен только через речь и письмо. Это с давних времен всегда используется для общения, выражения мыслей и чувств и сохранения информации и знаний. в данной статье особое внимание уделяется употреблению оксюморонов в русской культуре речи*

Ключевые слова *– оксюморон, культура речи, фигура речи, русский язык*

Abstract *– Language from the time immemorial is a social phenomenon. It emerges and develops in society and changes over time. Language always remains in its potential form and is physically manifested only through speech and writing. It has always been used since ancient times to communicate, express thoughts and feelings and preserve information and knowledge. In the present article, special attention is paid to the use of oxymoron as figure of speech in the Russian culture of speech.*

Keywords *– oxymoron, speech culture, figure of speech, Russian language*

Язык, несомненно социальное явление, возникает и развивается в обществе и меняется со временем. Язык всегда остается в своей потенциальной форме и физически проявлен только через речь и письмо. Это с давних времен всегда используется для общения, выражения мыслей и чувств и сохранения информации и знаний. Каждый язык представлен языковой системой. В русском языке языковая система формируется с помощью

различных единиц. Этими единицами являются фонемы, морфемы, слова, словосочетания, фразы, предложения и/или целые тексты.

В русском языке содержится три широкие группы стиля : разговорный, нейтральный и книжный. Книжный стиль можно разделить на художественный, публицистический, официально-деловой и научный. В языке существует множество литературных приемов, которые используются для достижения правильного значения в соответствии с ситуацией и большей выразительности речи. Тропы часто используются в переносном смысле и в большинстве случаев риторически. Например: метафора, метонимия, эпитет, литота, аллегория, олицетворение, оксюморон, и т.д.

Стилистические фигуры относятся к любому из множества методов, чтобы придать дополнительный смысл, идею или чувство. Также известная как фигуры речи или риторические устройства, цель этих методов состоит в том, чтобы создать образ, акцент или ясность в тексте в надежде привлечь внимания читателя. Например: эллипсис, инверсия, каламбур, градация, параллелизм и другие. В данной статье особое внимание уделяется употреблению оксюморонов в русской культуре речи.

Оксюморон, в общем, является значительным устройством в литературе любого языка. Оксиморон может быть стилистической ошибкой, но обычно он используется как стилистический прием в литературе и художественных текстах. Они используются, чтобы смутить читателей, а иногда они используются в комическом смысле, чтобы посмеяться над чем-то. Оксюмороны сознательно используются для обострения противоречия и достижения живости. У оксюморонов есть элемент удивления, который используется для привлечения внимания читателя к абсурдности ситуации. Он часто воспроизводится в литературе в тех случаях, когда необходимо выразить несогласованность или сложность характера предмета в тексте, достигнув нового смыслового качества.

Многие писатели воспользовались помощью оксюморон, чтобы передать что-то более глубокое или просто в комическом смысле, чтобы показать иронию. Например: «Конец вечности» (А. Азимов); «Живой труп» (Л. Толстой); «Мертвые души» (Н. Гоголь).

В журналистике оксюмороны часто используются, чтобы подчеркнуть иронию и привлечь внимание читателей к предмету, в котором

используется стилистическая фигура. Например: секрет полишинеля, демократическая диктатура, красноречивое молчание и др.

В научных статьях существует множество явлений, которые практически не парадоксальны, но используемые для них термины оксюмороны. Например: черный свет, сжиженный природный газ, сухой лед и др.

По мнению Э. Г. Шестакова, «Оксюморон - это такое совмещение несовместимых противоречивых, противоположных слов и понятий, при котором его составляющие не уничтожают и не нивелируют друг друга, а сохраняются в полном объеме своих значений, отображая принципиально новое явление или его новое состояние» (Шестаков, Оксюморон как категория поэтики (на материале русской поэзии XIX - первой трети XX века)).

По определению М. Д. Кузнеца, «оксюморон (англ. oxymoron от греч. oxymoron «остроумно-глупое»). Оксюмороном называется стилистический прием, посредством которого предмету речи приписывается признак (качество, действие, состояние), противоречащий природе, сущности определяемого. Это-столкновение слов, имеющих определительную, предикативную или обстоятельственную связь друг с другом, но логически несовместимых.» (Кузнец М.Д).

Согласно С. Б. Козинеца, «Оксюморон (лр.-греч. oxymoron - остроумно-глупое) - троп, основанный на сочетании противоположных по смыслу или несочетающихся понятий: горячий снег, умная глупость, весёлое горе, нищий богач и под.» (козинец)

Традиционно оксюмороны используются в художественных и публицистических текстах. В художественных произведениях оксюмороны используются, чтобы показать

абстрактную идею или показать сложную ситуацию. Их часто используют в стихах, чтобы выявить внутренние противоречия чувств, таких как любовь-ненависть, страх перед смерть, свобода и многое другое. Например: Той «грустной радостью», что я остался жив? - С. Есенин. (Русь Советская).

Также оксюмороны используются для названия многих произведений, таких как «Горячий снег» Ю. Бондарева, «Без вины виноватые» А. Островского, «Отправленная туника» Н. Гумилева, «Барышня-крестьянка» А. Пушкина, «Честный вор» Ф. Достоевского, «Обыкновенное чудо» Е.

Шварца. Со временем люди начали использовать оксюмороны как названия фильмов, например американский фильм «Назад в будущее», российский художественный фильм «Холодное танго» (П.Чухрай), «Правдивая ложь» Д. Кэмерона и т.д.

В публицистических текстах оксюмороны используются в качестве яркого приёма, чтобы показать контрастные ситуации или иронию, чтобы привлечь внимание читателя к объекту или явлению, которое находится в центре запроса. Например: *оглушительная тишина, демократическая диктатура, социалистический капитализм* и др. Эти примеры также подтверждают, что оксюморон имеет еще одну функцию, кроме выразительности, то есть номинативную функцию.

Оксюморонные термины также можно увидеть в научных текстах. В научных текстах оксюморонные термины являются более конкретными и имеют специфическое значение, связанное с ними, чем оксюмороны в литературе и публицистических текстах. Эти термины могут показаться парадоксальными, но существуют в реальном мире. В отличие от оксюморонов литературных текстов, оксюмороны в научных статьях имеют конкретное значение, и нельзя толковать эти термины по его воле. Нужно иметь базовые знания, чтобы чётко понять термины. Эти термины могут быть легко найдены в энциклопедиях, но практически отсутствуют в толковых словарях. Например: *сухой лед, жидкий газ, сухой спирт* и др.

Оксюмороны обычно состоят из двух компонентов: один главный и другой зависимый. Значение оксюморонов основывается на главном слове, а зависимое слово придает атрибуту противоположного значения главного слова. Это приводит к формированию нового термина с другим значением. Например: *священная война, отрицательный рост* и др.

Видно, что при образовании оксюморонов с двумя компонентами один из компонентов всегда должен восприниматься по-разному, чтобы достичь правильного значения всего словосочетания. И. Гальперин, изучая лексическое и грамматическое значение оксюморонов, заявил, что «В лексических значениях происходит столкновение семантических характеристик двух компонентов сочетания, вызывающее переосмысление одного из них. Обычно такому переосмыслению подвергается прилагательное. Как выражение качественно признака предмета или явления, оно менее стабильно, менее субстанционально, чем существительное» (Гальперин). Например: *честный вор, тупой учёный, доброжелательный диктатор*, и др.

Значительное количество оксюморонов можно найти на любом языке. Эти оксюмороны можно разделить на три широкие группы:

а) оксюморон в результате стилистической ошибки, возникающей в речи. Эти оксюмороны возникают в результате ошибки, которая совершается бессознательно в речи и становится частью речи на протяжении веков времени и носители языка легко понимают значение таких словосочетаний. Например: *Единственный выбор, немного переработать* и др.

б) Оксюморон как стилистическая фигура. Многие писатели, поэты, журналисты намеренно соединяли два семантически противоположных слова, чтобы выразить свою точку зрения. Эти новые словосочетания часто содержат новое более глубокое значение или иногда не имеют смысла и используются только для развлечения. Например: *оглушительная тишина, оборонительная атака, скучный рев, глобальная деревня*, и др.

в) Составной термин: Это термины, которые состоят из двух семантически противоположных слов, но на самом деле они означают что-то другое и имеют фиксированное значение. Например: *космический корабль, живое ископаемое, индустриальный парк, примитивные технологии* и др.

Иногда оксюмороны сделаны из афоризмов, таких как, культурное варварство- это цивилизация без культуры.

Оксюмороны, в зависимости от семантики, можно разделить на две группы: а) явные и б) неявные (т.е. косвенные). Явные оксюмороны - это оксюмороны, которые составлены из слов антонимов. Это означает, что существительное, которое превращается в прилагательное, должно быть антонимом к главному слову. Например: *медленная скорость, тихая ярость, виртуальная реальность.*

Неявные оксюмороны - оксюмороны, которые состоят из слов, которые являются антонимами, но не основаны на их значениях а основаны на пресуппозициях, связанных с этими словами. Например: *гуманная бойня, металлическое дерево, грустный клоун, космический корабль* и др.

Среди экспертов широко распространено мнение, что оксюмороны впервые появились в языке посредством разговорной речи. Это было связано с неграмотностью говорящих и нарушением семантической комбинации слов из-за незнания правил. Получающиеся слова и словосочетания были захватывающими, и из-за их привлекательной природы оксюмороны стали популярными. И они остались в использовании среди носителей языка.

Постепенно писатели и поэты начинают использовать оксюмороны. Они преднамеренно нарушили правила языка и объединили слова с противоположными значениями, а также слова, которые меньше или совсем не совместимы друг с другом. В результате этого в литературе

появились новые слова и словосочетания. С тех пор на протяжении всей истории писатели и поэты использовали оксюморонные термины на русском и других языках.

Оксюмороны часто используются в названиях литературных произведений не только для привлечения внимания читателей с первого взгляда но и для возбуждения интереса читателей, чтобы узнать больше о содержании работы. В сегоднящней цифровой среде оксюмороны широко используются для рекламы различных продуктов.

Оксюморон используется, чтобы показать или объяснить что-то, что не является реальным и невозможно существовать в реальном мире. Такие термины обычно используются в научной фантастике. Например: *сухая вода, алмазный дождь* и др.

В заключении можно сделать вывод что оксюморон является стилистической фигурой, усиливающей выразительность в любом языке. Оксюмороны используются как выразительные средства и как средства коммуникации. Оксюмороны играют важную роль в художественных и публицистических текстах. Элемент неожиданности отражается в резком контрасте между отдельными компонентами оксюморона. Этот элемент неожиданности используется, чтобы показать иронию. Из-за этой особенности оксюмороны используются особенно в публицистических и пропагандистских текстах, а также в рекламе. Оксюмороны также помогают в выражении некоторых сложных чувств и используются в литературе и других художественных текстах.

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МУЛЬТИЯЗЫЧНОСТЬ ИНДИЙСКОЙ АУДИТОРИИ И ЕЁ ВОСПОМОГАТЕЛЬНАЯ РОЛЬ ПРИ ОБУЧЕНИИ РУССКОМУ ЯЗЫКУ

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MULTILINGUAL ASPECT OF THE INDIAN CLASSROOM AND ITS HELPING ROLE IN TEACHING RUSSIAN LANGUAGE

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Аннотация*: Статья посвящена процессу обучения русскому языку в Индийской аудитории с точки зрения её многоязычной стороны. Студенты в идийской аудитории знают больше одного языка. Существуют разные сходства в русском языке и в индийских языках в сфере фонетики, грамматики и т.д.. В статье также рассматриваются, что преподаватель должен привести аналогичные примеры из этих индийских языков, так как эти подобные языковые правила и аспекты позволяют педагогам легко обьяснить понятие русского языка и ускоряют приобретение второго языка.*

Abstract: *This article deals with the process of teaching Russian language in the Indian classroom from the point of view of its multilingual aspect. The students in the Indian classroom know more than one language. There are various similarities in Russian and in Indian languages in the field of phonetics, grammar etc. The article also considers that the teacher should provide similar examples from these Indian languages, since these similar linguistic rules and aspects allow teachers to easily explain the concept of the Russian language and speed up the acquisition of a second language.*

Ключевые слова: *индиийская аудитория, мультиязычность, русский язык, родной язык, подобные лингвистические правила и структуры, звуки, мягкие согласные, редукция, склонение*

Индия – многоязычная страна, где почти во всех больших городах изучается русский, как инностранный язык. Среди инностранных языков обучаемых в Индии, русский язык был и остаётся одним из самых популярных языков.

Очень важно тут заметить, что обучение русскому языку, как иностранному главным образом проходит в Индии в ВУЗах, например: в Центре русских исследований в университете имени Джавахарлала Неру, на Кафедре русского языка в университете имени Махараджи Сайаджирау, на Кафедре славянских и финно-угорских исследований в Делийском университете, на Кафедре Русского языка в Университете Английского языка и иностранных языков и т.д. Это указывает на то, что учащиеся в Индии в большинстве случаев являются возрослыми студентами, а не маленькими или школьными детьми. Возрослые не могут выучить иностранный язык тем же способом, которым они выучили родной язык, когда они были маленькими. Нам известно, что дети осваивают язык легко и свободно. У них нет знаний, которые могли бы тормозить процесс изучения языка, поэтому они просто принимают и выучивают новый язык, как есть, быстро и эффективно. Как говорится, невежество – блаженство! И вот возрослым студентам нужен дополнительный язык обучения для пояснения грамматической особенности русского языка.

Индиийская аудитория сильно отличается от аудиторий других стран. Индиийская аудитория блогадаря её мультиязычности даёт возможность, особенно в начальном этапе, пользоваться разными языками (родной и другие языки) в процессе обучения. Данная работа сосредаточится на показании положительной или, можно сказать, воспомогательной стороны данного обстоятельства индиийской аудитории.

Обучение русскому языку и воспомогательная роль родного и других языков в индийской аудитории:

Индиийская аудитория своёобразная. Как сказанно выше, что Индия – это многоязычная страна и почти в каждом штате есть свой определённый язык, каторый сильно отличается от языка другого штата (Хинди, Бенгали, Гуджраты, Пенджаби, Телугу, Тамил и т.д.). Задачу обучения русскому языку в Индийской аудитории нужно рассматривать с точки зрения её многоязычной стороны. Учащиеся могут принадлежать к разным Штатам и поэтому у них бывают разные родные языки. И к тому же, индийские студенты знают санскрит и английский языки. Английский язык не считается у нас абсолютно иностранным языком и поэтому знание английского языка до большой степени облегчает задачу преподавателя русского языка. Английский язык в нашем контексте является ещё одним дополнительным языком обучения. Возникают проблемы тогда, когда английский язык

пользуется единственным языком обучения и приведены примеры только из него.

В итоге студенты индийской аудитории знают больше одного языка. В этом плане преподавателю иностранного (русского) языка нужно знать характерные черты родного и других общих языков студентов, учашихся русский язык.

Задача перед молодыми педагогами

Педагоги должны обратить внимание не только на грамматику и фонетику второго (русского) языка, но и они также должны стремиться владеть грамматикой и фонетикой родного и других общих языков студентов аудитории. Обучение русскому языку через родной язык и другие языки в многих случях делает этот процесс более проще и легче. Это потому, что в каждом языке есть многочисленные одинаковые лингвистические (грамматические, синтаксические и фонетические) правила и структуры. Подобные языковые правила, понятие и аспекты ускоряют приобретение второго языка.

Ясно, что в процессе обучения русскому языку особое место занимают положительные и отрицательные влияния родного или другого языка (в индийской аудитории учащийся знает по миниму два языка). Наша работа стремится показать, что хорошее знание больше одного (родного) языка, всегда помогает преодолевать отрицательные воздействия при обучении.

Существуют многочисленные синтаксические и фонетические сходства в Русском и в индийских языках Хинди, Санскрит, Гуджараты и Английский. Эти сходства позволяют легко обьяснить понятие изучаемого (русского) языка. Педагоги должны использовать подходящие примеры в процессе обучения. Один из языков индийской аудитории, по крайней мере, приходит на помощь, чтобы объяснить определённое понятие русской грамматики.

Приведём тут несколько примеров из русского языка и рассматриваем по грамматике и по языковой структуре их соответствия в языках, которые понимаются студентами индийской аудитории. Получается так, что студенты уже знакомы с такими аспектами русской грамматики и такой сравнительный подход приносит хорошие результаты.

Примереы:

В Хинди и в других индийских языках есть подобные звуки, которые позволяют студентам легко произносить русские звуки. Звуков [Д] и [Т] нет в английском языке. Например:-

Русский	Хинди
[Д]	[द]
[Т]	[त]
[С]	[स]

Мягкие согласные:- В русском языке встречаются мягкие согласные. Согласные звуки мягкие, если после них стоят гласные буквы е, ё, ю, я, и или ь. Студенты очень часто делают ошибки в произношении таких слов, но подобное понятие тоже есть в английском языке. Здесь английский язык упрощает дело преподавателя. Например:-

Русский	Английский
День, Дедушка, Дядя, Текст	Fuel

Редукция:- Процесс изменения звучания гласных звуков называется редукцией. В русском языке ударный слог произносится сильнее, громче, чем безударный. Редукция гласных звуков также встречаются в английском языке. Здесь лежит задача преподавателя, объясняя данную фонетическую концепцию русского языка он должен привести такие примеры, с которыми студенты уже знакомы. Например:-

Русский	Английский
Антон, Вода, Молоко	Monitor, Actor, Doctor, Vision, Banana

Синтаксическая конструкция -

Склонение:- Склонение существительных играет важную роль в русской грамматике. В данном случае самым подходщим языком для объяснения этот аспект является язык Санскрит. Например:-

Русский	Санскрит
Книга Рама	Ramasya Pustakam (**रामस्य पुस्तकम्**)
Книга Ситы	Sitayah Pustakam (**सीतायाः पुस्तकम्**)

Некоторые синтаксические конструкции русского языка уподобляются конструкциям языка хинди. Здесь мы видим, что хинди облегчает процесс обучения показывая одинаковые структуры предложения. Например:-

Русский	Хинди
Мне нравится этот фильм.	Mujhe yah film pasand hai.
Мне не спится	Mujhe nind nahi aa rahi.
Мой брат	Mera Bhai
Моя сестра	Meri Behan

Глаголы движения, которые относятся к группам «Идти» и «Ходить» можно объяснить приведя аналогичны примеры с языка Хинди. Например:-

Русский	Хинди
я иду в парк. → (однонаправленные движения, сейчас)	Mai Park Ja raha Hun.
Я хожу в парк. ↔ (разнонаправленные движения, часто)	Mai Park Jata Hun. / Mai Park Jata Rehta Hun.

Заключение

Индиийская аудитория исключительная и поэтому задачу обучения русскому языку в Индийской аудитории нужно рассматривать и исключительно, т.е. с точки зрения её многоязычной стороны. Учащиеся в идийской аудитории знают больше одного языка. преподаватель должен научиться использовать мультиязычность аудитории в положительном для себя ключе.

Обучение русскому языку через родной язык и другие языки в многих случаях делает процесс более простым и доступным. В том числе это связано и с тем, что существуют многочисленные синтаксические и фонетические сходства в русском языке, в индийских языках и других языках, на которых говорят у нас в стране. Подобные языковые правила и аспекты позволяют педагогам легко обьяснить понятие русского языка.

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(https://accent-center.ru/ru/articles/pochemu-my-ne-mozhem-vyuchit-inostrannyj-yazyk.html - Почему мы не можем выучить иностранный язык тем же способом, которым мы выучили родной).

(https://www.vspc34.ru/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=631&Itemid=22) - Проблема Интерференции в Процессе Развития Умений Аудирования у Студентов-Лингвистов, Изучающих Английский Язык Как Второй Иностранный

ИСПОЛЬЗОВАНИЕ ПРОПАГАНДИСТСКИХ ФИЛЬМОВ В ИНТЕРЕСАХ ГОСУДАРСТВА ВО ВРЕМЕНА СССР

THE USE OF PROPAGANDA FILMS TO SERVE THE INTERESTS OF THE STATE DURING THE SOVIET PERIOD

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Аннотация: *Пропаганда играет очень важную роль в строительстве государства. Мало того, что правительства используют пропаганду как способ оправдать и утвердить свой авторитет, но она также используется, чтобы произвести неизгладимое влияние на идеологию, которые приняты или отвергнуты населением. Пропаганда также была неотъемлемой частью сталинской России. Это помогло им не только достичь, но и сохранить власть в Советской России. Советские фильмы оказались одним из основных инструментов для распространения идеологии большевиков и коммунистических сообщений среди советского населения. Несмотря на то, что кино было не очень эффективным пропагандистским инструментом в сельских районах, оно было очень полезной формой пропаганды среди городского населения. Фильмы в значительной степени повлияли на политику, экономику и технологию той эпохи.*

Советские чиновники и кинематографисты уделили большое внимание на прошлых революциях как способ побудить людей продолжать борьбу, чтобы сделать Россию конкурирующей власть против западного общества. В России революционеры продвигали марксистские идеологии через кино, чтобы просвещать массы и прославлять годы, которые привели к конституционной реформе и демонтажу царского самодержавия. Основное внимание в этой статье будет уделено различным элементам советского кино, которые использовались в качестве пропаганды в сталинскую эпоху.

Abstract: *Propaganda plays a very important role in building a state. Governments use propaganda not only to justify and assert their authority but also to make a lasting impact on ideologies that are accepted or rejected by the population. In the same way, propaganda was also an integral part of Stalin's Russia. This helped him not only to achieve but also to maintain power in Soviet Russia. Soviet films proved to be one of the main tools for spreading the Bolshevik ideology and communist messages among*

the Soviet population. Although cinema was not a very effective means of propaganda in the countryside, it was a very useful form of propaganda among the urban population. Cinema greatly influenced the politics, economy, and technology of that era. Soviet officials and filmmakers used the past revolutions as an instrument to encourage people to keep fighting to make Russia a rival power against the West. In Soviet Russia, the revolutionaries promoted Marxist ideologies through cinema to enlighten the mass and glorify the years that led to constitutional reform and the dismantling of tsarist autocracy. This article will focus on the rise and fall of Soviet cinema and the various elements of Soviet cinema that were used as propaganda during the Stalin period.

Ключевые слова: *кино, пропаганда, советский фильм, правительство, революция, Советский Союз*

Пропаганда — это передача идей или ценностей от одного человека или группы людей к другому. Исторически сложилось так, что именно эти идеи используются, чтобы заставить аудиторию поверить в определенную причину или сообщение. Что касается Советской России, Сталин и другие официальные лица использовали пропаганду как способ продвижения идей революции, выдвинутых Лениным, посредством кинофильмов.

Кино, как искусство или индустрия, имеет решающее значение, потому что оно может привлечь людей из всех классов, социальных групп и мест. Это создает возможность укрепить нацию и сделать политическое движение более сплоченным. Продвигая идею революции, российское правительство также сосредоточила внимание на выявлении отрицательных сторон царского режима.

Когда Россия вступила в Первую мировую войну в августе 1914 года, иностранные фильмы больше не могли быть импортированы, и поэтому царское правительство создало Комитет Скобелева для стимулирования отечественного производства и производства пропаганды в поддержку режима. Когда царь потерял власть в марте 1917 года, Временное правительство во главе с Александром Ф. Керенским реорганизовал его производить анти - царскую пропаганду. Когда через восемь месяцев большевики унаследовали этот комитет, они преобразовали его в комитет по кинематографии Наркомпроса.

Ленин был первым политическим лидером 20-го века, который осознал важность кино в качестве пропаганды и его способности общаться быстро и эффективно. Он понимал, что зрителям не нужна грамотность, чтобы понять смысл фильма, и по сравнению с любыми другими средствами массовой

информации того времени, через массово распространяемые фильмы можно было охватить больше людей. Ленин заявлял, что «Кино для нас является важнейшим из искусств», и его правительство уделяло первоочередное внимание быстрому развитию советской киноиндустрии, которая была национализирована в августе 1919 года и был поставлен под непосредственным руководством жены Ленина, Надежды Крупской.

Для коммунистического правительства в Советской России пропаганда через кино стала логическим средством продвижения революционной идеологии, поскольку оно уже было доминирующей формой городских развлечений рабочего класса с 1914 года. При создании фильмов учитывались три целевые аудитории; солдаты, рабочие и крестьяне. На солдат было легче всего воздействовать с помощью фильма из-за отсутствия доступных развлечений.

С помощью фильмов партия большевиков подтолкнула людей к тому, чтобы вспомнить ужасную жизнь при царском режиме, и утверждала, что это никогда не должно повториться. Изображая такое отношение, они заявили, что их идеология и форма правления станут ключом к успеху страны. Советские власти продвигали эту идеологию в массы через фильмы, чтобы продолжить революцию, начавшуюся в 1905 году. Целью фильмов было показать людям, что Россия становится растущей силой и что пока революция, возглавляемая Лениным, продолжится, страна станет великой державой, которая легко сможет бороться против западного общества.

Смерть Ленина в начале двадцатых годов вызвала раскол в коммунистической партии и заставила большевиков беспокоиться об истощении революции, поэтому они чувствовали необходимость и дальше использовать силу пропаганды, чтобы держать эти пожары. Эти страхи были рассмотрены в фильмах, таких как: «*Конец Санкт-Петербурга*» Всеволода Пудовкина (1927) и «*Октябрь: десять дней, которые потрясли мир*» Эйзенштейна и Григория Александрова (1928).

В тот период кино стал важным инструментом советского правительства, поскольку это был самым простым способом охватить большую часть советского населения. Модернизация была предпосылкой коммунизма и необходимой для защиты от вторжения, и в 1928 году в соответствии с Первым пятилетним планом Сталина, модернизация была сделана приоритетом Советского Союза. У этого движения было три ключевых компонента: коллективизация, индустриализация и культурная революция. Однако, если советские люди должны были преобразовать свою нацию и ее

производство, им также нужно было бы преобразовать себя. Неграмотные рабочие и суеверные крестьяне должны были бы улучшить себя. Они должны стремиться к достижению идеала «нового советского человека». Пропаганда была необходима, чтобы показать, что эти три аспекта модернизации немедленно улучшат жизнь и помогут вступить в новую эру коммунизма.

До того, как Сталин взял под полный контроль партию, многие советские пропагандистские фильмы были посвящены темам продолжения идеалов революции, объединения людей и сохранения большевистского руководства. Такие фильмы, как «Мать» Всеволода Пудовкина (1926), «Шагай, Совет!» Дзига Вертова (1926), «Падение династии Романовых» Эсфирь Шуба, (1927), и «Звенигора» Александра Довженко (1928) напомнили зрителям, что революция была необходима и оправдана для того, чтобы продолжить движение к цели коммунизма. Некоторые из этих тем сохранятся и в сталинские годы, но акцент сместился на идеи о «новом советском человеке», культурной революции и продолжающейся борьбе с классовыми врагами. Этот упорный бой против классовых врагов проявлялось в пропагандистских фильмах, которые возникли в первые годы руководства Сталина, в первую очередь в Потомок Чингисхана» Пудовкина (1928). В «Потомок Чингисхана» Пудовкин продвигает несколько тем советской пропаганды: непрекращающийся международный дух революции; продолжающаяся борьба против различных классовых врагов, внутри страны и за рубежом; и необходимость модернизации, чтобы вывести людей из тьмы суеверий и религии.

В период правления Сатлина любой человек, которого считали частью движения против революции, мог быть обвинен в тюремном заключении или даже в смерти. Фильмы помогли бы людям лучше понять, как выглядит антиреволюционное движение. Это помогло определить, что людям нужно проявлять осторожность при выражении своего мнения. Фильмы, показанные в сельской местности, были попыткой обратить крестьян в коммунистическое общество, чтобы избежать какого-либо восстания.

Многие режиссеры вскоре оказались в противоречии со Сталиным по поводу экономических, политических и культурных направлений его политики. Эти проблемы в итоге привели к культурной революции в советской киноиндустрии. Напряжение между политиками и художниками прекратилось в марте 1928 года в Центральном комитете. В конце концов комитет принял резолюцию, в которой от директоров требовалось создать простые повествовательные истории с «правильным» посланием. Цель этой

резолюции заключалась в том, чтобы история каждого фильма была достаточно простой, чтобы крестьяне и рабочие могли понять ее смысл и урок. Это, по существу, видел конец идеологических и художественно сложных фильмов.

После этой встречи киноиндустрия, по существу, стала для правительства инструментом «просвещения» людей посредством пропаганды о необходимых шагах, таких как индустриализация и укреплении вооруженных сил, для построения сильного социалистического государства. По сути, это означало, что создатели фильма должны продемонстрировать, как в стране начали проявляться первые признаки превращения в славную коммунистическую утопию. Кроме того, фильмы, посвященные историческим событиям, должны показывать их с марксистской точки зрения. По сути, это позволяло правительству изменять прошлое и настоящее по своему усмотрению. Вместо экспериментальных стилей фильмов 1920-х годов, Конгресс требовал, чтобы советский реализм был доступен каждому. По мнению правительства, фильмы, предназначенные для просвещения масс, должны быть достаточно простыми, чтобы их мог понять каждый. Это привело к тому, что фильмы стали очень шаблонными в плане настройки, историй и персонажей.

Фильмы советского реализма можно разделить на три категории: исторические зрелища, революционные рассказы и современные драмы. Исторические спектакли были редчайшие фильмы в течение этого времени, и все они преследовали одну и ту же цель - прославить прошлое России. Революционные истории, тем временем, были сосредоточены на историю, установленной во время русской революции или гражданской войны в России. И Современные драмы рассказывали истории о простых людей, живущих в современном СССР.

Что касается персонажей, советский реализм, как правило, состоял из трех повторяющихся персонажей: простого человека, лидера партии и врага. Большинство фильмов, такие как «Клятва» (1946), «Беглецы» (1932), вращались вокруг среднего гражданина, который должен выполнить какую-то задачу, которая принесёт пользу как человеку, так и государству. Поступая таким образом, герой узнает больше о себе, окружающем мире, важности бдительности, классовой борьбе и необходимых действиях для построения коммунистического общества. К простому человеку почти всегда присоединялся партийный чиновник, который почти всегда был мужчиной, военным и не интересовался вопросами семьи или любви. Партийный

чиновник также иногда действовал как страж нравственности. Наконец, появится враг, который попытается подорвать государство и коммунистическое мировоззрение.

Для того, чтобы сделать Россию более самостоятельной, правительство ожидало, что киноиндустрия начнет увеличивать производство фильмов. К сожалению, это стало проблематичным, потому что советские кинематографисты в значительной степени полагались на иностранный импорт необходимого оборудования, а иностранные фильмы приносили значительный доход. Что еще хуже, художники вскоре оказались творчески ограниченными и были вынуждены следовать строгим правилам в рамках культурной революции. Со временем ограничения становились все жестче и жестче, пока практически не исчезла творческая или политическая свобода.

Перед началом съемок индустрия изо всех сил пыталась найти киносценарии, которые одобрили бы большевистские лидеры. Если партия не считала фильм достаточно образовательным или не выражал свою революционную идеологию, то такие сценарии не получали одобрения. Эта строгая процедура привела к нехватке доступных сценариев. В 1935 году только 43 из 120 фильмов, запланированных к выпуску, были просмотрены публикой. В 1937 году на показ было выпущено всего 24 фильма. Чтобы иметь твердое представление о содержании производимого фильма, партия должна была контролировать образ советского человека, представленный миру. Чтобы создать эти образы, правительству пришлось быть очень осторожным с сюжетом и пропагандистскими метафорами фильма.

В то время партия очень жестко справлялась с нехваткой выпускаемых фильмов. Кинорежиссер Борис Шумяцкий, который был главой советского кинематографического управления в 1930–1937 годах и в основном отвечал за управление советской киноиндустрией, был арестован из-за того, что не мог снимать достаточное количество фильмов. Его казнили в 1938 году.

К концу 30-х годов советская киноиндустрия застыла в застое и творчески мертва. Плохое экономическое планирование и сталинская паранойя помешали любому развитию. В период с 1927 по 1938 год Сталин обладал почти абсолютной властью над Советским Союзом. Чтобы сохранить контроль и подавить инакомыслие, миллионы граждан были казнены или отправлены в ГУЛАГ, где многие из них погибли, а любая группа внутри Коммунистической партии, которая выглядела так, будто могла образовать фракцию, подвергалась чистке. Все подозреваемые в каких-либо действиях или заговорах против Сталина систематически подвергались чистке. По этим

причинам любые надежды на то, что советское кино сможет продолжать развиваться и внедрять инновации, быстро рассеялись. Этот период художественных репрессий сильно замедлил рост советского кино.

Изначально в советских фильмах цитаты использовались как важный инструмент пропаганды. Цитаты, взятые из выступлений Ленина были включены в диалоге с целью продвижения своих намерений революционного движения. Известному советскому кинорежиссеру Сергею Эйзенштейну было поручено важное политическое поручение ВЦИК - снять фильм к 20-летию революции 1905 года. В начале фильма «Броненосец «Потёмкин» (1925) отрывок из речи Ленина 1905 года гласил: «Революция есть война. Это — единственная законная, правомерная, справедливая, действительно великая война из всех войн, какие знает история… в России эта война объявлена и начата» (Ленин, 212). Эти слова, представленные на экране, были простыми и очень понятными даже для тех, у кого не было сильного образования.

Фильм Всеволода Пудовкина «Мать» (1926) начинался с цитаты: «Нам надо позаботиться, - и кроме нас некому будет позаботиться, — о том, чтобы народ знал эти полные жизни, богатые содержанием и великие по своему значению и своим последствиям дни гораздо подробнее, детальнее и основательнее ...» (Ленин, 26). Эта цитата продемонстрировала огромную важность знания прошлого для создания лучшего будущего. Чтобы создать это лучшее будущее, народу России 1926 года нужно было иметь такую же страсть к тем, кто участвовал в прошлых революциях. Опять же, язык в фильме был легким для понимания и общения зрителей, благодаря чему фильм стал успешным.

Следующий проект Эйзенштейна, «Октябрь» (1928), был заказан Центральным комитетом в ознаменование 10-летия большевистской революции. «Октябрь» - самый противоречивый из пропагандистских фильмов, посвященных революции. Историки революции спорят о достоверности фильма, потому что показанный в фильме штурм Зимнего дворца на самом деле не произошел в действительности, утверждая, что фильм является вымышленной пропагандой. Когда фильм был закончен в ноябре 1927 года, он длился чуть меньше четырех часов. Однако пока Эйзенштейн писал «Октябрь», Иосиф Сталин взял под контроль Политбюро у Льва Троцкого, и режиссер был вынужден урезать текст на одну треть, чтобы исключить ссылки на ссыльного Троцкого.

В фильме «Октябрь: десять дней, которые потрясли мир» (1928) в начале фильма появилась памятная цитата Ленина: «Мы вправе гордиться, и мы гордимся тем, что на нашу долю выпало счастье начать постройку советского государства, начать этим новую эпоху всемирной истории...» (Ленин, 148). Это мощное заявление было призвано привлечь внимание молодых поколений советских людей.

Другой метод, используемый при создании пропагандистских сообщений, — это тонкое внушение. Пропагандист будет делать намеки, выражая более общее сообщение, но не всегда будет прямо об этом. Например, тонкие намеки, которые проявляются в изображениях персонажей. В фильме «Мать» изображена женщина, борющаяся против царской власти во время революции 1905 года. «Мать» показала представление российского общества через трех главных героев, которые могли бы понять зрители: мать, отец и сын. Мать, Пелагея Ниловна Власова, оказалась в эпицентре конфликта между ее мужем Власовым и их сыном Павлом, которые находятся на противоположных сторонах забастовки рабочих. Отец и сын каждый из них представляли разные поколения советских людей. Власов представлял старый царский режим, который был жестоким, а Павел представлял революционное движение. На протяжении всего фильма Пелагея находит себя в положении, в котором она способствует обеим сторонам забастовки рабочих, но в конце концов умирает вместе с сыном, сражающимся на стороне революционеров.

Персонажи также представляли собой положительный образец для подражания для массовой аудитории, с которой они могли идентифицировать себя и стремиться ими стать, особенно юные поклонники. В советских фильмах герой олицетворял революцию, а враг - символ царского режима. В фильмах советская жизнь изображалась определенным образом, а на самом деле в реальности жизнь была совершенно иначе. Партия хотела изобразить советскую жизнь определённым образом, чтобы люди присоединились к революционному движению, надеясь получить тот образ жизни, показанный на экране.

Советские чиновники создали персонажей, которые становились образцами для подражания среди поклонников, что, в свою очередь, формировало у русских людей стремление к более сильному чувству национализма. Связав эти узы между людьми, Сталин и его правительство стремились превратить Россию в мировую державу, пытаясь распространить коммунизм на остальную Европу, как планировал Ленин перед своей смертью.

Стремление снимать пропагандистские фильмы создавало прекрасную возможность переписать советскую историю в пользу революции. Тонкое послание, передаваемое через пропаганду, было предназначено для того, чтобы побудить людей присоединиться к делу. Для советских людей это послание означало, что они должны доверять правительству и следовать принципам коммунизма, поскольку это приведет к созданию великой и могущественной страны. Послания в фильмах были направленны с целью влиять на эмоции аудитории, чувство принадлежности к коллективу и чувство разума, чтобы добиться успеха. В советских пропагандистских фильмах использовались риторические приемы пафоса (призыв к эмоциям), этоса (призыв к этике) и логотипов (призыв к логике) для продвижения конкретных идеологических посланий к аудитории.

Символы также являются важным компонентом пропагандистских сообщений, потому что они убеждают аудиторию верить в определенную причину. Символы, найденные в фильме, могут создавать как благоприятное, так и неблагоприятное отношение в зависимости от представленной ситуации. На броненосце «Потёмкин» матросы были вынуждены есть тухлое мясо. Это мясо символизировало фальшивое обращение с русским народом при царском правительстве. Использование плохого мяса ненавязчиво подчеркнуло переломный момент для моряков после несправедливого обращения из-за их более низкого статуса. Эйзенштейн создал царских солдат, которые смотрели свысока на тех, кто был ниже их, что было обычным поведением при царском правлении.

Что касается русской революции, то фильмы типа «Броненосце «Потёмкин», «Октябрь» и многие другие, не обязательно являются точными представлениями прошлого, но они были фильмами, которые сформировали восприятие современного общества прошлого с помощью своих методов производства фильмов и пропаганды.

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ИСПОЛЬЗОВАНИЕ РАССКАЗОВ В ОБУЧЕНИИ РУССКОМУ ЯЗЫКУ КАК ИНОСТРАННОМУ

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USE OF SHORT STORIES IN TEACHING RUSSIAN AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

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Аннотация: *Общеизвестно, что мы с детства любим, слушать и читать рассказы. Следовательно, у нас есть исключительная и уникальная связь с ними. На уроке, особенно в классе иностранных языков, иногда ученику неинтересно выучивать столько новых слов, выражений, грамматических правил и т.д. Использование рассказов в обучении делает класс живым и интересным. Во-вторых, учащиеся могут легко понять контекст слов, в которых они могут использоваться. Поскольку запоминания новых слов недостаточно, нужно также знать, как правильно их использовать. Эта исследовательская работа представляет собой попытку изучить различные виды деятельности, основанные на рассказе, для обучения лексике, различным грамматическим категориям и т.д.*

Ключевые слова: *рассказ, Чехов, толстый и тонкий, методика преподавания*

Abstract: *It is well known that since childhood we love to listen and read stories. Hence, we have an exclusive and unique link with them. In the class, especially in a foreign language class, often, students find learning new words, structures, and grammar tedious, so teaching the same through stories can be a great approach. Students can effortlessly understand the context of words in which they can be used. Since memorizing new words is not sufficient, one should also know how to use them appropriately. This research paper is an attempt to explore various activities to teach vocabulary, different grammatical categories, etc.*

Keywords: *short story, Chekhov, thick and thin, teaching methods*

Существуют разные методы обучения любому языку, например прямой метод, грамматико-переводной метод, коммуникативный метод и т.д. Однако

не все лингвисты согласны с каким-либо одним методом обучения языку. Это также зависит от цели изучения языка. Но большинство ученых считают, что для того, чтобы говорить и понимать язык так же, как его носители, необходимо знать литературу, культуру языка, который мы изучаем. О важности литературы в изучении иностранного языка Лонг говорит, что «Литература является подлинным текстом, а действия, используемые с литературным текстом, - это настоящие действия, а не придуманные вокруг сфабрикованного текста». (Daskalovska and Dimova 1184) В повседневном разговоре мы используем идиомы, фразы, конструкции, имеющие переносное значение и т.д., и чтобы лучше понять язык, мы должны знать, как и когда их использовать. Литература является наилучшим материалом для их правильного понимания.

До тех пор, пока люди не были знакомы с искусством письма, а средств развлечения, несомненно, не было так много, как в настоящее время, они должны были рассказывать друг другу о событиях своей повседневной деятельности, охоте и, а также повествовали сказки о божественной силе, демонах, животных и т. д.

«Одним из старейших зарегистрированных примеров, вероятно, является египетская сказка о двух братьях, датируемая 3200 г. до н.э. *Джатака* (сборник рассказов о ранних воплощениях Будды) и сказки *Панчатантры* являются великим вкладом Индии в мир сказок. Они, наряду с баснями Эзопа (греческие басни с животными в качестве персонажей и моралью), рассказами из Библии и сказками из «Тысячи и одной ночи», являются предшественниками рассказа». (Introduction to the short story 9) Другими словами, происхождение рассказа можно проследить в традиции устного повествования.

Чтобы лучше понять значимость рассказов в обучении языку, необходимо знать, что такое рассказ? И каковы их основные характеристики? Мы также должны знать, чем он отличается от других жанров? По большому счету мы предполагаем, что рассказ, басня или сказка – это одно и то же, но это не так. Есть разные точки зрения на определение и длину рассказа. Джеймс Купер Лоуренс в своей статье «Теория короткого рассказа», обобщающей взгляды Эдгара Аллана говорит, что рассказ - это то, что можно рассказать или прочитать за один присест. (Lawrence, 275) Сэммерсет Моэм утверждает, что «Рассказ - это произведение, которое читается в зависимости от длины от десяти минут до часа и имеет дело с единственным хорошо определенным

предметом, случаем или цепью случайностей, представляющих собой нечто целостное». (“Определение жанра рассказа (Алексей Миловер) / Проза.ру”)

Существует ряд причин использования рассказов в обучении языку. Одной из важных причин является полнота смысла. Рассказ сравнительно легче с точки зрения длины, и его можно преподавать в течение определенного времени. Кроме того «Чтение художественной литературы позволяет отойти от стандартизированных учебных текстов и познакомить учащихся с современным «живым» языком. Работа над художественным текстом позволяет развивать языковые навыки – лексические и грамматические. Позволяет преодолеть языковой барьер, давая учащемуся возможность выражать свое мнение о прочитанном, оценивая ситуации, героев, события. Таким образом, чтение художественного текста стимулирует речевую деятельность». (Гильманова et al. 24)

Джон Ф. Пови утверждает, что «литература расширит лингвистические знания, демонстрируя обширное и тонкое использование словарного запаса, а также сложный и точный синтаксис. (Povey 42) Одной из первостепенных задач при обучении любому иностранному языку является подбор подходящего художественного текста, интересного учащимся. Рассказы содержат все основные компоненты, необходимые для изучения языка. Например, из-за их краткости учитель может громко прочитать весь рассказ в классе, а ученик может выполнить следующее упражнение. 1. Студенты ставят ударение, чтобы запомнить правильное произношение слов. 2. Студенты будут громко повторять за учителем трудные слова. 3. Учитель прочитает рассказ два или три раза, а ученики напишут краткое изложение рассказа. Такие упражнения будут больше вовлекать учащихся в класс. Это улучшит их навыки разговорной речи, чтения и аудирования. Кроме того, для улучшения письма и вышеперечисленных навыков учитель может подготовить различные упражнения.

Чтение рассказов, помимо улучшения языковой компетенции учащихся, поможет учащимся узнать и понять культуру другой страны. Очевидно, что рассказы содержат культурные, социально-политические и т.д. черты общества.

В этой статье рассказ знаменитого русского писателя Антона Чехова «толстый и тонкий» взят для изучения и иллюстрации различных видов языковых упражнений. Преподаватель может использовать данные ниже упражнения при обучении языку.

1. **Пишите незнакомые слова.** Это упражнение позволит учащимся лучше понять текст, так как в нем могут быть незнакомые слова.

   хрес, чинопочитание, лютеранка, урожденная, узел

2. **Прочитайте текст и перескажите его своими словами**. Это улучшит разговорные навыки учащихся.

3. **Найдите приставки, используемые в следующих глаголах, и объясните их значение.**

   Оглядывать, Выглядывать, Прожечь, Зажечь

4. **Напишите и прочитайте эти предложения и обратите внимание на их смысл. (**Рябинина 59)

   1. « Откуда ты взялся? – Откуда ты появился?
   2. Приятели устремили друг на друга глаза. – Друзья посмотрели друг на друга.
   3. Пробавляемся кое-как. – Живём кое-как.
   4. Поднимай повыше. – Я занимаю более высокую должность.
   5. Он вытянулся во фрунт. – Встать навытяжку». (Рябинина 59)

5. **Составьте предложения, используя следующие слова.**

   1. Вот сюрприз!
   2. Голубчик мой!
   3. Батюшки!
   4. Ах ты, господи!
   5. Бог с тобой

6. **Поставьте вместо точек слова, данные в скобках, в нужной форме.**

   1. «.....Николаевской железной дороги встретились два приятеля: один толстый, другой тонкий. (вокзал)
   2. Тонкий же только что вышел ..... и был навьючен чемоданами, узлами и картонками. (вагон)
   3. Это, Нафаня, друг ..... детства! (мой)
   4. Он отвернулся от тонкого и подал …… на прощанье руку». (“Lib.ru/Классика: Чехов Антон Павлович. Толстый и тонкий”) (он)

7. Проспрягайте следующие глаголы.

встретить, пообедать, воскликнуть, ожидать, учиться, подумать, знать, поднимать, понимать, спрятать, побледнеть, написать, шаркнуть, отвернуться, захихикать, возразить.

8. Напишите нужную пару (совершенный или несовершенный вид) глагола.

побледнеть, написать, шаркнуть встретить, учиться, подумать, знать, поднимать, понимать, спрятать, отвернуться, захихикать, возразить, пообедать, воскликнуть, ожидать.

9. Определите, какое из следующих слов лишнее и почему?

губы, пальцы, подбородок, глаза, лоб, нос, щеки.

10. Прочитайте текст и закончите предложения.

1. «Я уже _____, как видишь... . Это вот _____, Луиза, урожденная Ванценбах... лютеранка... А это сын мой, Нафанаил, ученик III класса.
2. В _____ вместе учились!
3. Помнишь, как _____?
4. Жена уроки музыки дает, я _____ из дерева делаю.
5. Мы с тобой друзья детства – и к чему тут это _____». (“Lib.ru/Классика: Чехов Антон Павлович. Толстый и тонкий”)

11. Прочитайте следующие фразы и обратите внимание на их смысл

1. «Голубчик мой! – Ласковое обращение к человеку.
2. Милый (-ая) мой (моя)! – Дорогой, любимый (ласковое обращение к человеку).
3. Вот не ожидал! – Выражение удивления от встречи.
4. Батюшки (мои)! – Выражение изумления, испуга.
5. Вот так сюрприз! – Выражение удивления.
6. Ах ты, господи! – Выражение удивления, восторга, негодования и других чувств.
7. Бог с тобой (с вами, с ним, с нею, с ними). – Выражение безразличия или уступки.

8. Ну, полно! (устар.). – Совет прекратить что-нибудь.
9. Помилуйте! (устар.). – Выражение несогласия, возражения». (Рябинина 59)

12. Составьте предложения, используя следующие глаголы.

Шаркнуть, поднимать, отвернуться, возразить, воскликнуть, ожидать, выглянуть

съёжиться, застегнуть.

13. Объясните значение следующих устойчивых выражений.

Сколько лет, сколько зим!

На лице написано.

14. Ответьте на вопросы:

1. Где они встретились?
2. Как зовут толстого?
3. Кто женат из обоих?
4. Кем работает тонкий?
5. Кто из них был с семьей?
6. Почему они были так рады видеть друг друга??
7. Что тонкий рассказал своему другу о своей семье и жизни?
8. Как изменились поведение тонкого человека, когда он узнал чинопочитание толстого?
9. Как вы думаете, они настоящие друзья?
10. Как зовут жену тонкого?

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ОТРАЖЕНИЕ «КОРРУПЦИИ» И «НАСИЛИЯ В ОТНОШЕНИИ ЖЕНЩИН» КАК СОЦИАЛЬНЫХ ПРОБЛЕМ СОВРЕМЕННОЙ РОССИИ В ПРОЗАИЧЕСКОМ ПРОИЗВЕДЕНИИ ВАЛЕНТИНА РАСПУТИНА «ДОЧЬ ИВАНА, МАТЬ ИВАНА»

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REFLECTION OF "CORRUPTION" AND "VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN" AS SOCIAL PROBLEMS OF CONTEMPORARY RUSSIA IN THE PROSAIC WORK OF VALENTIN RASPUTIN "IVAN'S DAUGHTER, IVAN'S MOTHER"

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Аннотация: *В России, как и в мире в целом, существует ряд нерешенных социальных проблем. Они оказывают влияние на функционирование общества. Самые острые из них это: коррупция, насилие в отношении женщин, алкоголизм, и социальное неравенство. Любая из вышеперечисленных социальных проблем влияет на все сферы жизни общества. Так, например, коррупция затрагивает органы государственной власти, здравоохранение, образование и т.д. Насилие в отношении женщин также затрагивает некоторые социальные сферы. Так, например, к последствиям насилия в отношении женщин можно отнести следующие: страдание в изоляции, физические страдания и эмоциональные переживания, тревогу и депрессию, отсутствие участия в регулярных мероприятиях и т.д. Все злободневные вопросы, имеющие влияние на разные сферы жизни, соответственно связаны между собой настолько, что могут быть причиной или следствием друг друга. Рассмотрение вопросов коррупции и насилия в отношении женщин в качестве социальных проблем, которые очевидно преобладают в современной России, будет отражено в данной статье на примере жизни героев произведения знаменитого русского писателя Валентина Распутина «Дочь Ивана, мать Ивана».*

Ключевые слова: *коррупция, насилие в отношении женщин, социальная проблема, современная Россия, Распутин*

Abstract: *In Russia, as in the world, there are a number of unresolved social problems. They influence in the functioning of any society. The most acute of them are: corruption, violence*

against women, alcoholism, and social inequality. Any of the above-mentioned social problems affects all spheres of society. For instance, corruption affects the proper functioning of public authorities, healthcare, education, etc. Violence against women also affects some social spheres. For example, the consequences of violence against women include the following: suffering in isolation, physical suffering and emotional distress, anxiety and depression, lack of participation in regular activities, etc. All topical issues that have an impact on different spheres of life, respectively, are interconnected to such an extent that they can be the cause or consequence of each other. The issues of corruption and violence against women as social problems that evidently prevail in modern Russia, will be discussed in this article, based on the example of the life of the protagonists of the prosaic work of the eminent Russian writer Valentin Rasputin "Ivan's Daughter, Ivan's Mother".

Keywords: *corruption, violence against women, social problem, contemporary Russia, Rasputin*

Определенные неблагоприятные ситуации с потенциально пагубными последствиями, могут повлиять на общество. Они могут препятствовать нормальному функционированию общества. Такие ситуации можно отнести к понятию «социальная проблема». Эти проблемы возникают из-за того, что каждое общество имеет свои определенные нормы и ценности, и нарушение этих норм и ценностей приводит к социальным проблемам. Иными словами, отклонение от определенных норм и ценностей общества называется социальными проблемами.

Термин «социальная проблема» впервые появился в западноевропейском обществе в начале XIX века, обозначая одну определенную проблему: неравномерное распределение богатства.

«В России, так же как и во многих странах Западной Европы, в конце XIX – начале XX веков как синоним понятия «социальные проблемы» чаще использовался другой термин, а именно «социальные вопросы» (Симонова Т.М.).

Определение понятия «социальная проблема» дается в Оксфордском толковом словаре по психологии как «общий термин, используемый для обозначения любой ситуации, которая, с точки зрения значительного числа людей в сообществе, считается составляющей проблему, достаточно серьезную для того, чтобы требовать реформы.»

По словам Виталия Анатольевича Жмурова (известный российский психиатр и профессор), социальной проблемой является «любая ситуация, которая, с точки зрения значительного числа людей, составляет достаточно серьезную проблему и, по их общему мнению, может быть преодолена социальными реформами (например, проблема бедности, организованной преступности и др.).»

О.И. Иванов определил социальные проблемы как негативные обстоятельства, превратившиеся «не просто в вопрос для дискуссий, а в задачу для социального действия». В. И. Куценко понимает социальную проблему как противоречие между «назревшей общественной необходимостью и конкретными условиями ее реализации». И. В. Бестужев-Лада трактует ее как противоречие «между желательным и действительным.»

Социальная проблема также определяется как «ситуация, противостоящая группе или части общества, которая наносит травматические последствия. С ними можно справиться только коллективно.»

Таким образом, из вышеприведенных определений социальной проблемы, стало очевидно, что ни один человек не несет ответственности за возникновение социальной проблемы и контроль над этой ситуацией также не под силу одному человеку или группе лиц. Ответственность за решение социальных проблем возлагается на общество в целом.

Далее рассматривается отражение коррупции и насилия в отношении женщин как социальных проблем современной России на жизнь и судьбу героев повести.

1. КОРРУПЦИЯ

Коррупция – это острый злободневный вопрос в современной России, затрагивающую функционирование органов государственной власти, правоохранительных органов, систем здравоохранения и образования, а также других сфер жизни. Данный вопрос волновал общество довольно давно. Также и во времени Советского Союза.

О существовании данной проблемы в России свидетельствует множество поговорок и пословиц. Настолько распространена и знакома эта тема для людей, что появились такие устойчивые изречения, которые понятны абсолютно каждому: «Дари судью, так не посадят в тюрьму», «Перед Богом – с правдой, а пред судьёй – с деньгами.», «Не ходи в суд с одним носом, а ходи с приносом.», «В суд пойдешь - правды не найдешь», «Когда карман

сух, тогда и суд глух», «Что мне законы, коли судьи знакомы», «Богатому идти в суд - трын-трава, бедному - долой голова», «С кого судья взял, тот и прав стал», «Когда деньги говорят, тогда совесть молчит».

В повести проблема коррупции стала причиной смерти преступника и сломанной жизни главной героини Тамары Ивановны. Тамаре Ивановне пришлось убить человека, так как по – другому он остался бы безнаказанным. «- Виновата, буду ответ держать. Сделанного не воротишь. А я и не жалею о сделанном… Подавать кассацию не буду. Что заслужила - всё моё.» - говорит Тамара Ивановна, главная героиня повести Валентина Распутина «Дочь Ивана, мать Ивана».

Тамаре Ивановне было мучительно больно представить преступника на свободе поэтому, она решила вершить суд сама. Ей пришлось дожидаться преступника около 7 часов, чтобы реализовать свой замысел. И ей это удалось – она застрелила насильника своей дочери. Русская женщина, мать – она носила ребёнка под сердцем, затем «передала его в мир», и с ним отдала частичку себя в этот мир. Так же захотела бы поступить любая настоящая мать, узнав она о том, что тот самый, кто сломал судьбу её ребёнка, будет продолжать жить обычной жизнью: спокойно есть, спать, работать и, возможно обманывать и других наивных девчонок, таких как Светка. Тамара Ивановна понимала, что преступник не понесёт никакого наказания, а всего лишь откупится. От этих мыслей так больно стало ей за свою кровинку, за себя саму, за семью, за Родину, так как обидчик был азербайджанец. Поэтому, она решила сделать всё, чтобы защитить своё дитя. Мать она есть мать. Не зря автор выбрал именно такое название произведения. Отец Анатолий по этому поводу корил себя, но, его друг совершенно точно подметил: «Ты бы убийца был и больше никто, а мать она и есть мать. Где мать имеет право не выдержать, отец терпи и не рыпайся.»

В данном произведении коррупция в рядах госслужащих описана в ситуации со следователем, который получил взятку от родственников преступника. Так, однажды, родителям удалось подслушать разговор стороны обвиняемого и следователя: «- Меру пресечения решает прокурор, а не я, – торопливо говорил он. – Уберите это от меня! – вдруг перешёл он на требовательный и растерянный шёпот. – Уберите немедленно. Не я решаю. Завтра мы приведём его на санкцию. Сегодня я ничего не могу обещать. Завтра.» Из этого разговора Анатолий и Тамара Ивановна поняли, что преступник может остаться безнаказанным. И взятка в этой истории стала катализатором событий, которые в последующем привели к трагическому финалу.

Автор описывает все события таким образом, что становится очевидно, что преступник не понесёт никакого наказания. Совершенно чётко писатель даёт понять в своих строках то, что и борьба с этой проблемой практически бессмысленна. Уже в самом начале, когда следователь подписал протокол допроса, можно было предугадать дальнейший исход событий лишь по одной его растянувшейся фразе: «Судят по месту преступления. Но, до суда еще далеко-о. Последнее слово он невольно, ни на что не намекая и ни к чему не склоняясь отправил в недосягаемые выси.»

Родители Светы были уверены, что преступник пойдёт под суд. И вдруг, они узнают, что экспертиза не в их пользу, и в органах во всём винят их дочь. Также, в ходе этого разговора прокурор упоминает о том, что дальнейшее положение дел подозреваемого неизвестно: «Может быть или заключение под стражу, когда это необходимо, или, когда это допустимо, освобождение под залог.»

Анатолий и Тамара начинают понимать, что дело тёмное. Как же родителям жить спокойно, переживать мучения, зная, что злоумышленник будет спокойно находиться на свободе и наслаждаться жизнью?

Преступники настолько почувствовали свою мощь и безнаказанность. Они считали, что можно «купить» всех и поэтому осмелились предложить деньги в обмен на то, чтобы родители Светки забрали заявление из полиции. Отец отказался. Тем не менее, в прокуратуре всё было уже решено не в пользу пострадавшей семьи Воротниковых. Но не в органах, там было по – другому. Так писатель описывает ситуацию чуть ли не факта передачи взятки: «В кабинете был ещё один человек, кавказец, он пытался спрятать в ладонях пачку денег.»

Доказательство того, что автор считал коррупцию обычным делом можно увидеть через восприятие его персонажем Тамарой Ивановной. Вот такое описание кабинета следователя он даёт: «Тамару Ивановну эта мрачная обстановка удивила. Она считала, что если новая власть купается в сказочной роскоши, а закон истово помогает новой власти нарушать правосудие, то и его служба должна оплачиваться щедро. Оказалось, судя по обстановке в прокуратуре, это совсем не так». Вот еще одно яркое подтверждение наличия проблемы: «Душою жалели Тамару Ивановну. Судебным положением осуждали за превышение… за превышение чего? – материнских и человеческих чувств, за превышение чувства справедливости? Но как ещё можно противостоять бешеному разгулу насилия и жестокости, если

государство своих обязанностей не исполняет, а правосудие принимается торговать законами, как редькой с огорода?»

Писатель таким образом показывает то, что главная героиня так же считала, что коррупция – это обычное явление для тех, кто занимает высокое положение в обществе.

Но, что, если бы родственники не предлагали следователю взятку? Что, если бы события в произведении развивались по другому? Тогда, на суде смогли бы доказать вину парня, и он угодил бы за решётку. Там он понёс бы заслуженное наказание в соответствии с законом. И тогда, Тамаре Ивановне не пришлось бы самой становиться преступницей и ломать свою судьбу, совершая тяжкое преступление. Однако, взяточничество, в настоящее время, является такой же острой проблемой в современной России. Оба эти преступления, как коррупция, так и убийство кардинально меняют жизнь семьи близких тех людей, которые причастны к совершению данных преступлений.

Стремление к удовлетворению материальных потребностей играет не последнюю роль в выборе поведения человека. Иной раз трудно устоять, когда на чаше весов с одной стороны улучшение материальных условий, а с другой стороны зов совести. В такой непростой ситуации, человека могут посещать мысли: «Я заслуживаю жить лучше.» «Жизнь одна.» «Если мне выпадает такой шанс, то почему бы им не воспользоваться?» К сожалению, выбор в пользу улучшения материальных условий для одного, может сделаться мукой для другого. Автор хотел донести до читателя через свое произведение ту мысль, что в любой ситуации нужно оставаться человеком, не терять себя, не подвергаться соблазну.

Так и в повести, герои хотели сбежать от самих себя, скрыться, они мучились от того, что всё происходит так несправедливо, преступник безнаказанный, а жертва уже наоборот – сама становится преступником по мнению властей. Для чиновников всё просто – выбор делается в пользу тех, у кого больше материальных возможностей. Очень сложно идти против власти простому честному человеку, «русскому Ивану». И порой, такие женщины, как наша героиня сами берут ситуацию в свои руки и решаются на крайние меры, так как не видят справедливости и иного выхода.

В современной России проблема коррупции является на сегодняшний день достаточно острой. Взяточничество можно наблюдать во всех сферах русской жизни. Если человек обладает достаточным количеством денежных средств,

то для него вероятность уйти от наказания судом остаётся довольно высокой. По данным новостного портала ПОЛИТ.РУ за 2021 год в России было зарегистрировано около 18.5 тысяч преступлений в области коррупции. Эта цифра больше на 27.8 %, чем в 2020 году. Такое увеличение зарегистрированных преступлений может говорить о том, что ведётся активная борьба с коррупцией на государственном уровне. Таким образом, можно надеяться на то, что последние годы в России ведётся активная антикоррупционная политика.

2. НАСИЛИЕ В ОТНОШЕНИИ ЖЕНЩИН

«В глобальном индексе организованной преступности Россия занимает 32-е место среди 193 стран – участниц ООН», следует из опубликованного исследования международной неправительственной организации GITOS (статистика из новостного ресурса РИА новости).

По данным Федеральной службы государственной статистики России, в 2000 году в России всего зарегистрировано 2954,4 тысячи преступлений. Из них почти восемь тысяч заявлений об изнасиловании или покушении на изнасилование. В 2021 году статистика преступлений против половой неприкосновенности снизилась более чем в 2 раза по сравнению с 2000 годом.

Однако, количество преступлений, которые совершили иностранцы (мигранты) за 2021 год увеличилось по сравнению с предыдущим годом. Поэтому, та трагедия, которая произошла с героиней повести Светланой могла произойти с любой девушкой в любом городе современной России. К сожалению, эта проблема до сих пор является достаточно острой. Поэтому современные русские девушки уделяют достаточно большое внимание собственной безопасности.

В своём произведении Валентин Распутин среди других проблем описывает проблему насилия в отношении женщин как одну из главных драм, наряду с коррупцией. Автор описывает переживания героев очень ярко. Он пишет о том, как им хотелось убежать от всего, убежать от себя. Они практически сгорали со стыда. Как мучительно долго они искали дочь, во время поисков возникало очень много убивающих мыслей. И, как бы они не оберегали Свету, и в какой строгости не держали её, им не удалось её сберечь.

Далее описываются события этой драмы. Однажды, когда дочь не вернулась домой в положенный срок, мать, Тамара Ивановна, забила тревогу. Она не спала всю ночь в муках и поисках Светки. Тамара Ивановна попросила друга

мужа помочь с поисками девочки. Они ездили и опрашивали всех подруг дочери.

Среди ночи им наконец удалось узнать хоть какую – то информацию о том, куда могла исчезнуть их дочь. Когда родители искали дочь и попали к подруге дочери, вот что пишет автор: «Подругу Лиду застали врасплох, она не знала, как отвечать. И отвечала осторожно, выдавая недосказанное подёргиваниями плеч, то ли себя выгораживая, то ли Светку». Здесь автор обращает внимание читателя на трусость девочки: «Пьянство и трусость, пьянство и трусость!» Лида боялась сказать что – то лишнее, что могло бы стать свидетельством против подруги. Либо она просто боялась, что её станут обвинять в том, что она не смогла помочь подруге. Ведь она стояла сейчас перед ними целая и невредимая, тогда как Светку до сих пор не могли найти.

«Он к Светке приставал, говорил, что она ему понравилась, он к Светке не в первый раз подходил. Сказал … город ему понравился, просил город показать. Мы не согласились. Мы уходим, а он не отстаёт, прилип. Кое – как убежали. Потом Светка пошла к дяде Володе, а я поехала домой». Подруга решила немного солгать, так как испугалась родителей Светки. Автор показывает, на какие хитрости готовы пойти злоумышленники, чтобы заманить свою жертву: попросить помощи у сердобольных девчонок. Настойчивость и лесть со стороны парня оказывают гипнотическое влияние на девушку. Она начинает думать, что она, действительно, особенная, и поэтому становится доверчивой и мягкой.

После давления на девочку со стороны Тамары Ивановны Лида решила рассказать правду: «Кавказец, узнав, что они продавцы без товара предложил им поехать к своему двоюродному брату, тот ищет таких, как они. Потому, что ему надо срочно распродать большую партию китайских товаров. Они долго не соглашались, но парень настаивал. Показал какой – то документ, говорил, что это недалеко и они скоро вернутся. Пока они раздумывали, он затолкал упирающихся девчонок в машину и сказал шофёру, куда ехать.» В этой ситуации автор показывает на возможное трудоустройство для девочек, которое определённым образом влияло на их поведение. Поскольку они были несовершеннолетние, то найти работу для них оказалось очень сложно. Распутин показывает, что настойчивость парня оказывает влияние на девушек. Цитата «пока они раздумывали» является подтверждением того, что девочки готовы были на свой страх и риск пойти с незнакомцем, так как тот обещал им заработок. Бедность и желание заработать настолько тяготило их, что девочки были готовы поверить любому, кто обещал им «золотые горы».

Поэтому, девочки в такой ситуации начали размышлять и сомневаться. Всё-таки, они надеялись на благосклонность судьбы, на то, что им может выпасть хороший шанс устроиться.

Тем не менее, почему Света также не могла сбежать, как её подруга и почему подруга оставила её одну с незнакомцем, не попытавшись защитить подругу, помочь ей? Струсила? За себя испугалась? Так же струсила и Светка. Она даже на трамвайной остановке среди толпы побоялась убежать. А могла бы?

После заявления о пропаже дочери в милицию, добросовестный молодой участковый взялся за поиски. Вскоре Светка нашлась. Но, перед этим автор описывает как мучительно долго искали девочку её родители. Какие их переполняли эмоции. Особенно яркое описание писатель даёт чувствам матери после того, как они побывали в общаге, в которой происходило преступление: «Тамара Ивановна сразу опять оцепенела, уставившись глазами прямо перед собой на дорогу. Но, ничего, кроме воспалённого солнечного пятна прямо перед машиной, она не видела. Внутри там, где полагается быть чувствам, сменяющим одно другое, залёг камень, и он начинал раскаляться». Ощущение того, что ничем хорошим это не закончится, не покидало женщину.

Вот как описывает автор долгожданную встречу родителей с девочкой: «Тамара Ивановна не отодвинула Дёмина и не бросилась к дочери – она вонзилась в неё глазами и высмотрела всю. Потом перевела тяжелый и пронизывающий взгляд на кавказца и его тоже высмотрела до печёнок.» В последней фразе «высмотрела до печёнок» чувствуется желание матери испепелить парня, убить его. Она всматривалась в него, в то время как он, тот самый преступник, бешено и яростно кричал, что Света врёт. Он кричал, направляя свой безумный, брезгливый взгляд в сторону девочки, о том, что она сама виновата.

Действительно, может быть девушки начали играть на чувствах парней. Например, в ситуации на базаре, когда парень заметил этих девушек, автор нам показывает шутливый настрой девушек, что иной человек, особенно кавказской национальности может расценивать как заигрывание: «Под его слишком уж пристальным показным вниманием они захихикали, а он, словно только этого и ждал, сбежал к ним вниз и уставился уже на одну Светку…» Действительно, такое поведение девушек можно расценивать как лёгкое заигрывание. Они не осознают, насколько серьёзным и опасным может быть незнакомый мужчина. Ведь, иногда такое поведение приводит к плачевным результатам.

Это также можно обозначить как актуальную социальную проблему – «перекладывание вины на потерпевшего». Вину за изнасилование пытаются переложить на пострадавшего человека. В данном случае преступника не наказывают, а пострадавшего обвиняют. Это не справедливо. Такой пример этого явления даётся в повести, когда прокурор говорит родителям Светы: «Если бы ваша дочь с самого начала не захотела иметь дело с этим… с кем она легкомысленно поехала… А потом: если бы она захотела убежать от него, а потом – позвать на помощь – она бы это сделала. У неё была не одна возможность избежать случившегося. Она ни одной не воспользовалась…»

При чтении строк допроса «убитой стыдом» дочери в присутствии её матери становится очень горько, — настолько ярко автор описывает все переживания героев. Света так боялась осуждения матери, что с большим трудом отвечала на вопросы следователя, не поднимая головы, чтобы только не встретить взглядом мать. Юная девушка доверилась лестным речам незнакомого и настойчивого парня и попала в ловушку, которая сломала всю её дальнейшую судьбу.

На допросе в присутствии матери девочке пришлось рассказывать ужасные и постыдные вещи о том, как тот парень её бил, унижал, избивал и насиловал. «После одного из ответов, совсем уж неслыханного, молния сверкнула в голове у Тамары Ивановны, возвещая конец её терпению, — она стукнула кулаком по столу, вскочила и крикнула для себя же, для себя, не для кого другого крикнула в нестерпимой муке: - Да как так можно?! – и выскочила в коридор.» —Тамаре Ивановне стало невыносимо больно слушать то, что пережила дочь. Ведь, она, — мать, не смогла её спасти, не смогла ничем помочь. В данном случае Тамара Ивановна могла испытывать чувство вины. И теперь, обе они не знали куда себя деть, куда сбежать. Но, от себя самого убежать невозможно.

На протяжении всего произведения автор периодически возвращается к описанию этого чувства героев. Он часто напоминает, как они хотели забыться, сбежать, сгореть со стыда. Подтверждение этому можно найти в словах Тамары Ивановны: «Ну да, с кем – нибудь… это понятно. Но это с нами…это не понятно. Слух со стороны дойдёт, — продолжала она после паузы, — так слуха одного боишься… А тут не слух, а тут не с чужими. Как это – то вынести? От этого сбегать надо на край света.» В этих строках автор даёт понять, что люди настолько уверены, что это любое горе их не коснётся, что когда оно вот, произошло с человеком, то ему не верится, что это произошло именно с ним. Люди считают, это всё происходит где - то далеко,

только с другими людьми. В сознании людей живёт страх непринятия обществом, неодобрения, поэтому все боятся, что могут подумать другие. Ведь, если плохо подумают другие, то можно и со стыда сгореть.

Именно доверчивые русские девушки, женщины чаще становятся жертвой таких преступлений. Они словно впадают в гипноз от лестных ласковых слов и становятся более податливыми, особенно, когда речь идёт ещё и про обещания помощи или обещание «красивой жизни». Так и героиня нашего произведения описывается автором: «Светка росла слезливой, мягкой, как воск, любила приласкаться, засыпать у матери на руках… В детском саду Тамаре Ивановне пришлось запретить своим детям по всякому пустяку искать у неё защиты и приклеиваться к материнской юбке, Светка, не спуская с матери зарёванных глаз, отходила в уголок, чтобы казаться окончательно несчастной, и истекала слезами, деля порывистые движения в сторону матери, не смея нарушить запрет.»

Среди русского народа, и в мире в целом в последние годы идёт тенденция к раскрепощению, деградации нравственных устоев, смягчению строгих традиций, что можно рассматривать как глобальную социальную проблему. Доступность любой информации через СМИ, общение в соцсетях пагубно влияет на неокрепшую психику подростков, которые затем формируют в своём мировоззрении ошибочные представления о правильном и неправильном, допустимом и не допустимом. Всё это оказывает влияние на поведение молодого поколения. Они становятся более подвержены разным преступлениям в связи с тем, что могут не осознавать последствий, или могут ошибочно считать недопустимое поведение нормой. Так, например, подростки демонстрируют неуважение и бесстрашие по отношению к взрослым людям, употребляя в присутствии незнакомых взрослых нецензурные выражения без чувства стыда. Подтверждение этим словам можно найти также и в рассматриваемом нами произведении: «Весь город знал, что «Пионер», не поменяв имени, превратился в притон наркоманов и проституток школьного возраста и на дискотеках здесь разыгрывается такое «кино», что только «туши свет» и больше ничего.»

Каковы последствия насилия в обществе? Насилие, как социальная проблема, влияет на установление гендерного равенства в обществе. Поскольку над женщинами совершается насилие, а над мужчинами нет, то это даёт основание полагать, что женщин принуждают подчиняться мужчинам с точки зрения положения в обществе. Также женщины считаются более

слабыми и доверчивыми, поэтому представители противоположного пола могут идти на разные уловки и легко заманить свою «жертву» в ловушку.

Ранее, когда существовали совсем иные устои, женщины стыдились признаваться в том, что подвергались насилию. Этот факт провоцировал усугубление проблемы. Женщины молчали и терпели, не защищая себя и, как следствие подвергались дальнейшим пыткам.

Настало время, когда женщины стали заявлять о своих правах и пытаться себя защитить. Несмотря на стремление к признанию гендерного равноправия, на сегодняшний день проблема насилия в отношении женщин остаётся не решённой. Однако, женщины привлекают внимание к этой проблеме в соцсетях с помощью акций, флешмобов и т.д.

В данной статье были проанализированы две острейшие социальные проблемы современной России: коррупция и насилие в отношении женщин на примере жизни героев произведения Валентина Распутина «Дочь Ивана, мать Ивана». Писатель в своём произведении мастерски изобразил суровую реальность современной России, где простые люди борются с различными социальными проблемами в своей повседневной жизни. Право на справедливость, безопасность, достойную жизнь и личную свободу, а также институты, свободные от коррупции, — вот основные права, которые доступны гражданам любой страны мира, но россияне по-прежнему остаются дискриминированы в некоторых ситуациях, когда речь идёт об их правах. Таким образом, писатель показал, что когда государство не в состоянии обеспечить людям справедливость, тогда они сами вынуждены вершить правосудие.

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ПРИМЕНЕНИЕ МЕТОДА «ГЕЙМИФИКАЦИИ» НА УРОКАХ РКИ: ОПЫТ РАБОТЫ С ПЕРВОКУРСНЫМИ СТУДЕНТАМИ

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***Аннотация**: Последние два с половиной года характеризовались непредсказуемостью во всех сферах жизни, включая образование. В связи с этим, нетрадиционные методы обучения, например, геймификация, приходят в помощь преподавателям, чтобы привлечь внимание студента и повысить мотивацию. Этот метод применялся раньше также, но рассматривался как способ отдыха от основного занятия. Нам кажется, что в настоящее время он стал неотъемлимой частью учебного процесса.*

***Ключевые слова:** Русский как иностранный, геймификация, Кахут, мотивация*

***Abstract**: The past two and a half years were characterised by uncertainty in all spheres of life, including education. In this regard non-traditional teaching methods, such as gamification, aided the teachers in gaining the student's attention and raising motivation. Gamification had been used earlier too, however more as a means of taking a break from the primary methods. It has become intrinsic to the teaching-learning process at present times.*

***Key words**: Russian as a foreign language, gamification, Kahoot, motivation*

Общеизвестно, что настоящее время характеризуется изменением и непредсказуемостью в разных сферах жизни. Новое нормальное положение вещей, 'the new normal', нашло свое отражение и в области высшего образования. Из-за введения карантина, студентам запрещено ходить в учебные заведения уже больше шести месяцев.

В этом контексте, обучение русскому языку как иностранному, особенно на начальном этапе, представляет собой сложной задачей. Как известно, каждодневное общение со студентами является необходимым, чтобы вырабатывать коммуникативные навыки аудирования, говорения, чтения и письма. Неудивительно, что из-за отсутствия занятий в традиционном виде, у студентов наблюдается понижение мотивации.

В связи с вышесказанным, применение нетрадиционных методов обучения, как, например, геймификации, является не просто выбором преподавателя, а необходимой частью учебного процесса.

В своей статье «Геймификация в обучении иностранным языкам: психолого-дидактический и методический потенциал» С. В. Титова и К. В. Черкизова пишут, что «термин геймификация получил распространение в педагогике после публикации монографий американских педагогов М. Поренски (2008), К. Каппа (2012). Согласно К. Каппу, геймификация – это «внедрение игровых технологий в неигровые процессы, в том числе в образование» [21, с. 10], а также «использование игровой механики, эстетики и игрового мышления для вовлечения людей в обучение и решение различных задач и для повышения их мотивации».[1,2]

Оксфордский словарь определяет понятие геймификации следующим образом: «Применение типичных элементов игры (например: очки, элементы соревнования, правила игры) в других областях деятельности, часто в качестве техники онлайн-маркетинга для того, чтобы повысить вовлеченность продуктом или сервисом».[2,2]

Следует сказать, что игровой подход, как метод обучения применялся раньше также, однако, не занимал такое количество часов. Он рассматривался больше как способ развлечения, чтобы отдохнуть от основной задачи урока. Нам кажется, что в настоящее время, отношения к методу геймификации переоцениваются, и он постепенно становится органической частью введения занятий, особенно на начальном этапе.

По их словам: «Обучение в высших образовательных учреждениях ... характеризуется повышенными учебными нагрузками, во-вторых, наблюдается дефицит учебного времени при значительной интенсификации образовательного процесса, в-третьих, объективно требует большего напряжения и стрессоустойчивости. Мы полагаем, что и в системе высшего профессионального образования при поиске наиболее рациональных путей повышения качества образовательного процесса необходимо использовать игровые методы. З. С. Смелкова пишет о том, что «постижение знаний в форме игры, свобода выбора действий и аргументов, право на ошибку и отсутствие страха получить плохую оценку – “наивыгоднейшие условия” обучения».[3,3]

Следует отметить, что применение метода геймификации соотносится с образом мышления представителей нового поколения. Как считают

психологи, современные студенты имеют некоторые общие черты характера, например, ... «8-секундный лимит внимания; увлечение социальными сетями; любимое развлечение – играть на смартфоне или ноутбуке; хобби связаны с активной деятельностью; в процессе обучения предпочитают сразу применять полученные знания на практике».[4,3]

Эту точку зрения поддерживает Э. Эриксон и пишет, что «играющий человек делает что-то, что выбрал сам, он развлекается и свободен от страха или ощущения серьезных последствий».[5,3]

В процессе игры приобретается опыт, исчезает страх допустить ошибку, так как можно сыграть еще раз.

Группа первокурсников, которых мы обучали, составляла 23 студента.

За четыре месяца обучения в традионном формате и остальные в режиме онлайн, студенты проходили темы как, склонение существительных и личных местоимений единственного числа во всех падежах, формы прилагательного и прятяжательных местоимений только именительного падежа, формы числительного именительного падежа, некоторые аспекты вида глагола, а также глаголы движения идти-ходить, ехать-ездить, с приставками по- и при-.

Нашей целью было укрепление знания окончания форм слов, повторение правил употребления вида глагола, форм глаголов движения. Мы также хотели укреплять и расширять запас слов студентов.

Материалом служили учебники и рабочья тетрадь по программе. Когда студенты привыкли к этому способу повторения, им прислали видео анимационных фильмов, как «Чебурашка и крокодил Гена», «Маша и Медведь», а также короткие видео-ролики из Ютуба. Миультики и видео-ролики имели субтитры на русском языке.

Игры в Кахут были созданы по определенным темам: глаголам движения идти-ходить-пойти, ехать-ездить-поехать; употреблению вида гдагола, употреблению существительного в творительном падеже с глаголами стать и быть, а также в значении инструмента действия; в родительном падеже в значении отсутствия предмета или принадлежности; употреблению прилагательного; по переводу слов или выражений с английского языка на русский язык.

До того как начать игру, студентов напомнили, что нужно внимательно читать вопросы. В вопросах, где требуется перевод глагола на русский язык, следует уточнить его вид, а если существительного, то и число.

Анализ

Существуют много преимуществ игры в Кахут. Во-первых, можно задавать вопросы, помогающие проверять знание грамматических правил. Преподаватели могут создать игры с разными типами вопрос, такими, как, вопросы с множественным выбором, вопросы типа верно-неверно, вопросы пазл, в которых нужно переставлять слова в правильном порядке, а также вопросы, на которые нужно ответить коротко.

Вопросы с множественным выбором являются подходящими для проверки форм склонения или спряжения. Студенты знакомы с задачами, в которых нужно заполнить пропуски существительным или прилагательным подходящей формой рода, числа и пажежа. Они должны выбирать одно слово из множества.

В игре Кахут о виде глагола, они должны обратить внимание на вид и форму времени глагола. Им надо вспоминать основную разницу вида глагола – достижение придела действия или процесс; синхронность или последовательность действия; неожиданность или повторяемость действия и т.д., и находить в предложениях слова подсказки, как, уже, вдруг, часто, обычно, каждый день и т.д. Вопросы с множественным выбором также помогают укреплять понимание о направленности и способа действия.

Вопросы типа верно-неверно можно использовать, чтобы укрепить навыки аудирования или же восприятия анимационного фильма или видео-ролика. В Кахуте были написаны предложения, и студенты должны были, после просмотра анимационного фильма или видео-ролика «Маша и Медведь» выбирать правильный вариант. (Например, случилось ли это ... или говорили ли это ...)

С помощью пазл, можно укрепить знание о порядке слов в предложении, стараться довести до автоматизации навык о том, что при нейтральном порядке слов, новая информация всегда ставится в конце предложения. Можно сказать, что студенты часто не различают разницу между прямым порядком слов и инверсией, и понятие о теме и реме требует многократного повторения. Им мешает такжу интерференция родного языка, английского языка или языка хинди.

Вопросы, на которые студентам нужно сами писать ответ проверяют их память: могут ли они отвечать на вопросы без подсказок. Как и вопросы типа верно-неверно, они также помогают проверять аудирование и восприятие видео-ролика.

На основе анимационных фильмов или видео-ролика просили студентов писать перевод слов на русский язык. Студентам давали также незнакомые слова или выражения, чтобы проверить, могут ли они, с помощью контекста, угадать их значение, и писать перевод.

Второе преимущества игры в Кахут заключается в том, что, до того как начать игру, участники могут потренироваться, т.е. заниматься по флеш-картам, пройти трентровочный тест. Это помогает снимать напряжение и повышвать уверенность в себе.

В-третьих, студенты могут играть в произвольном темпе, когда и как им удобно. Все участвуют в одной же игре, но имеют в своем распоряжении достаточно времени – день или два. Они могут делать перерыв и продолжать снова, через некоторое время.

К тому же, преподаватель может не включить таймер. Студенты могут читать вопросы спокойно, обдумать свой ответ, а затем выбирать вариант или писать свой ответ. Такой способ игры подчеркивает точность ответа, нежели скорость, значительно снимает напряжение, и создает подходящую обстановку для освоения материала.

В четвертых, игры в Кахут можно назвать прекрасным помощником преподавателя. После окончания каждой игры образуется табл успеваемости. Преподаватель может узнать количество студентов, участвующих в игре и процент вопросов, на которые они ответили правильно. В отчете также есть список вопросов, и с каждым вопросом указывается процент студентов, правильно ответивших на него.

На слайде видно, что студенты хорошо ответили на вопросы, основанные на темах, проиденных на уроке. Они уже делали упражнения из своего учебника на эти темы. Им трудно ответить на вопросы, основанные на анимационном фильме или видео-ролике, хотя те имеют субтитры на русском языке.

Таким образом, преподаватель может уточнить количество студентов, нуждающихся в помощи, а также материал, требующий дополнительного обяснения. Можно сказать, что табл успеваемости - это вид обратной связи.

В ходе создания Кахут мы сталкивались с некоторыми проблемами также. Студенты не всегда внимательно слушали видео-ролики, хотя эти клипы имеют субтитры. Они не обращали внимания на контекст употребления слов.

К тому же, они привыкли находить перевод слов в «Гугл». Таким образом, их перевод слов и выражений на русский язык был не правильным.

Например, одна студентка перевела словосочетание to ‘bake a cake’ как делать торт. Студенты знают глагол готовить, еще не знают печь, но студентка читала в Гугл словосочетание делать торт и писала его в своем ответе.

В мультипликационном фильме «Чебурашка и крокодил Гена» употребляются слова ‘караул, разбойники! В Кахуте студенты должны были ответить на вопрос ‘Как по-русский ‘help, bandits!’ Большинство, кажется, посмотрели в словаре и писали ‘помогите, бандиты!’.

В видео-ролике «мой день» употреблялось словосочетание ‘варить кофе’. В Кахуте студенты должны были ответить на вопрос ‘Как по-русский ‘to prepare coffee’. Большинство, наверное, внимательно не смотреди ролик, и писали автоматически ‘готовить кофе’. Это правильно, но не по контексту. Нам хотелось, чтобы они ознакомились с глаголом ‘варить’, в сочетании со словом ‘кофе’.

Итак, можно сделать вывод, что применение метода геймификации, а именно игры в Кахут приносило значительную пользу. Такие игры помогают студентам хорошо запоминать правила словоизиенения. Они также научат их обращать внимание на контекст и понимать, что русский язык богат синонимами. В целом, студенты становятся более уверенными, что мотивирует их заниматься усердно.

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ПЕРЕВОД ПЬЕСЫ НИКОЛАЯ КОЛЯДЫ С РУССКОГО НА ХИНДИ: ОПЫТ ПЕРЕВОДЧИКА

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TRANSLATION OF NIKOLAI KOLYADA'S PLAY *THE CATAPULT* FROM RUSSIAN INTO HINDI: TRANSLATORS EXPERIENCE

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Аннотация*: Это часть моего исследовательская работа (M.Phil.) В настоящей статье обсуждаются переводческие проблемы возникающие в процессе перевода произведения Коляды. Для выполнения нашей цели мы поставили следующие задачи :*

обсуждение затруднений с точки зрения структуры и семантки , работа с ненормативной лексикой в переводе художественного произведения, выбор самых подходящих эквивалентов на основе проведенного анализа и обобщение результатов.

Ключевые слова*: Николай Коляда, Рогатка, перевод, пьеса*

Abstract*: This work is a part of my M.Phil. research. This article discusses the translation problems arising in the process of translating Kolyada's work. To fulfill the above-mentioned goal, we have set the following tasks:*

discussion of difficulties in terms of structure and semantics, work with non-normative vocabulary in the translation of a work of art, the choice of the most appropriate equivalents based on the analysis and generalization of the results.

Key words*: Nikolay Kolyada, Rogatka, translation, play.*

Николай Владимирович Коляда - родился 4 декабря 1957 года в селе Пресногорьковка Кустанайской области, Ленинского района (Казахстан) в семье работников совхоза. С 1980 г. начал литературную деятельность, приобрёл известность как драматург. Коляда автор более чем 120 пьес и лауреат литературных премий. Драматургия Николая Коляды - это целый художественный мир. Коляда — Предшественник современной русской драматургии.

Выбранная пьеса «Рогатка» - Эта скандально известная пьеса, написанная в 1989 году, поставленная только в двух российских театрах. Западная пресса писала, что это была «первая советская гомосексуальная пьеса». Она была переведена на многие языки и поставлена в Швеции, Англии, Болгарии, Америке, Югославии, Италии, Австралии, во многих театрах Германии, а также в Литве.

Процесс перевода художественного текста мы можем обозначить как художественный перевод.

При выполнении художественного перевода основной задачей переводчика является передача не только содержания, но и авторского стиля исходного текста , его емоциональную тональность.

Известный российский поэт и переводчик О.Мандельштам, в своих статьях о переводе, опубликованных в 20-х гг XX века., отмечал, что «перевод – это создание самостоятельного речевого строя на основе чужого материала, которого на родном языке еще нет»

«Художественный перевод, реализованный как декодирование и перекодирование сообщения, несет на себе печать творческой литературной деятельности. Это не «чистый билингвизм», а «функциональная разновидность билингвизма». Двуязычность переводческой деятельности превращает тексты, из «закрытых» в открытые и таким способом дает возможность реализовать чужой литературный код.» (Попович 30)

В процессе перевода этой пьесы нам пришлось постоянно наблюдать Нюансы драматурги и передать не только смысловые значение текста но и сохранить сценические детали пьесы. Переводчик пьес не только переводит высказывания действующих лиц но и ему необходимо целиком передать жести и поступки лиц на сцене. На такой процесс обращает вынимание "Д.А. Олицкая" в своей статье «перевод драмы: специфика, проблемы, подходы» «Двойной эстетический код (литературный и театральный), определяющий онтологическую интермедиальность драматургического текста, требует постоянно рассматривать его либо непосредственно в смысле спектакля, либо как текст пьесы, только ожидающий акта высказывания на сцене. » (Олицкая19)

Во время перевода драмы с одного языка на другой, мы обнаружили типичные проблемы выделённые Олицкой «неравномерная точность,

сценичность, театральный потенциал, деиктический перевод, режиссура слова, образ «слова-жеста» и т.д. » (Олицкая19)

В пьесе «Рогатка» главные действующие лица – Илья и Антон принадлежат разным сферам Общества. Илья неграмотный, а Антон образованный. У них совсем разные манеры речи и поступки. Словарный запас употребляемые ими в своей речи так же отличается . Это различие должно быть показано через выбор слов при переводе.

Ниже представлены разные примеры из переведенной пьесы . Несмотря на то что в в переведенной пьесе немало случаев различных трансформаций и интересных переводческих явлений, мы рассматриваем только наиболее интересные примеры.

Опущения

Здесь перечислены примеры опущений от пьес. В этих образцах удалили лишние слова в тех случаях, где без этих слов мысль передается, и семантика тоже языка хинди позволяет эти изменения.

1. Я **кому** сказал, пошел отсюда

   कहा न दफा हो जाओ यहाँ से

В данном случае ***кому*** написано в оригинале, а в переводе на хинди достаточно использовать словосочетание «*कहा न*» чтобы передать смысл в контексте.

2. **Чьи-то** босые ноги шлепают по лунным квадратам на полу.

   चाँद की रौशनी से प्रज्जवलित फर्श पर नंगे पाँव चलने की पदचाप।

Здесь в переводе мысль передается без выражения «**Чьи-то**», поэтому опускается это словосоченаие.

3. Ты должен все понять и все простить ... Ты умеешь ведь это делать ... **Понять, простить, понять, простить** ... («Рогатка»)

   तुम्हें तो सब समझना चाहिए, माफ़ कर देना चाहिए, तुम तो **समझ सकते हो** और **माफ़ कर सकते हो** मुझे...

В данном случае слова **Понять**, **простить** повторяются в оригинале , такое повторение не нужно в переводе.

Добавления

Ниже приводятся случаи, когда синтаксис и структура языка хинди требуют «добавления тех или иных единиц в целях полной ясности. » (Бархударов 175) Добавленные слова/ словосочетания выделены жирным шрифтом.

4. На горшок **меня сажать** не надо пока.

... कमोड पर **बैठने के लिए मुझे किसी के मदद की** जरूरत नहीं है।

Здесь значение передается только добавлением слова «बैठने के लिए मुझे किसी के मदद की», иначе предложение остается неполным.

5. Нет, ты посмотри, какой **попугай** залетел в мои хоромы… («Рогатка»)

देखो तो कैसा **मासूम प्यारा तोता** उड़ आया है मेरी हवेली पर...

Здесь в переводе прямое значение «попугай» не объясняет смысл поэтому добовляются эти слова «मासूम प्यारा»

Перестановка

«Это изменение порядка слов и словосочетаний» (Бархударов, Язык и перевод: Вопросы общей и частной теории перевода 191) в структуре предложения по сравнению с текстом подлинника.

6.

1 Илья сидит в коляске	2 выбритый, посвежевший,	3 неловко улыбается
2 ताजगी से भरा हजामत किया हुआ	1 व्हीलचेयर पर बैठे हुए इल्या का	3 अजीब सी मुस्कराहट वाला चेहरा।

7.

1 Я	2 счастливый	3 человек
3 भाग्यशाली	2 हूँ	1 मैं

В данном примере также использован приема опущении. Опускается слово «**человек»** так как при переводе оно становится лишним.

В вышеупомянутых примерах изменяется порядок слов и словосочетаний в структуре предложения перевэденново текста , потому что стиль хинди требует такого рода изменений.

Замены

«В процессе перевода замене могут подвергаться как грамматические единицы - формы слов, части речи, члены предложения, типы синтаксической связи и др.» (Бархударов 194)

8. На окне - тюлевая штора с большой дырой, которая заштопана внахлест черными нитками.

   खिड़की पर टंगे हुए झीने परदे पर, काले धागे के पैबंद से ढंका हुआ एक बड़ा सा छेद।

Здесь Замена сложного предложения простым.

ЗАМЕНЫ ЧАСТЕЙ РЕЧИ

Замены членов предложения

9. Окна раскрыты, и **штора летает** от дуновения ветра.

खुली खिड़कियाँ, हवा के झोंकों से **उड़ते हुए परदे**।

В этом примере русская активная конструкция “**штора летает”** заменяется пассивной конструкции хинди “**उड़ते हुए परदे”**

Фразеологизмы

- **Передача фразеологизмы через фразеологизмы**

10. 12крути педали, пока не дали

    नौ दो ग्यारह हो जाओ।

11. Шарики за ролики.

    बौरा गया था।

12. Так, **поговорили по душам**. **То-се, пятое-десятое**

    मन से बोल रहे थे। बस इधर - उधर की बातें कह रहे थे

13. Я тебе тут **наговорил семь верст до небес**

मैं तो बस डींगे हाँक रहा था तुमसे।

14. У тебя, гляжу**, бзик на этом**

देख रहा हूँ कि तुम्हारे ऊपर जैसे इसका **भूत सवार है**।

15. …кому бублик, а кому дырку от бублика.

किसी के **दोनों हांथो में लड्डू** और किसी को **दो जून कि रोटी** भी नसीब नहीं।

- **Передача Фразеологизмов свободными сочетаниями**

Некоторые фразеологизмы, по которым нам не удалось найти соответствующих фразеологизмов, мы перевели с помощью свободных сочетаний.

16. Сейчас. Уйду. **Шнурки поглажу**.

ठीक है। जाता हूँ। **लो अब नहीं जाता।**

- **Передача свободных сочетаний фразеологическими оборотами**

В переводе есть и случаи, где передача свободных сочетаний осуществлена с помощью фразеологизмов на хинди.

17. А эти - ну, половые просто гиганты

और ये जो अपने आप को **कामदेव का अवतार** दिखाते हैं!`

18. Давай, давай, не **выдрючивайся** ...

चलो चलो **बनो मत ज्यादा**...

19. **порылся** в шкафу, тог накренился. чуть не упал на Антона

अलमारी का **कोना कोना छान मारता है**, अलमारी झुक जाती है, मानो अंतोन के ऊपर गिर पड़ेगी।

Лексические трансформации

«При лексических заменах происходит замена отдельных лексических единиц (слов и устойчивых словосочетаний) ИЯ лексическими единицами ПЯ, которые не являются их словарными эквивалентами, »

Случаи дифференциации

«Прием дифференциации используется для передачи слов , явлений и процессов , которые не передаются таким образом в другом языке. »

20. **АЛЕКСЕЙ.** Мы на «ты», кажется. **Давайте, на «ты».**

    अलेक्सेई - आइये एक दूसरे को "तुम" से संबोधित कर के इस "**आप" की औपचारिकता को समाप्त करते हैं।**

Выражение «давайте на ты» в русском культуре используется человеком когда кто-то хочет быть нефоермальным с кем-то . здесь использован прием дифференциации для пердачи этот смысл.

Случаи конкретизации

«Конкретизация – это замена слова или словосочетания ИЯ с более широким значением словом или словосочетанием ПЯ с более узким значением. » (Бархударов 210)

21. Мне тридцать три года, а я - **мальчик**!

    तैंतीस साल का होकर भी मैं अभी तक कुंवारा हूँ!

Здесь словарное значение "мальчик" на хинди не дает полной семантики в данном контексте , поэтому это слово потребует транформации. Прием конкретизации используется для передачи значение слов который не передается в языке хинди.

22. Антону восемнадцать лет. **На нем** белая рубашка, джинсы. Явно пользуется бешеным успехом у девушек. Но **в нем** нет наглости и высокомерия, присущих обыкновенно таким смазливым пацанам.

    अंतोन अट्ठारह वर्ष का है। सफ़ेद कमीज और जींस पहनी हुई है। निःसंदेह लड़कियों के बीच काफी मशहूर होगा। लेकिन उसके अंदर कोई शोख़ी और अहंकार नहीं है, अमूमन जैसा कि ऐसे आकर्षक लड़को में होता है।

Здесь «на нем» в первое случае Конкретизируются при переводе как «он носит» а в второе случае как «у него» чтобы передать полны смысл.

Случаи генерализации

«Генерализацией называется явление, обратное конкретизации — замена единицы ИЯ, имеющей более узкое значение, единицей ПЯ с более широким значением.» (Бархударов 213)

23. **Перья** у меня черные, **крылья** такие, знаешь.

पंख मेरे काले हैं , पता है

Здесь слова «Перья» и «крылья» имеют почти такое же значение, поэтому в переводе использован прием генерализации.

Случаи Компенсации

24. **ИЛЬЯ** . На кухне кран **текет**.

АНТОН. Течет.

ИЛЬЯ. А?

АНТОН. Не “течет”, а “текет” ты говоришь. Надо - “течет”.

इल्या. रसोई में पानी **टिपक रहा है** ।

अंतोन. टपक रहा है।

इल्या. मतलब ?

अंतोन. तुम बोल रहे हो पानी टिपक रहा है , तुम्हे बोलना चाहिए पानी टपक रहा है।

В данном случае, надо было найти два понимания одного слов «Течет» чтобы контекст становится более ясным читателям.

25. **ИЛЬЯ**. А это я. Я в школе когда учился, в начальных классах был ударником, хорошистом. Я **посередке** тут.

АНТОН. **Посередке**, **посередке**! Надо говорить - **посередине**! Понял, нет? По-се-ре-ди-не! («Рогатка»)

इल्या . और यह मैं हूँ। जब मैं स्कूल में पढ़ता था तब शुरू कि कक्षाओं में बड़ा तेज था , अच्छा छात्र था। ये **मध्यान** वाला मैं हूँ।

अंतोन. **मध्यान** , **मध्यान**! तुम्हें कहना चाहिए - **मध्य** में! समझे कि नहीं ? म -ध्य में!

Случаи модуляции (смыслового развития)

26. Ладно, брось. Прости, **старик**. Не хотел я.

ठीक है छोड़ो। गुस्ताखी माफ़ करें **हुज़ूर**। मेरा ये मतलब नहीं था।

Здесь это прием используется для передачи выражений «старик» другим словам в переводящем языке. словарное значение "старик" не можнно использовать в данном контексте.

27. Совсем еще молодой человек, а учишь взрослых дядек…

    अबे, कैसे हो तुम ... कल के लौंडे, और सिखाने चले हो बाप को ।

28. Ты как в Америке, гляжу ... **По-домашнему** ...

    देख रहा हूँ कि आज तो तुम पूरे अमेरिकी **अंदाज़** में हो...

Антонимический перевод

29. ... И тебе налью ... Вместе шандарахнем ... **Ты не думай, я добро помню** ...

    तुम्हे भी पिलाऊंगा... साथ में ही गटकेंगे... **मत सोचो कि मैं भलाई भूल जाऊंगा**...

30. Бежи, бежи, чего же ты?

    आखिर भागता क्यों नहीं ?

31. Мне это **снится**, да? Скажи, **снится**?

    कहीं मैं **सपना तो नहीं** देख रहा ? बताओ न , **सपना तो नहीं** है ?

32. которую вспоминаю все время, чуть ли **не каждый день**.

    जिसे मैं सभी समय याद करता हूँ , **लगभग हर दिन**।

В этом случае значение лучше передается антонимическим переводом, поэтому здесь использован этот прием.

Случаи целостных преобразований

33. Вон, сказал. Будешь тут в голове масло ковырять. Еще одно общество “Милосердие” выискалось ...

    ज्यादा दिलासा दिलाओगे मुझे , आ गयी साली एक और समाज सेवी संस्था...

34. **Надо же** ... Бывают совпадения ...

    ग़जब... कैसा संयोग होता है...

В этих примерах заменяются выражений исходного текста с помощью целостного преобразования. при помощи этово приема развивает смысл.

Было заметно что некоторые выражения в этой пьесе Коляды сексистски. Надо было с чувствительностью их переводить, поэтому казалось

неуместным переводить их одним и тем же значением. Для сохранения идеи этих выражений , использованы другие слова и предложения , которые могли бы выразить смысл без ущерба основной идеи. Например , в пьесе «Рогатка» получается такое выражение-

Ах, думаю, Света, разложить бы тебя на диванчике и с таким удовольствием бы во все дырки, во все дырки!

Такого сексистическово выражения нельзя было передать на языке хинди. Следовательно оно было переведено как

काश, स्वेता, मैं तुम्हे सोफे पर लिटा कर इत्मीनान से तुम्हारे जिस्म का भरपूर मज़ा ले पाता।

В процессе перевода этой пьесы на хинди было замечено, что ввиду ограниченности возможности перевода матерного языка и современного русского сленга, возникают существенные трудности в передаче материала и его адекватном отображении на хинди.

В переводческой работе важную роль играет фактор, не зависящий от внутриязыковых и внешних ситуативных причин. Это индивидуальность самого переводчика. Именно переводчик находит уникальные, особые варианты значений. Это более глубокое понимание переводчиком культуры и текста исходного языка и языка перевода, которое определяет качество перевода.

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ГЕНДЕРНЫЕ ВОПРОСЫ: ИССЛЕДОВАНИЕ «ЖЕНИХ И НЕВЕСТА» АЛИСЫ ГАНИЕВЫ

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GENDER ISSUES: A STUDY OF ALISA GANIEVA'S *BRIDE AND GROOM*

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Аннотация: *Произведения Алисы Ганиевой не нуждаются в представлении. В своих произведениях она отражает разные проблемы, касающиеся женских половин дагестанского общества. Роман «Жених и Невеста» обсуждает ряд проблем, связанных с ролью и местом женщин в обществе. Через простой сюжет брака А. Ганиева оспаривает стереотипный образ женщин в обществе, где женщины должны играть гендерные роли. А. Ганиева отмечает, что стереотипные образы женщин укрепляются с ростом исламского фундаментализма.*

Ключевые слова: *Дагестан, брак, гендер, стереотип, износилование*

Abstract: *Alisa Ganieva's works need no introduction. She is well known for her realist portrayal of issues concerning the Caucasus region especially Dagestan in her literary works. The novel "Bride and Groom" written from a woman's perspective, Ganieva through a simple plot of marriage challenges the stereotypical image of women, where women have gendered roles to play. Ganeiva points out, the stereotype images of women are getting strengthened with the rise of Islamic Fundamentalism.*

Keywords: *Dagestan, marriage, gender, stereotype, rape.*

Известная современная российская писательница Алиса Ганиева родилась 23 сентября 1985 года в Москве. Родом она из Махачкалы, столицы южной республики Дагестана. Она принадлежит к крупнейшей этнической группе Дагестана, аварцам. Субъект Российской Федерации, республика Дагестана расположена на Северном Кавказе, и соседствует с Чеченским регионом. Основная часть населения Дагестана исповедует Ислам и наблюдается в культуре этого края отпечаток арабо-мусульманской культуры.

Выходец из Дагестана, Алиса Ганиева, завоевала особое место в мире русской литературы. Пишет она не на родном аварском, а на русском языке.

Ее тесная связь с дагестанской и русской культурами способствовала выявлению ряд проблем, связанных с кросс культурным образованием и формированием личности. В одном интервью когда Ганиеву спрашивали, кем она считает себя - русской или дагестанской, она ответила, что выросла на русской литературе и культуре, не на аварской (она не так много читала аварскую литературу) . Тем не менее, по ее словам, она идентифицирует себя «скорее как дагестанский аварец». (Read.Russia)

Произведения Алисы Ганиевой не нуждаются в представлении. В своих произведениях она отражает разные проблемы, касающиеся дагестанского общества. Ганиева отличается от других писателей, обсуждающих кавказский вопрос тем, что она описывает кавказские проблемы с эмической точки зрения.

Настоящая статья намеривает затрагивать преимущественно гендерные вопросы, связанные с женским полом. В любом обществе женщины являются самыми большими жертвами насилия, жестокости и дискриминации. Высшая степень дискриминации и жестокости со стороны общества проявляется в форме изнасилования, развода и.т.д. Женские образы в творчестве Ганиевой часто показаны жертвами гендерной дискриминации в обществе. Как очевидно из названия, «Жених и невеста» вращается вокруг вопроса брака в Дагестане.

Главные персонажи романа - Марат и Патя. Как уже сказано, предметом исследования данной статьи является женские вопросы, следовательно особое внимание в статье уделено женским персонажам и их жизни, а именно образам Пати, Сабрины, Амишки, Аиды. Через женские образы Ганиева пытается передать роль и место женщин в феодальном строе, где считаются их «вторым полом».

Главная героиня романа, Патя образованная женщина. Ей двадцать пять лет. Она работала в подвале московского суда. Здесь она подшивала и переписывала бумаги. После возвращения в Дагестан из Москвы она начала помогать матери по хозяйству, как было положено. Ее мать волновала тот факт, что Патя еще не незамужем. По ней Патя уже старая. « Дома мама встретила меня в ожидаемом возбуждении:

– Где ты была? Заходила к Аиде? А жена Магомедова мне уже позвонила, рассказала, что дети под впечатлением, что сыну ты очень понравилась!

– Мама, он всё время молчал, – отмахнулась я.

– Опять! Опять придирки. Принца ей подавай! – рассердилась мама. – Скоро на тебя даже старики не посмотрят! А через три-четыре года ты уже не сможешь иметь детей, как Люся!». (Ганиева)

Для матери важнее была, чтобы ее дочь не нарушала вековые традиции вступить брак рано в жизни и рожать детей.

Взгляды Пати всегда противоречат традиционным нормам общества. Она не может одобрять регрессивные общественные нормы, где люди думают, что девочки должны выйти замуж рано. Для женщин будто ничего не может быть важнее свадьбы Патя замечает в городе: «Свадебные салоны через каждый шаг. Бутики европейских дизайнеров, центры свадебной мусульманской моды, кринолины, шлейфы, дымчатые шали, меховые горжетки, эксклюзивные коллекции… Плакаты «Аренда залов для сватовства», новые обложки бесчисленных журналов о свадьбе: советы бывалого тамады, признания звёзд-молодожёнов. Все кругом только и делают, что женятся, женятся. Как будто нет других занятий». (Ганиева)

Алиса Ганиева через образ Пати также хочет показать менталитет народа дагестанского общества о одежде женщин. У Пати короткие волосы. Люди думают, что женщины должны не иметь короткие волосы. В своем творчестве А.Ганиева раскрывает эту проблему, где соседка говорит ее о одеждах и о волосах:

«– Ну что, Патя, как вообще дела? – прицепилась вошедшая ко мне на кухню соседка.

– Нормально, спасибо…

– А волосы ты где постригла? В Москве?

– Да…

– А зачем? Модно, да?

– Да не знаю. Постригла, и всё…

Я шумно вздохнула. Мне так опостылела соседская трескотня, что я готова была уже вылететь на улицу

– А ты в штанах наружу тоже выходишь? – продолжала соседка, переключившись на мои брюки.

– Здесь ещё не выходила.

– В поселке не надо, не поймут. Ты бы хоть футболку сверху спустила, что ли». (Ганиева)

Феодальный порядок требовал, чтобы мать рано приучала свою дочь к труду. По данному поводу писательница М. Б Гимбатова отмечает «С 6–7 лет она помогала матери по хозяйству: мыла посуду, принимала участие в уборке дома, нянчила младших братьев и сестер, выполняла мелкие поручения. Постепенно девочку приобщали к более сложным трудовым процессам: стирать, чинить одежду, готовить пищу, выпекать хлеб, ходить за водой и т.д. Хозяйственность была основным качеством, которым обладало большинство дагестанских девушек. Уже к 13 годам девочка могла полностью заменить мать в хозяйстве. От того, насколько девочка была трудолюбива и чистоплотна, зависела ее дальнейшая семейная жизнь».

Аналогичную картину мы видим в романах Ганиевой. Аида, второй значительный женский образ из романа Ганиевой представляется простой замужней молодой женщиной. Она мать трех сыновей. В отличие от Пати, она является традиционной мусульманкой -носит шарф, заботится о своей семье и прочее. В целом ведет себя так, как полагается в традиционном обществе.

Через образ Зарипат, автор уделяет внимание на статус женщин в феодальной семье после брака. Зарипат является известной певицей. У нее хороший голос, и за это стала любимой многих. Ее брак стал причиной ее душевного потрясения. После замужества муж запретил ей петь и следовательно полностью изменилась ее жизнь. Ее брак отнял ее свободу, ее идентичность, ее пассию. Она теряет свою личность. Автор очень умело передает печальное состояние таких женщин, которым проходится отказаться от своей мечты, пожертвовать свою жизнь, из за феодального правопорядка. «Несколько лет назад эта певица вышла за соблюдающего мусульманина, который запретил ей петь, выступать и даже слушать музыку. Сменила декольтированные платья на балахон, родила друг за другом нескольких детей и совсем затихла». (Ганиева)

Душевная гибель видимо стала причиной физической гибели Зарипат. Она страдает от рака и уже в предсмертном состоянии в больнице, она набирала силу пойти против воли мужа и петь на последний раз перед смертью. Именно тогда ощущается, сколько она мучилась в жизни. Она спокойно смирилась с тем, что муж отнимал у нее самое дорогое - ее музыку, что дало ей идентичность. «Муж запрещал Зарипат с ним общаться. И вот пришёл к

ней в 6ольницу 6рат, и она ему говорит еле-еле слышным голосом: знаю, что умру, исполни перед смертью моё желание.

– Какое желание?

– Она захотела спеть! Брат принёс инструменты, записывающую технику, всё настроил прямо в палате, и Зарипат как начнёт петь! У меня сейчас записи нет, но мне мой Мага давал слушать. Я те6е по 6лутузу пришлю. Патя-я-я, ты 6ы знала, как она поёт! Лучше, чем здоровая! Даже поверить трудно, что вот-вот на тот свет попадёт. Как 6удто Аллах силы ей в лёгкие вложил, отвечаю!». (Ганиева)

Другая проблема, с которой женщины сталкиваются в обществе, это проблема изнасилования. Женщины часто становятся жертвами насилия, и это пагубно сказывается на ее физическом, психическом здоровье.

В романе показана, что охранник сельской школы изнасиловал женщину. Когда она открыто сообщает об этом, тогда ей никто не верит. Автор хочет показать ментальность общества, где женщина должна доказать что она износилована. Ее мучение не кончается на это. Ей сказали продемонстрировать, как охранник совершал насильственные действия.

«в сельской школе охранник изнасиловал уборщицу. Вернее, она утверждала, что изнасиловал, а охранник убеждал, что по доброй воле. И вот уборщица, значит, доказывала своё. Что она кричала и отбивалась. Решили проверить, услышали 6ы учителя, если 6ы она и вправду кричала. Провели следственный эксперимент. – Ну представь, следственный эксперимент. Разыграли, чтобы всё 6ыло, как в тот день. И о6виняемый взял и по второму разу её изнасиловал». (Ганиева)

С другой стороны Ганиева показывает что все жизненные предрассудки связаны с женской половиной общества. Мужчины феодального общества не несут ответственности за любой свой аморальный поступок. Как мы видим в романе, Абдулла просит своего друга набирать информацию о характере его будущей жены, тогда как он сам является аморальным. Часто посещает проституток. Мужчины ожидают чистоты и девственность от женщин. «Нормальная девушка, я сам для него собирал информацию, проверял её прошлое. Всё чисто. Зато сам А6дуллаев вляпался. От него тут одна рожать со6ирается. Купит стимуляторов в аптеке, наглотается и идёт в сауну, к проститутке. Чтобы 6ольше палок кинуть и денег так сэкономить». (Ганиева)

Писательница также обращает читательское внимание на проблему гендерных стереотип в отношении поведении женщин в семье. Сабрина образованная девушка, но это не дает ей право открыто выражать свои взгляды в семье, выступать против изнасилования черной вдовы. Ее отец рассердился на нее, поскольку женщины не имеют право выражать свои мнения в таком строе. «Подождите, полковник залез к чёрной вдове в окно? Зачем? – оторвался Марат от тарелки.

– Ну, это ещё неизвестно, полез или нет, это всё наши болтуны раздувают.

– Полез, папа, ты знаешь, – снова вклинилась Сабрина. – Вытащил её на допрос, она с детьми была и с подругами… Вытащил, повёз в свой отдел и там…

Сабрина неожиданно прервалась.

– Речь идёт об изнасиловании, – докончила за неё жена Шахова.

– Ой, ой, ой, – завертелся на стуле Шахов, – нашлись тоже, правозащитницы. Да это ещё доказать надо, насиловал или нет. И даже если насиловал, может, она сама его склонила, чтобы скандал раздуть. Эти лесные вдовы хуже уличных женщин, на всех набрасываются.

– Папа! – сдвинула брови Сабрина.

Шахов вскочил со стула и размашисто заходил. Вот растил, растил дочку, ни в чём не отказывал, а теперь она мне заявляет, что эти дуры в никабах – правы, а её отец, у которого тридцать медалей, причём не купленных, а самых настоящих, – не прав! Скоро постареет и все женихи закончаться. Пускай тогда надевает никаб и идет в лес к своим друзьям, там она очень быстро мужа найдёт. И даже не одного! – распалился Шахов». (Ганиева)

Образ Амишки, восемнадцатилетней девушки, является жертвой феодального менталитета. Она стала дружить в университете с Каримом, для которого она была лишь объектом физического удовольствия. Воспользовавшись моментом, он насилует ее в своей квартире. Он дал ей водки вместо молока и износивал её. После этого Карим бросил ее. Таким образом, он обманывал ее. «– Он сказал, что мы и так и так поженимся, – не глядя на нас, выдавила Амишка. – Что ему нет смысла меня обманывать, раз наши родители уже в курсе. Что наши отношения открытые, честные. Что он ни с кем так долго не встречался. Про любовь говорил. Что ему троюродную сестру предлагают, но

он отказался, потому что я – его судьба. Ещё и кальян мне дал покурить. Сказал, что на молоке.

– А оказалось?

– На водке». (Ганиева)

В заключении можно сказать, что в своем романе «Жених и невеста», Алиса Ганиева представляет набор ориентальных стереотипов по отношению роли и места женщин в массовом сознании феодального строя, где женщины постоянно подвергаются физическому и психологическому насилию. Нет там места для эмансированных и не раскрепощенных женщин.

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XX ВЕК - ОТ РОССИЙСКОЙ ИМПЕРИИ ДО РОССИЙСКОЙ ФЕДЕРАЦИИ

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XX CENTURY - FROM THE RUSSIAN EMPIRE TO THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION

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Аннотация: *В настоящей статье речь идёт о причинах образования, а также распада бывшего Советского Союза. После Октябрьской революции 1917 года «Российкая Империя» прекратила свое существование и двигался к формированию «Советского Союза». Советское государство было создана на основе идеи социализма. Октябрьская революция произошла во имя создания «нового общества», где не должно было места эксплуатации человека человеком. Однако, все это явилась только утопией! Во имя социально-политических преобразованиий и достижения свелтлого будущего люди были превращены в идеологических рабов и орудий государства. И к концу XX века страна снова воскрешался в новом воплощении как «Российской федерацией».*

Ключевые слова: *Российская Империя, Советский Союз, Российская Федерация, социализм, революция, утопия, государство*

Abstract: *This article deals with the reasons of the formation and disintegration of the former Soviet Union. After the October Revolution of 1917 the «Russian Empire» ceased to exist and moved towards the formation of the «Soviet Union». The Soviet state was founded on the idea of socialism. The October Revolution took place in the name of creation of the «new society», where there will be no place for human exploitation. However, all this was only utopia! In the name of socio-political transformations and achieving beautiful tomorrow, people were turned into ideological slaves and instruments of the state. And by the end of XX century the country was again resurrected in a new incarnation as «Russian Federation».*

Key words: *the Russian Empire, the Soviet Union, the Russian Federation, socialism, revolution, utopia, state*

В русских социальных мыслья̆х существует мнение, что двадцатый век был короче, чем девятнадцатый. XX век начинается тем, что это страна двигается от «Российкой империи» к «Советскому союзу» и к концу XX века снова воскрешается в новом воплощении как «Российской федерацией». В двадцатом веке в России произошли огромные коренные перемены во многих сферах жизни. Страна стала свидителем многочисленных общественно-политических и экономических реформ и преобразований. Это был период не только мировой, но и гражданской войны и три революции□. И это только начала века!

Хотя XX век начинается с 1900-х годов, однако в реальном век XX начинается с Октябрьской революции 17-ого года. Дело в том, что 1917 год является тот отправным моментом после чего, Россия изменилась коренным образом. С октября 1917 года мы имеем дело с социалистической страной реализованной на основе Социалистической утопии. Октябрьская революция произошла во имя создания «нового общества», где не должно было места эксплуатации человека человеком. Это должна была попыткой преобразования царского самодержавного строя. Однако, история явилась другой. В этот период Россия увидела много исторических явлений, в том числе и волны репрессий, организованных самым государством против своего же народа. В этом контексте появился термин «Большой террор», который относится к истории бывшего СССР.

Когда идёт дискурс об истории России двадцатого века с точки зрения народа, то можно сказать, что трудна была их судьба. Им пришлось пройти этапы ускоренной индустриализации, форсированной коллективизации, «голодомор» на Украине, процессы вынужденных казённых депортаций, сталинских репрессий, антигуманных лагерных мучений многочисленных Иванов Денисовых в «Гулаге», лишения и страданий Второй мировой войны, потеря молодёжи в Афганистане на «чужой войне», радиоактивного заражения всего населения территории после аварии на Чернобыльской АЭС, вынужденным образом изобретения народом искусственной «советской» супра-идентичности. Это события причиняли всему народу жившему на территории бывшего СССР невероятное невыразимое горе. Необходимо отметить, что среди эти событии были не только естественные катастрофы, но и выдуманные человеком.

Среди список этих проблем, по моему мнению, самое тяжёлые времена явились с сталинским периодом. «Сталинская эпоха» (1922-1953) составила почти половину срока жизни советского государства. Кульминацией

правления Сталина стал "Большой террор" 1934-1938 годов. Миллионы советских граждан были арестованы, депортированы или расстреляны. Постоянные сталинские репрессии привели к возникновению обширной сети лагерей, того самого "Архипелага ГУЛАГ", который А.И. Солженицын позже назовет в своей книге «символическим воплощением сталинской эпохи» (Сухих 25). 30-ые годы двадцатого века видели жестокую репрессию против старых членов партии, не согласных с установленными методами государственного руководства.

Процесс становления нового государства начался в соответствии с теорией «марксизма» и построение социалистической экономики виделось большевикам через плановое развитие народного хозяйства из единого центра. Большевики пришли во власть с обещаниями о «новом мире», где не будет эксплуатация человека человеком, в стране будет царствовать всеобщее равенство и мир и т.п. Однако, все это явилась только утопией!

Рассуждая об истории России XX века можно повторить высказывание о том, что в контакте истории бывшего СССР – теория и практика были ужасно не в соответствии. По словам известного критика Сухиха - «Всемирная история пишется окровавленной рукой войн, революций и бунтов. Люди во все времена убивали друг друга. В XX веке человек оказался перед лицом тоталитарных идеологий, служащих оправданием убийства. Как следствие — две мировые войны, фашизм, сталинский геноцид, миллионы смертей... Государственные чиновники хладнокровно отправляют на смерть тысячи людей, цинично оправдывая массовые убийства интересами нации, государственной безопасности, прогресса человечества, изощряясь в придумывании все новых обоснований и формулировок» (Довлеткиреева, Война в Чечне: параллельный взгляд изнутри).

В список преступлений советского государства против народа, принято включить явление «Голодомор». Начало 1930-х годов еще Голодомор – это массовый голод, который охватывал пространные территории в бывшем СССР. В это время на территории Украинской ССР погибло большое количество народа в начале 1930-х годов. Форсированная индустриализация ухудшила жизненный уровень населения. Можно сказать, что самое страшное явление, связанное с трагической историей бывшего СССР, и имеющее извещённое влияние на распад 1991 года, это была политика «Большой террор» и «Гулаг». «Первые лагеря на территории Советской республики появились летом 1918 года. Правительственные распоряжения, предписывали проводить «беспощадный массовый террор» против классовых врагов,

«сомнительных» отсылать в концентрационный лагерь. Официальному появлению новых карательных учреждений способствовал декрет Совета Народных Комиссаров от 5 сентября 1918 года. Большевистская власть приступила к уничтожению своих действительных, а так же потенциальных противников, не смотря на общепринятые процессуальные нормы и правовые гарантии. <.....> К концу 1921 года на территории СССР функционировало 122 лагеря. В 1940 году ГУЛАГ объединял 53 лагеря с тысячами лагерных отделений и пунктов, 425 колоний, 50 колоний для несовершеннолетних, 90 домов младенца» (ГУЛАГ. История создания).

Советское государство было создано под идею социализма. Это была советская утопия; хорошо известно, что после революции 1917 года советское государство стало возникать насильственно.Громко было провозглашено о новых отношениях в общем во всем поприщах жизни и особенно в сфере литературы. В Советском Союзе большинсво из писателей стали лишь государственным инструментом пропаганды. В этой сфере государство намеревалась воспитание одной линии в литературе и искоренение всех других. Ленинский декрет о печати 1917 года положил начало советской цензуре. Главлит был учережден в 1922 году. Он должен был остановить публикацию произведения, содержащие «агитацию против советской власти». (Аванта 50)

В этом отношении стоит заметить что, «с 30-х годов в истории русской литературы появились ещё одно направление - пребывание писателя, в советских лагерях, в тюрьмах, в местах ссылок, на допросах, в общении со следователями, в одиночках, испытание порой пыток и издевательств лагерной жизнью» (Булгаков Письмо Советскому Правительству). Явно формируется государственная идеология, своего рода произвольная структура, узурпирующая творческую функцию Демиурга (один из эпитетов Бога-Творца в христианском богословии), которая предполагает «создание» новой социальной модели и «переделку» людей в соответствии с определенный узор. Процесс «творения» и «переделки» происходит под знаком некоторая регрессия: лидеры создают новую социальную модель, т.е. реализуют утопической идеей, но в поисках Добра и Организованного Счастья он опирается насилой, тем самым меняя жизнь людей, и она постепенно превратилась в Хаос. Концептуально-нравственная позиция более или менее радикальных писателей и мыслителей, вольно или насильственно объединившихся под сенью советского дискурса, ясно отражает идеи

советской риторики, лишенной самосознаний и национальности («Мой адрес - не дом и не улица, мой адрес - Советский Союз»).

XX век, когда слова «революция» и «война» обещали разрешение всех проблем человечества. Это век кровавой гражданской войны, двух мировых войн, Февральской и Октябрьской революций и т.д. Этот век был время реализации утопихеских проектов не только в СССР и в Китае но и в Кубе. Во имя свелтлого будущего и культурной революции люди были превращены в идеологических рабов и орудий государства.

Это общепризнанный факт, что большевистская Россия была одним из последствий Октябрьской революции. Формирование нового государства на основе большевистской теории было социальным экспериментом, который предстояло распространить по всему миру. Но этот социальный эксперимент провалился на самом полигоне. В этом контексте стоит упомянуть одну статью 1924 года (сразу после образования СССР) - «Так как советская республика не только государство, но и опыт, то мы найдем в советской конституции следы неудержимого стремления производить опыты, и притом, как всегда бывает с коммунистами, неудачные. Советское государство возникло не из национального корня, как все современные государства, а из стремления к интернациональному объединению всех трудящихся. ...СССР не есть государство в собственном смысле этого слова. ...Он не представляет из себя прочно установленного государственного порядка. Он может в любой момент исчезнуть... » (Последние Новости 1924).

Можно сказать, что в бывшем СССР люди были свидетелями –

- конфликта между «Личностью» и «Коллективом»;
- конфликта между «Государством» и «Гражданином» в контексте свободы и счастья человека;
- конфликта между «Реальностью» и «Утопическими мечтами»;
- Конфликта между максимальной эксплуатацией ресурсов и их жизнеспособностью.

Заканчивается XX век так же драматично, как он возник. Народ в России снова потерялся на несколько лет! История России прошла долгий путь - Русь, Россия, Советский союз, Российская Федерация. «Двадцатый век завершился тем, что Россия еще раз, как и в 1917 году, изменила границы, название, государственный строй. Молодая Российская Федерация, вероятно, еще долго будет разбираться со своим прошлым, с наследием Российской империи и

СССР» (Сухих 25). События, которые произошли в Советском Союзе в период с 1985 по 1991 год, вошли в мировую историю как перестройка и остаются предметом резких дискуссий. Распад СССР стал результатом многих факторов, приведших к краху великого государства на карте мира. Это и провал экономических реформ, социальные проблемы, успех первого и последнего президента М.С. Горбачева и исчезновение КПСС, которая была не просто политической партией, а национальной идеологией всей страны, и . В качестве причин распада Советского Союза известный автор Р. А. Медведев называет - упадок идеологии, российский сепаратизм, давление Запада и, наконец, деятельность самого президента Горбачева. Через 70 лет распался СССР в результате своих и не своих противоречий.

Это очень ясно, что «Люди девятнадцатого столетия. Как они спешили расстаться со своим веком! Как потом жалели об этом...» (Сухих 6). Причиной распада СССР оказалось та политика государства в результате которой народ потерял веры в государство. Общие результаты изучений и исследований, проведенных о Советской эпохе можно подытожить таким образом –

- Человек как винтик в огромном проекте.
- Стремление к монокультуру.
- Подавление инакомыслия.
- Образование ширмы автономии.
- Несменяемость руководителей.
- Безразличие к природе и стремление управиться ею.
- Превосходство науки и технологии над человеком.
- Подавление личной инициативы.

Крах СССР был вызван не только неблагоприятными объективными условиями, а существующими производственными отношениями, оправданными неправильной теорией. Это был результатом неправильного подхода к производственным отношениям. Это было таким «искажением, которое забыло о людях». Коммунизм оказался не в состоянии конкурировать с силой Запада и упал отчасти из-за него. Тот факт, что человеческие свободы были подавлены препятствуют тому, чтобы правительство в полной мере поддерживал народ. В то же время, тот факт, что правительство свирепствовал с коррупцией. Невозможно удалить человеческий элемент природы от правительства, а это означает, что правительство не могло бы предотвратить

его представители становятся коррумпированными или по крайней мере стали жертвами взяток и других плохих поведении. Похоже, что эта система была ущербной с самого начала и рухнула отчасти потому, что она не смогла жить до высоких моральных и политических стандартов, которые оно поставило для себя. Создание Советского государства было уникальным моментом в истории человечества, однако ностоящее изучение главных моментов истории бывшего СССР подчеркивает факт о том, что сложная история XX века оказалась против жизни своего же народа. При этих условиях СССР не могла продолжиться и наконец пришло к распаду.

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PRESENCE OF ŚĀKTA TRADITION OF KASHMIR IN KERALA: AGENTS AND RITUAL SYSTEM

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Abstract: *This paper focuses on esoteric and exoteric dimensions of Śākta brahmins of Kerala. The Śākta brahmins of Kerala are believed to be descendants of Kashmir brahmins who left their land due to political turbulence and lack of support from ruling kings. It is not known exactly when they reached Kerala and settled there. The ritual system they inherit is something unique which can be traced back to the tantric cults of Kashmir. This paper explores into the peculiar characteristics of the rituals of these community and how they appropriated it during the course of time in accordance with the demand of new socio-cultural milieu.*

Keywords: *Krama, Kālasa□kar□i□ī, Pi□āras, Mūssads, Sākta, Kulaprakriyā, Tantraprakriyā.*

Broadly, ritualistic tradition of tantra of Kerala can be divided into three traditions i.e., *Tantrasamuccya*, Irinjalakkuda and Śāktism of *Pi□āras* (bha□□āraka) and *Mūssads*. The former, *Tantrasamucccaya* tradition, consists of all the similar ritualistic traditions that took their root either before or after the composition of the *Tantrasamuccaya*. This tradition gained wider acceptance and dominance all over Kerala. About Irinjalakkuda tradition it is a less known cult, geographically constrained and prevalent only among the brahmin settlements of this specific region. Though in practice Irinjalakkuda settlement follows a different custom of temple rituals, there are similarities with that of *Tantrasamuccaya*. While Tantrasamuccaya and Irinjalakkuda traditions have many things in common, the Śākta tradition of *Pi□aras* and *Mūssads* is totally distinct from both.

Śākta Brahmins

If the carriers of *Tantrasamuccaya*and Irinjalakkuda traditions are orthodox brahmins of Kerala, that of Śākta tradition are *Pi□aras* and *Mūssads* who are known as Śākteya brahmins. It is since they are the worshippers of Śakti, follow the vedic rites of passage (samskāras), perform daily and incidental rituals as exactly orthodox brahmins of Kerala do, they are called as Śākta brahmins. Though brahmins by birth they are not considered to be equal to orthodox brahmins of Kerala and have been degraded to a secondary status. It is believed that these brahmins form a migratory group, descendants of Kashmir brahmins whose

trajectory of exodus and time of their settlement could not be traced yet. But eventually they preferred Kerala as a final abode to settle. Not only they form a different group, they also possess a different ritual cult as well. Unfortunately, no study has been so far undertaken on these facts.

It is interesting to note that though a small community, *Pi□āras*and *Mūssads*, reside around the Śākta temple, as four independent families. For instance, the four households around Kalarivatukkal temple are *Tāzattillam, Kizakkillam, Paze□attillam* and *Vadakkillam* named accordingly based on directions and relative positions of the houses with regard to the temple.

A similar pattern is observed across all other major Śākta temples too. They formed an independent caste-like structure with their own chief vedic priest called *vādhyān* who supervises all the smārta ceremonies like upanayana, vivāha etc., and teaches temple rituals to next generation. He also acts as an authority to declare that someone is eligible to perform Śākta rituals in temple. The Śāktas have their own special cremation grounds shared only within these families. After the cremation the remaining skeletons are buried at a location in the vicinity of the temple called *Tirunelli*, which is common for all the Śākta families, is the place where all the posthumous rites related to the departed soul are made every year. About their priesthood, there is a family of *tantrin*s called *tantrimūssad* and who maintains a hierarchy among themselves. Someone who performs all the major rituals in temples are known as *mūttapi□āra* and the one who assists the former is known as *i□ayapi□āra* (*laghubha□□āraka*) and *pi□āra*. All these different priestly groups play different roles, depending on the nature of rituals.

The marital alliance is made only within their clan who lie spread in and around Talipparamba, Payyannur, Kannur and Kozhikkode districts of Kerala. They are Yajurvedins belonging to Bauddhāyana clan. Though they follow Kerala brahmins closely in their vedic observances, minor variations are observed with *upanayana* and *vivāha* ceremonies.

Apart from *Pi□āra*s and *Mūssad*s who form part of Śākta brahmin group, the community of *A□ikal* is also counted along with them as associated Śākta brahmins. But the details on the extent to which they are close or different from the other two groups, is yet to be explored.

This paper is an attempt to study the tantric ritual cult of Śākta brahmins, particularly its esoteric and exoteric dimensions. The following observations are made based on previous studies, testimony of manuscripts which are located at

public and private repositories all over Kerala and interviews with scholars, Śākta priests and historians.

Śākta temples

There are sixteen temples in Kerala where Śākta ritual cult of *Pi□aras/Mūssads* are or were prevalent. They are:

1. **Mannampurathukavu**, Nileswaram
2. **KalarivathukkalBhagavatiKshetram**, Valapattanam
3. **Panamkāvu**
4. **MadayiThiruvarkkattukavu** (**Madayikkavu**),
5. **MamanikkunnuBhagavatiKshetram**, Irikkoor, Thalipparamba
6. **Sri Vazhuncherrykkavu** (**Thiruvanchery**) **Bhagavati Kshetram**, Kuthuparamaba.
7. **Ammangottam**, Srikanthapuram, Irikkoor
8. **Pisharikkavu**, Koyilandy
9. **Thiruvalayanattukavu**, Govindapuram, Kozhikkode
10. **Kaliyamvalli,** Vatakara
11. **KodikkunnuBhagavatiKshetram**, Pallippuram, Pattambi.
12. **ThirumandhankunnuBhagavatiKshetram**, Angadippuram, Malappuram
13. **KodungalloorBhagavatiKshetram,** Thrissur
14. **ParumalaValiyaPanayannarkkavu**, Pathanamthitta
15. **Muthoottukavu,** Thiruvalla
16. **Thiruvalayanattukavu,** Kottakkal

These temples are known as *Kāvu*s (groves) and they maintain a unique architectural structure when compared to other temples of Kerala. Most of them are situated on the hill tops or surrounded by small forests. It was not easy to reach out these temples until the time of temple entry proclamation, which enabled all Hindus to enter temple premises. It does not mean that these temples were totally

restricted to laymen, people belonging to all castes were permitted and entitled to exercise their duty during festival season (Fawcett F., 1915, p. 225 ff.).The same is followed even today.

The above 16 temples relate to each other by the common priesthood and popular local narratives. For example, the temples like Panamkavu and Ammankottam are just an annex of Kalarivatukkal and Mamanikkunnu temples. The goddesses of Kalarivatukkal and Matayikkavu are believed to be sisters. So, in many ways Matayikkavu and KodungallurBhagavati temples relate to each other.Among these temples Thirumanthankunnu, Muttuttukavu, Panayannarkāvu and Kodungalloor are taken over by Kerala brahmins but it is learned that Śākta rituals of *Pi□āra*s were in practice even in these four temples long before.

Out of these, eight temples of central and north Malabar form a cluster by sharing a common ritual system and similar religious observances. The rest are belonging to another group because they are geographically outside the cluster and belonging to different priestly community called *A□ikal* (E. Thurston, 1909,p. 217)particularly at Thirumanthankunnu, Kodungalloor and Kodikkunnu temples. Some historians identify *A□ikal* as descents of I□ankova□ikal of *Cilappatikāra*. The priests of Valayanattukavu, Pisharikkavu and Kaliyamvalli are known as *Mūssad*s. Of these communities, the ritual system of *Pi□āra*s and *Mūssad*s are same whereas, that of *A□ikal* is yet to be studied. It is to be noted that forthcoming discussions are mainly restricted to the eight Śākta temples of Malabar, where *Pi□āra*s and *Mūssad*s enjoy priesthood.

Royal Patronage

Most striking feature of these temples is they enjoyed patronage of local chieftains and stood out as an empowering centre for the kings, be it to subjugate other local kings and expand the kingdom or to be victorious in all royal endeavours. It is said that the Chirakkal King used to visit Panamkavu temple and get his sword ritually empowered before he set out for a battle. Such instances of royal connections to these temples are numerous (Chenthera, 1982). Also, chieftains had the rights to nominate and select the chief priests of these temples called *mūttapi□ārar* and his assistants. So royal engagement with these temples and priestly class helped them to sustain even during the hard times of Tippusultan's attack on temples of Malabar. When any member of the local chieftain visits these temples, there are certain customs to be followed by them and that is in practice even today.

Pantheon and Ritual

The system of ritual followed in these temples is multi-layered and complex. We have to separate and clearly define each layer at the very outset in order to understand the degree of complexity and also the underlying principle by which divergent cults are brought together. The pantheon is almost same in all these temples though there is slight difference with regard to the presiding deity and number of *upadevata*s. The pantheon consists of Ca□□ākāpālinī, Kālasa□kar□i□ī, Parā, Bhadrakālī, Sapta/A□□amāt□s, Śiva, Yogini, Yogeśvarī, Bhairava, Bhairavī, Vetāla and K□etrapāla. Except Parā all other deities have a particular substratum of worship which ranges from the iconic form of Ca□□ākāpālinī, Kālasa□kar□i□i and Bhadrakālī to weapons like trident, khadga (nāndaka) and mirror (mukura).

On the textual sources of these deities, the worship of Ca□□ākāpālinī can be traced to the *Brahmayāmala*(Picumata) but the fact is that the chief priests of these temples do not practice and possess a complete ritual system of the goddess as laid down in the text. The worship is shortened to bare minimum. The cult of Kālasa□kar□i□ī, the goddess of Krama system, is taught in a great number of texts like *Brahmayāmala, Kramasadbhāva, Kālīkulapañcaśataka, Devīdvyardhaśatikā*, three *Mahānayaprakāśa*s (of Śitika□□ha, Ar□asimha and an unknown author), *Mahārthamañjarī* of Maheśvarānanda, *Cidgaganacandrikā* of Śrīvattsa, *Kālīkulakramārcana* of Vimalaprabodha and *Mahārthamantrapaddhati*. But the system of *Pi□āras* follows *Mahārthamañjarī*exactly in the order, but in the internal ritual (kulaprakriyā). Therefore, it can be safely concluded that Krama system of Kashmir reached to Kerala in well-developed form and it can be traced as such back to *Mahārthamañjar*ī, a 13th century A.D South Indian treatise.

Though the worship of Goddess Parā is taught in a varying number of texts like *Siddhayogeśvarīmata, Tantrasadbhāva, Trikasāra* and some South Indian scriptures like *Paraśurāmakalpasūtra, Nityotsava and Anuttarasa□vidarcanācarcā*, the system of *Pi□aras* is different and short for the focus is mainly on worship of the mantra in one's own body, not in external ma□□ala. No textual source for this system is found so far. It is to be noted that the manuscripts found from the private collection of *Pi□āras* lay down elaborate ritual procedure of the goddess Parā but it does not feature in the daily rituals of these temples. The reason on why the worship is curtailed to the essentials and lost its priority, is not known. Though Śrīcakra is also featured among the above the list, no worship of Tripurasundarī is known to be performed in any of these temples except some flower offerings. But there are manuscripts of a full-fledged

Śrīcakrapūjā in some of the households of these priests, which are modelled on the *Śaubhāgyamañjarī* of Nārāya□anātha, a South Indian Ritual manual of Tripurasundarī. The cult of these four goddesses form part of esoteric tantric practices. Generally, initiation is the sole prerequisite to get entry into these secret traditions according to the scriptures. But interestingly, there is no practice of elaborate standard rituals of initiation among *Pi□āra*s nowadays. But it is to be noted that there is specific form of ritual practice called as *kazakamariyikkal*, which is a reminiscent of Kaula/Krama mode of initiation (Sanderson, 2005, fn. 63, pp. 113-14) by which someone from the family of *Pi□āra*s after *upanayana* and*samāvartana* rites of passage is made eligible to perform the rites of these temples.

The most remarkable feature of the worship of these esoteric deities is that they form the secret inner realm of *Pi□āra*s. They do not reveal this to an outsider unless he/she is more familiar with Trika, Krama, Kaula and Tripurā systems or initiated into any of these esoteric tantric traditions.

The ritual system of Bhadrakālī is the most intriguing one. Generally, these temples are known *śākteyyakāvu*s or kālī temples. For general public these are the temples of Bhadrakālī. And further, local customs, art forms like *Theyyam* and other cultural art performances associated with these temples are held around the purānic accounts of valorous deeds of Bhadrakālī (ChelanattuAchyutha Menon, 1959, pp. 13-21; 113-172). And usually, the general public is totally unaware of the inner secret worship and its association with Krama system of Kashmir. The worship of Bhadrakālī is also something unique. She is worshiped as Rurujit, the killer of demon Ruru, whose cult is slightly different from other systems of Bhadrakālī worship of Kerala. It is easily discernible even in the temple layout and architectural structure. With regard to textual references to peculiarity of such temples, Alexis Sanderson's view that these temples are based on māt□tantra cult of *Brahmayāmala*, is worth considering. He notes:

> In the early medieval period it is, to my knowledge, only in the Māt□tantra tradition of the unpublished and hitherto unstudied *Brahmayāmala* texts of southern India that Bhadrakālīcomes to the fore as the principal focus of a properly Tantric Śākta cult. And while that cult, in which she is worshipped either on her own or, as Cāmu□□ā, as one of seven Mothers, accompanied by Vīrabhadra, and Ga□eśa, is indeed fully Tantric, it is much more integrated into the civic dimension of religion than are the early North Indian Śākta traditions exemplified by the Trika and Kālīkula. For unlike these and the northern *Brahmayāmala*, with which it has only a

> tenuous connection, the subject of these texts is not worship conducted by individual initiates for their own benefit or that of individual clients but a calendrically fixed programme of regular worship conducted by professional priests before permanent idols in temples; and the principal purpose of the worship is said to be to foster the victory of the monarch over his enemies, as in the Orissan cult of Bhadrakālī, and, more generally, to protect the kingdom from danger (deśaśānti□, rā□traśānti□), such temples being, at least in the main, royal foundations and recipients of royal patronage. (2007, pp.277-78)

The first instance of such a temple based on māt□tantra can be traced back to Kolaramma temple, Kolar in Nolambavādi if at all it predates Śākta temples of Kerala. A 11th century A.D. inscription found in this temple provides a vivid picture of the deities who receive worship every day there. They are the Vīrabhadra, Saptamāt□s, Ga□apati, Cāmu□□eśvarī, K□etrapāla, Mahāśāsta, Suryadeva, Yogini and Yogeśvara. It is to be noted that except Sūryadeva, all other deities of Kolarammā temple are found in the some of the śākta temples of Kerala too. For example, Śāstā is one of auxiliary deities in Matayikkavu and Yogini and Yogeśvara form part of daily rituals of all these temples. So, the Kolārammā temple might be a prototype of Śākta temples of Kerala. But the difference is that Cāmu□□ā forms just a retinue of Bhadrakā□ī along with saptamāt□s in śākta temples of Kerala, whereas in Kolārammā temple she (ugracāmu□□ā) is the presiding deity and supreme among saptamāt□s.

As has been pointed out earlier, the description and classification of temple structures of Rurujit temples first appears in South Indian *Brahmayāmala*. Then the *Māt□sadbhāva*, which is modelled and draws heavily on *Brahmayāmala*, elaborate it into *Sā□ga, Nira□ga* and *Bhinna* divisions. This classification is mainly based on direction the goddess faces to. *Sā□ga* is that in which the goddess Bhadrakālīfaces north, whereas in *nira□ga*she faces east. And if she faces west, it iscalled as *bhinna* . One of the distinct features of Rurujit temples is that the goddess is found facing north together with *Sapta/A□□amāt□s*. Following the lead of *Māt□sadbhāva*, *Śe□asamuccya* of CennasŚa□karanNambūtiri (15th century A.D) explicates it further and lays down specific ritual procedures associated with each of these classifications. Even a cursory look at the structure of these temples would reveal that it confirms to the textual references of *Māt□sadbhāva*and*Śe□asamuccaya*. It is to be noted that apart from these two texts, none of the ancient or medieval scriptures of Krama system provides

architectural details of such temples. The reason is that Krama system has nothing to do with temples.

Esoteric Dimension

As has been mentioned above, inner secret ritual space of *Pi□āra*s consists of the pantheon of Ca□□ākāpālinī, Kālasa□kar□i□ī and Parā. Among them Ca□□ākāpālinī takes the center space in these temples. Though the *Picumatabrahmyāmala* is the root text of worship of Ca□□ākāpālinī, it is not followed as such in daily worship. Among her retinues prescribed in *Brahmayāmala* i.e., four devīs, four dūtis, six yoginis and eight mothers (Shaman Hatley, 2018) only the first set of four yoginis figure in the daily worship of these temples. That means her ritual system in complete format is either lost or modified later.

Even if Ca□□ākāpālinī takes center space, all the prominence is given to the worship of Kālasa□kar□i□ī. Her prominence is understood from the testimony of manuscripts which describe her inner worship in minute detail (TVM, Ms. 17841 E). Not only that, the daily ritual has got more elements of Kālasa□kar□i□i than other goddesses. The inner worship of Kālasa□kar□i□ī is no more in practice now. We may think that her external worship is exactly same as the inner worship. But the fact is that external ritual has a totally different texture. It is preferably done on the yantra and a few manuscripts of *Pi□āra*s provide the details on this form of worship too. But interestingly, what is in practice in the Śākta temples is neither of the two mentioned above. It seems that they have reworked and modified the complete system into a new syncretic format in which some elements of the three goddesses are taken and interwoven together. Even in such instance the prominence is given to the worship of Kālasa□kar□i□ī. It is not known clearly yet what led them to realign the complete ritual system into a syncretic format. It is postulated that Tippu's attack on Malabar temples would have led them to modify all the rituals into a miniature form, else, time-consuming rituals would have become impractical gradually. The possibility of intervention of the local chieftains in the ritual timings also cannot be ruled out. However, the new ritual system has all the components of worship of Ca□□ākāpālinī, Kālasa□kar□i□ī and Parā but not in equal measure. It is interesting to note that *Pi□āra*s possess manuscripts of complete ritual procedure of goddesses Kālasa□kar□i□ī, Parā and Tripurā as independent systems. In short, the ritual procedures of Ca□□ākāpālinī are incomplete.

Krama tantrism: Lineage, Texts and Philosophy

It would be interesting to inquire into what is Krama tantrism is all about i.e., its historical beginnings, lineage (Rastogi, 1979), major texts and how it might have reached Kerala from Kashmir. The Krama system is believed to be originated from Ma□galādevi (also known as Vīrasi□hasvāminī), the leader of yoginis/pī□heśvaris. It is from her the teachings went to Śivānandanātha (first half of the ninth century), also known as Avatāranātha, to whom is believed to have revealed at U□□iyā□apī□ha, which is traced to the west-north-west of Kashmir to the north of Peshwar (Sanderson, 2007 b, p. 265) Later, Śivānanda passed on the esoteric teachings to three of his female disciples namely, Keyūravatī, Madanikā and Kalyānikā. Form them it went to Govindarāja, Bhānuka and Eraka.

Among the above said yoginis, Keyūravatī enjoys a prominent place within Krama tradition. From her the teachings went to Hrasvanātha / Vāmana who is said to have had five disciples. Chakrabhānu is foremost among them, who initiated Abhinavagupta's teacher Bhūtirāja (Rastogi, pp. 154-56).

South Indian history of Krama tantrism begins with Mahāprakāśānanda. Generally, it is held that Śivānanda (the author of □juvimarśinī commentary on Nityā□odaśikār□ava) was the forerunner of South Indian Krama Tantrism. But this supposition is to reconsidered as there is no evidence for Śivānanda's association with Krama system. But there are quite number of evidences to prove that he was an adept in different branches of Traipurasa□pradāya. It is Mahāprakāśananda who initiated Maheśvarānanda alias Gorak□a, the author of the Krama work *Mahārthamañjarī*, into this system. It is through Maheśvarānanda Krama system spreads across South India. Even if Maheśvarānanda refers to Māhāprakāśānanda as his teacher, he mentions a Devapā□in and says that it is whose ritual system of the cycle of worship from s□□□i to bhāsā he had adopted in his text. It is to this Devapā□in, present Krama system of Kerala can be traced. To anyavailable texts of Krama system the unique mantra deities worshipped in Bhāsācakra by *Pi□āra*scould not be traced so far except, to a single manuscript (Ms.No-17841 E) located at the oriental manuscript library. In the opening benedictory verses, it pays homage to the teachers who fall within the preceptorial lineage beginning with Sathyanātha. Then he is followed by Devapā□in. Quite interestingly, the procedures of inner worship and mantra deities described therein exactly matches with that of *Pi□āra*s. Therefore, it is inferred that it is the system of Devapā□īn whom Maheśvarānanda referred to in his *Mahārthamañjarī*, *Pi□āra*s probably have inherited. Nothing is known about Devpā□īn except these references by his name.

The characteristic feature of South Indian Krama tradition is that, unlike that of Kashmir, it is more syncretic in the sense that a group of similar traditions like Trika, Kaula and Tripurā form part of same lineage. Such an amalgamation of varying cults in a single system can be seen right from Śivānanda himself. Hence, the lineage to which Maheśvarānanda belonged is not Krama alone but was a confluence of several non-dualistic traditions. If we look at the range of works composed by these teachers like Śivānanda, Mahāprakāśānada and Maheśvarānanda, we will see that they were not masters of a single cult alone but of all non-dualistic śākta-śaiva traditions originated in Kashmir. This same conclusion can be reached at regarding pi□āras also, as they do inherit non-dualist śākta- śaiva cults of Kashmir. The major difference is that the Tripurā cult among of the *Pi□āra*s can be seen gradually waning. But fact is that the manuscripts of Śrīcakrapūja found preserved in some of these households have everything intact. It is lost over the course of time.

Mark S.G Dyczkowski identifies four stages of development of krama soteriology and ritual system. The first stage according to him is characterised by worship of numerous forms of Kālī and Kālasa□kar□i□ī is just one of her major forms. Jayadrathayāmala presents this earliest form of worship of Kālī, which even predates the Jñānanetra, foremost teacher of Krama lineage.

The second stage is marked by its association with Kaulism, which has been developed by Matsyendranātha as an independent system. The association with Kaula tradition resulted in the accommodation of Matysendranātha in the sthiticakra of Krama ritual along with his twelve disciples (rājaputras).

Third phase is represented by the texts like *Devīpañcaśataka*and*Kramasadbhāva*. These texts lay emphasis on the worship of Kālasa□kar□i□ī and Śu□kā.

The fourth stage starts with Jñānanetra, who is known to have authored *Yonigahvara*and*Kālikāstotra*. This phase is characterised by worship of numerous yoginis which reaches its pinnacle by the time of *Mahānayaprakāśa*. These texts refer to the reality as Mahārtha by which the system is known later (2018, pp.69-71)

Among the four stages observed by Dyczkowski, *Pi□āra*s system of worship represents the fourth stage, the mahārtha. What is more interesting is that earlier the Krama school was known as Mahārtha since *Jadarathayāmala*up to*Mahānayaprakāśa*, but in the ritual system of Pi□āras the central goddess Kālasa□kar□i□ī herself is found designated as Mahārtha.

It is assumed that the Krama system might have reached around 13th to 15th century A.D in Kerala. This assumption is made based on the fact that if we take lower limit as the time of Maheśvarānanda (13th century A.D) and upper limit as that of CennāsŚa□karanNambūtiripadu. No other evidence has come down to us till now to prove its existence even before 13th century A.D.

Krama philosophy and Ritual

The refinement of discursive thoughts (*vikalpasa□skāra*) is the central aspect of Krama epistemology. It postulates that everything be it *sa□vit*, empirical cognition, reflective meditation or cosmic emanation undergo a succession (Krama). Scriptures of this tradition put forward three modes for reaching nirvilapa state of consciousness. They are *kathana, pūjana and sa□krama□a* respectively. Among these the *kathana* is imparting the traditional secret through oral means. The *pūjana* is worshiping the cycle of consciousness either internally or on an external substratum. The *samkrama□a* is a direct transmission of knowledge from a master to disciple through intense form of descent of grace. The *pūjana* is the lowest of the three modes and which is capable of leading practitioner to the *samkrama□a* gradually.

The pi□āras possess a unique *pūjanakrama*which however, came to be associated with temples. Though the *pūjana krama* found in the fundamental scriptures like *Jayadrathayāmala, Devīdvayrdhaśatikā, KramasadbhāvaKālīkulakarmārcana* and *Mahārthamañjarī* it slightly differs from each other. Eventually, this ritual system gets consolidated, particularly by the time of *Mahānayaprāśa*.

The cardinal features of Krama worship are: pī□□acakra, pañcavāhakrama, mūrticakra, prakāśacakra, ānandacakra, v□ndacakra, s□□□īkrama, sthitikrama, sa□hārakrama, anākhyākrama and bhāsākrama.

Internal ritual (kulaprakriyā) procedures found in the manuscripts of *Pi□āra*s follow the above said order precisely. But this as such is not practiced by pi□āras today. What is more pathetic is that present generation of *Pi□āra*s are not even aware of the existence of a full-blown Krama ritual in their possession.

The daily routine of these temple rituals consists of four rituals i.e, *u□a□pūjā, etirttupūjā, uccappūjā*and*attāzappūjā*. In the *u□a□pūjā* the goddess Bhadrakā□ī, the external phase of the temple worship, is worshipped. Among these four rituals *uccappūjā*is the most elaborate one in which Ca□□ākāpālinī, Kālasa□kar□i□ī, Parā, Bhadrakālī (Rurujit), Māt□s, Va□ukabhairava and all retinues of goddesses are worshiped with alcohol and meat. After the morning rituals, the sword *nāndaka*is taken out of sanctum sanctorum and placed on a seat at

mukhama□□apa in Kalarivatukkal and Matayikkavu temples. The sword remains there till the afternoon rituals get over. The sword *nāndaka*represents the goddess Bhadrakālī, for she is worshipped on it. The sword is the only ritual substratum taken outside of the temple even for processions during festive season. It also proves the fact that the external phase of the worship of *Pi□āra*s revolves around Bhadrakālī, whereas the pantheon of inner worship is kept secret within the sanctum sanctorum. So, these temples are venues where inner non-dualistic and outer dualistic ritual realms co-exist and complement with each other. The inner realm is more concerned with practitioners' spiritual elevation whereas the outer realm is associated with well-being of the King, kingdom and the public.

Exoteric Dimension

The worship of Bhadrakā□ī (Rurujit) of these temples can be found adopted from *Māt□sadbhāva*, a ritual manual of unknown author. In twenty-eight chapters it expounds the rituals of Bhadrakālī from ācāryavara□a up to jīr□odhhāra. Quite several times it refers to *Brahmayāmala*as its source text and draws materials heavily from it. Unfortunately, the available copies of Brahmayāmala are incomplete and highly corrupted. Its copies, but fragments, are found located in Oriental Manuscripts Library, Trivandrum and IFP, Pondicherry.

According to *Brahmayāmala* the goddess is worshipped for the victory of kings in battle or prosperity of kingdom. It attests that when she is found installed alone in the sanctum sanctorum (*ekaberam*), she stands for the victory of the king and destruction of enemies. When she is with *Saptamāt□s*(*bahuberam*), the primary concern is the quelling of the dangers and restoration of well-being. It is to be noted that unlike the interpretation of Āgamic texts, here the terms *ekabera* and *bahubera* have different connotations. Among the Śākta temples mentioned above, most of them are belonging to *ekabera*system, only one or two are there that of *bahuvera*. The goddess of *ekabera* is also known as *ekavīrī/ekaberī* in *Brahmayāmala,* the root text of Cāmu□□ā cult and identified with Dārukajit*,* one who killed the demon *Dāruka*. Interestingly, it does not mention the other form of the goddess, namely Rurujit.

Time and again it emphasizes on the point that those who are born to the lineage of *Pāraśava / Pāraśaiva* only are entitled to worship this goddess.The *Pāraśava-s* are those who born to a Brahmin father in the woman of a *śūdra* caste. He must be well versed in the cult of *ekavīrī* in particular and *Māt□tantra-s* in general, also should be an adept in *Śaiva, Pāśupata*and*Somasiddhānta*. The sole means of livelihood for *Pāraśava* is the worship of *Bhadrakālī.*And again it is very particular about the caste of the assistants (*mūrtipā□*) in ritual that they should also

be belonging to *Pāraśava* community.Being this the case, Varrier community of Kerala are referred to as Pāraśava in the scriptures but they are not known to be the worshippers of Bhadrakālī and do not have any Bhadrakālī temple under their possession. So, textual reference does not match with facts at least in this case. Moreover, the priests and chief custodians of Kālī temples are *Pi□āra*s who are Śākta brahmins. Except the matter of caste identity, rest of the details on temple structure and pantheon laid down in *Brahmayāmala* match remarkably well with the Śākta temples of Kerala.

The *Māt□sadbhāva* gives detailed account of rituals of Rurujit, but does not provide any details of that of Dārukajit, the killer of demon Dāruka, except a short description of the fierce battle held between the demon Dāruka and the goddess. It does not even differentiate one form from the other ie., Rurujit from Dārukajit. But the *Brahmayāmala* clearly demarcates both by giving technical details of either forms. Nevertheless, *Māt□sadbhāva*and*Śe□asamuccaya* did not carry these technical details forward. Hence, in order to get a complete picture of Rurujit worship, one must read these three texts together.

In all probability, the author of *Māt□sadbhāva* might be a Keralite and someone belonged to the *Pi□āra* family. Internal evidences corroborate this assumption. They are:

1. The text bears close affinity with *Prayogamañjarī*, a Keralite work on temple rituals. It proves his affiliation with Kerala.

2. Reference to *samayavidyā*, *śūlodakavidhi*, *rudraśakti*,*pada*, *pi□□a, rūpa* and *rūpātīta* etc. shows authors knowledge of Krama, Trika and Kaula ritualistic traditions. There are no evidences to prove that orthodox Brahmin tantrins of Kerala were aware of Trika and Krama systems.

3. Moreover, the name of the text, *Māt□sadbhāva*, itself shows authors preference to link it with the Krama goddess Kālasa□kar□i□ī.

Later, what the author of *Śe□asamuccaya*did was solely providing detailed account of worship of Rurujit as is suitable to temple ritual cult of Kerala. He, knowingly or unknowingly, got rid of all the elements of Krama, except *samayavidyā*, which he misunderstood for that of Tripura cult. The fact is that the mantra that he has illustrated as of *samayavidyā* is not found in any of the texts of Tripurā cult. Secondly, the mantra is closely associated with worship of Tripurasundarī which is not at all fitting to the context of worship of Rurujit. In addition to it, none of the deities mentioned in the *samayavidyā* has any place in the worship of Rurujit. So, it can be stated that the author of *Śe□asamuccaya*had missed the Krama context of

the worship of the Rurujit completely. What he did was modifying simple ritual procedures laid down in *Māt□sadbhāva* into complex format aligning to *Tantrasamuccaya* model of presentation. Hence, in effect, the worship of Rurujit was decontextualised and made favourable to the tantric ritual model of Kerala brahmins.

Foregoing discussions amply demonstrate how complex the ritual system of *Pi□āra*s is. They inherit a great tradition in which many undercurrents of Śāktism, developed in North and South India, can be seen interwoven together in perfect harmony. This cult is something unique and unparalleled. But dearth of sources makes further exploration more challenging. If we could succeed in finding the missing links of this great tradition, it will unravel the mysteries of intellectual and religious exchange held between Kashmir and Kerala.

Conclusion

The primary concern of this paper is to bring to light hitherto unexplored recess of a ritual cult, which has direct links with *Krama* tradition of Kashmir.The *Pi□āras/Mūssads*are hereditary custodians of Śākta temples of Kerala and whose religious practices have two different dimensions. They brought their cultic deities to these temple sites, who are worshipped with soteriological emphasis, as taught in the Krama scriptures. On the other exoteric level, they worship Bhadrakālīalong with Sapta/A□□amāt□s for the victory of kings in the battles as well as for the prosperity of regional kingdom. So here the inner world of spiritual seekers and outer world aiming at mundane success meet in a ritual system of *Pi□āras.*

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THE TWAIN SHALL EVER MEET: THE ARABIAN *HANGING ODES* AND TENNYSON'S "LOCKSLEY HALL"

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Abstract: *This article unpacks the influence of the pre-Islamic Arabian "hanging odes" or the "golden" qasidas, better known by their Arabic name the Muallaqat, on European polymaths and litterateurs in a way that helps illuminate the phenomenal "textual traffic" between the East and the West that has shaped and sustained the world republic of letters. More specifically, the article will show, through a comparative analysis, that the Muallaqat—the celebrated Muallaqa of Imrul Qays (d. ca. 550 CE) in particular—provide the key with which to open the doors to the celebrated English poem "Locksley Hall" (1842) written by the pre-eminent Victorian poet Alfred Tennyson (d. 1892). At a broader level, the literary relationships as epitomized by the Muallaqat-"Locksley Hall" story demonstrate that the twain shall continue to meet, notwithstanding assertions to the contrary.*

Keywords: *Pre-Islamic Arabic poetry; Muallaqat; Imrul Qays; Tennyson; "Locksley Hall"; East-West encounters; literary influence*

Introduction

The aphorism "Poetry is the Register of the Arabs" (*diwan al-'Arab*) could not be more felicitous. Poetry and Arabian life can be said to have bled into each other since antiquity such that, as al-Jumahi, the ninth-century Arab scholar, puts it, the ancient Arabs "began their affairs [with poetry], and with it they ended them," and, as Ibn Khaldun, the fourteenth-century Arab historian, notes, "[they] did not know anything except poetry…" (as quoted in Irwin 2). During the pre-Islamic period (between the fifth and sixth centuries CE), the Arabian desert witnessed an outburst of poetry which vividly recorded the vicissitudes and dynamics of tribal life—its histories and traditions, values and worldviews, joys and sorrows, and so forth. Publicly performed, such poetry would be memorized by its audience and transmitted by word of mouth across generations with the help of skilled rhapsodes (*rawis*). Legend has it that, in a way that anticipated modern-day literary festivals—Arabs in the pre-Islamic period held poetry competitions at the popular annual trade fair at Ukaz, near Mecca, where poets would read out their poems. The poems that won the highest acclaim on such occasions (seven—or, by some

accounts, ten—in all) were embroidered in gold on priceless Egyptian cloth and suspended from Arabia's most scared shrine, the *Ka'ba.* These greatly celebrated *qasidas* were thus known as the *Muallaqat* (s. *Muallaqa*), meaning "suspended" or "hanging" odes (Sells 3). The *Muallaqat* subsequently served as one of the pre-eminent sources of Arabic literary culture—a status that was overshadowed only by the formidable presence of the Quran as the "inimitable" word of God (Ernst 191).

The *qasida*—the most enduring literary form of classical Arabic poetry and of which the *Muallaqat* are the extant prototypes—is crafted following a highly conventionalized scheme as regards both form and content. A poem usually not longer than 120 lines, the *qasida* is composed in a monorhyme and a single metre in hemistichs making up lines of verse called *bayt* ("tent" or "house"). It typically has three distinctive thematic movements: remembrance of the beloved (*nasib*), the journey (*rihla*) and the panegyric (*madih*). The *qasida* is born in a deserted campsite, as it were—in the traces and ruins (*atlal*) left behind by the beloved's tribe. In the *nasib,* the amatory prelude, the poet recalls a lost passion. Looking back, he evokes memories of a past love in a language that mixes regret and pride. In the *rihla,* the journey section, the poet, by way of relieving his lost passion and suffering, goes on a journey in the desert by camel or horse and eulogizes his mount and various aspects of desert life profusely. Finally, the poem closes with the *madih*, the panegyric, where the poet praises himself or his tribe, satirizes a personal or tribal foe, or lavishes praise on a patron (Badawi 3; Irwin 6-7). In practice, these thematic movements overlap making it difficult for one to pinpoint where one section ends and another begins. Also, a *qasida* could often end abruptly with a powerful and lively description of a violent thunderstorm as exemplified by the *Muallaqa* of Imrul Qays (see below).

Although the exact origins of the word *muallaqat*, the number of poems so honoured as well as the actual poets to whom these poems have been attributed are a bone of contention, Arab literary scholars have agreed that seven pre-Islamic *qasidas* by seven different poets form the *Muallaqat* (Irwin 6-7). However, there is no doubt that a *qasida* beginning "Halt, friends both!" (*qifa nabki*) by Imrul Qays is not only one of these seven "hanging" odes but also the oldest of them all, and that his *qasida* enjoys pride of place among the *Muallaqat.* Known as "the Vagabond Prince," Imrul Qays was the scion of the royal family of Kinda in South Arabia and had to split his time, attention and energies between the professions of poetry and warfare. Other notable *Muallaqat* poets include Tarafah ibn al-Abd, Zuhayr ibn

Abi Sulma, Labid ibn Rabiah, Antarah ibn Shaddad, Amr ibn Kulthum, and al-Harith ibn Hilliza.

Notably, the pre-Islamic period was described as the age of "moral ignorance" (*jahl*) in Islamic historiography. Yet, the poetry produced in that age continued to inspire the Arabic language and its literary culture in the early periods of Islam and beyond. In fact, it was an eighth-century literary anthologist and rhapsode, Hammad al-Rawiyah—"Hammad the Transmitter"—who is said to have first compiled the seven odes of the *Muallaqat* (Arberry16-21). As the earliest extant prototypes of the Arabian ode, the *Muallaqat* enjoy a unique status not only in the Arabic literary tradition but also in the pantheon of so-called world literature. In these classic poems which are gorgeous works of verbal fine art fashioned by poets who have been torn between love and war, success and tragedy, not only that the remarkable poetic finesse and creative acumen of ancient Arab poets are on splendid form but also that they hold a mirror and window onto the sociality of Bedouin life in all its richness and profundity. Consequently, the contemporary resonance and appeal of the *Muallaqat* as well as the influence they have commanded on generations of poets and enthusiasts the world over have been tremendous. To cite a very recent example, the Saudi King Abdulaziz Center for World Culture (*Ithra*) brought out a bilingual (Arabic and English) edition of the *Muallaqat,* all ten *qasidas* included, with new commentaries and translations in 2020. Titled *The Mu‖allaqāt for Millennials: Pre-Islamic Arabic Golden Odes,* this latest edition is, by the publisher's own account, an attempt to make these poems speak and appeal better to modern Arab and non-Arabic readers, the millennials (*jil al-alfiyyah*) in particular (13).

The East in the West: The *Muallaqat* as World Literature

American literary historian David Damrosch remarks:

> A work enters into world literature by a double process: first, by being read as literature; second, by circulating out into a broader world beyond its linguistic and cultural point of origin. (6)

If Damrosch's words are anything to go by, the peregrinations of the *Muallaqat* around the world—in the original Arabic, but, most commonly, in translations and imitations, in adaptations and appropriations—make them into masterpieces of world literature. The interest in the *Muallaqat* was not something that merely concerned Arab readers and scholars alone, but also permeated into Arabists and scholars outside the Arab world. The first translation of these classic odes into a European language appeared in English in 1782 thanks to the British Arabist

William Jones (d. 1794). This was followed by several other translations in European languages, including the translation of five *Muallaqat* into German by the German Arabist Theodor Nöldeke (d. 1930) and the translation of seven of them into French in 2000 by the French Arabist Pierre Larcher (b. 1948). In her study of the translations of the *Muallaqat* into English and French spanning well over two centuries (1782-2000), Raja Lahiani mentions as many as 31 translators (*Eastern Luminaries* 7). Several editions of these pomes were also published in Germany, France and England, and Charles James Lyall's 1894 edition of the philologist Abu Zakariyya Yahya ibn Ali al-Tibrizi's (d. 1109) commentary on the *Muallaqat* and other poems is credited with being the first complete English edition of "hanging" odes in Arabic script (Arberry 24-25; Lahiani, *Eastern Luminaries* 20).

As noted earlier, the first Western attempt ever to translate all the seven *Muallaqat* came from the British polymath and philologist William Jones in 1782. A dazzling polyglot, Jones's fascination for Oriental languages and literatures is well-known, and his interest in the *Muallaqat* had already germinated as early as 1772, when he stated that "The seven *Arabick* elegies [sic], that were hung up in the temple of *Mecca,* would…be highly acceptable to the lovers of antiquity, and the admirers of native genius…" (as quoted in Arberry 9). Upon its publication, Jones's translation *Moallakat* took the Western literary world by storm and was immediately hailed as a pioneering literary initiative well beyond England. No less an authority than the English historian, Edward Gibbon (d.1794), remarked in his *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* that "We may read in our own language the seven original poems which were inscribed in letters of gold, and suspended in the temple of Mecca" (as quoted in Arberry 25). In his "Notes and Essays" on his own *West-East Divan* (1819), the German poet Johann Wolfgang von Goethe—who gave us *Weltliteratur* in 1827—approvingly quotes Jones's account of the seven *Muallaqat* poets as offered by the latter in his *Poeseos Asiaticae Commentariorum* published in 1774 (178). Thus, the popularity of the *Muallaqat* was established in countries such as Germany following Jones's translation (Arberry 25-26).

It may be recalled that the celebrated *qasida* of Imrul Qays is the oldest of the seven *Muallaqat.* Jones's translation of this ode into English along with a transliteration of the original Arabic text has proved particularly influential. It was this translation that inspired the renowned Victorian poet Alfred Tennyson's 1842 poem "Locksley Hall". By way of further delineating the *Muallaqat's* enduring influence on Western literature, I now turn to a brief discussion of Tennyson's poem in the light of the *Muallaqa* of Imrul Qays in Jones's translation.

The *Muallaqat* and "Locksley Hall": Literary Influence in Perspective

Imrul Qays's *Muallaqa,* perhaps "the most famous poem" in the Arabic language (Irwin 7), is considered the "master poem" of the Arabic *qasida* tradition composed by the "master poet" of the Arabic language (Stetkevych, *Mute Immortals* xiv; Stetkevych, "Mu allaqah" 35). The youngest son of Hujr ibn al-Harith of the powerful southern Arabian royal house of Kinda, Imrul Qays has left behind a life story that is shrouded in legend and history, and the poet is said to have pursued poetry and warfare in tandem (Arberry 31-39). He had attained immense fame during his lifetime, which only kept increasing after his death about the year 550. As A. J. Arberry notes, "Men treasured jealously the verses … [Imrul Qays] had spoken, and transmitted them from mouth to mouth…until all Arabia echoed with his songs" (39-40).

Celebrated as the prototype of the Arabian ode, Imrul Qays's *Muallaqa* embodies the *qasida* conventions so brilliantly that his poem is usually considered the model against which the *qasida* genre is defined. Crafted in monorhyme, with the opening rhymed couplet and end-rhyme of each line, in the letter "l" and sounding "li" throughout, the poem follows the monometer during its entire course. The adopted metre in this case is the long and sublime *Tawil* (literally "the long one') which runs, "*fa ūlun mafā īlun fa ūlun mafā ilun,*" according to the Arabic metrical system (*ilm al-arud*). The single rhyme and meter coupled with use of such stylistic devices as alliteration, assonance and polyptoton make the poem rich in sound patterns and contribute to the poem's parallelism, sonority and musicality in the Arabic original—in a way that holds together the various thematic movements of the poem within a singular and orderly fabric. Imrul Qays skilfully exploits the generic possibilities of the *qasida* in his *Muallaqa* and presents the motifs and themes of the classical Arabian ode in a stunning style which sometimes gently flows with delicacy and subtlety and sometimes sparkles with passion and vigour. Following Suzanne Stetkevych, we may identify five major *qasida* themes in Imrul Qays's *Muallaqa*: stopping at the ruined abode, lines 1-6; erotic encounters, lines 7-43; the dark night of the soul, lines 44-48; the horse and the hunt, lines 49-66; and observing the storm, lines 67-78 ("Mu allaqah" 24-89). The first three belong to the *nasib,* the lyrical-amatory prelude with which the *qasida* conventionally kicks off and the last two fall under the concluding section of the boast/panegyric (*fakhr*/*madih*).

The *nasib,* the lyrical- amatory prelude which opens—and dominates—Imrul Qays's *Muallaqa* deserves special mention. Imrul Qays commanded an unrivalled

mastery of the *nasib* and his handling of erotic themes won great acclaim. The *incipit* of the poem goes thus in Stetkevych's translation:

> Stop, my friends, and we will weep over the memory of a loved one
>
> And an abode at the dune's edge of Siqt al-Liwā, between al-Dakhūl, then Hawmal,
>
> Then Tūdih, then al-Miqrāt, whose trace was not effaced
>
> By the two winds weaving over it from south and north.
>
> You see the droppings of white antelope
>
> Scattered on its wide grounds and dried-up puddles like peppercorns.
>
> On the morning when they loaded the camels to depart, before the tribe's acacia trees,
>
> I wept splitting bitter colocynth.
>
> My friends stopped their mounts there over me and said:
>
> "Don't die of grief, control yourself!"
>
> "There is no cure for me but pouring tears,
>
> And is there a better place to weep than the worn traces of a ruined abode?" ("Mu allaqah" 45)

As conventions dictated, the poem opens at an abandoned campsite, where the poet, forlorn and melancholic, asks his companions to stop in order to remember and even celebrate his lost love—the abandoned campsite being the place where his lost beloved once dwelt. The opening phrase *qifa nabki* ("Stop, my friends, and we will weep") has become proverbial, and Imrul Qays has to his credit the honour of introducing this opening motif of "asking to stop" in the prelude to the Arabian ode (Stetkevych, "Mu allaqah" 43). Then follow the poet's numerous erotic encounters related with brutal honesty, and in the famous night passage capturing the poet's spiritual devastation and psychological numbness, he asks out of sheer desolation, addressing a long tormenting night wherein time has hung heavy:

> 'Well now, you tedious night, won't you clear yourself off, and let dawn shine?
>
> Yet dawn, when it comes, is no way better than you…' (tr. Arberry 64)

In the so-called boast (*fakhr*) section we are offered descriptions of the poet's magnificent steed and thereafter the poem quite unexpectedly ends with the

renowned storm scene whose sublimity and majesty have left readers utterly ravished. The overwhelming presence of the *nasib* in the *Muallaqa* of Imrul Qays seems to have dwarfed the other two conventional thematic movements of the *qasida,* namely the *rihla* and the *madih* (praise/boast/satire, etc.), and consequently it is quite difficult to locate both the journey and panegyric sections of the ode with any precision or exactitude. This shows that the *qasidas* do not necessarily follow the entire set of genre conventions in any simple fashion (Irwin 7-15).

Following extensive research which took him through all extant *Muallaqat* manuscripts, editions, translations and commentaries, Jones published his prose translation in 1782 (Lahiani, *Eastern Luminaries* 44). His work contains translations of the seven odes along with an "Argument" for each, which offers a brief description of the poem concerned, including its metre and, on occasion, the background to its composition. Notably, a transliteration of the original poems is also featured after the English translations. Jones's translation was greeted with lavish praise and his work instilled an interest in Oriental literature among his contemporaries. In "An Essay on the Poetry of Eastern Nations," published a decade before his *Moallakat*, Jones had already prized "the writings of the Asiaticks" for affording "a more extensive insight into the history of the human mind, …a new set of images and similitudes, and a number of excellent compositions, … which future scholars might explain, and future poets might imitate" (as quoted in Irwin 125). Subsequently, several English poets and writers found in Jones's translation of the *Muallaqat* a strong impetus to the turn eastward for fresh poetic models. Among such poets in the Victorian era, Tennyson could be regarded as one of the "most consistently drawn to the Orient" (Haddad 373). His 1842 poem, "Locksley Hall," has famously been inspired by the *Muallaqat* via Jones's translation. As Tennyson's son, Hallam Tennyson, puts it:

> I remember my father saying that Sir William Jones' prose translation of the *Moallakat,* the seven Arabic pomes…hanging up in the temple of Mecca, gave him the idea of the poem. (163)

More specifically, it is on the *Muallaqa* of Imrul Qays, entitled "The Poem of Amriolkais" in Jones's translation, that "Locksley Hall" is based, as we shall see presently.

Written around 1837-8 and published in 1842, Tennyson's "Locksley Hall" is a dramatic monologue in trochaics which decries marriages driven by insatiable greed and crass materialism. The poem is spoken by a disillusioned lover who revisits the desolate Locksley Hall, his childhood home by the sea, where he had fallen in love with his cousin Amy. Amy reciprocates his love, but eventually

marries a wealthier suitor to oblige her family. The speaker takes the opportunity to rail against the modern mechanized world—where the juggernaut of steamship and railway has reared its ugly head—but ends his monologue by ambiguously accepting the "inevitable" change as he declaims: "Forward, forward let us range, Let the great world spin for ever down the ringing grooves of change" (lines 181-182). As an "imitation" rather than "translation" of the *Muallaqa* of Imrul Qays, "Locksley Hall" merits attention for the way in which it appropriates a classical Arabic genre (Lahiani, "Unlocking" 25). In the words of Robyn Creswell (126),

> The monologue can be read and heard as Tennyson's experiment in playing the part of the Arabic poet – a Victorian *mu'allaqa* that is fascinating precisely for those elements of the original it works up and those it sets aside.

Tennyson begins his poem "Locksley Hall" very much in the manner of the *nasib,* the amatory prelude of the *qasida*, "asking to stop" in a way that evokes the oft-quoted *incipit* (*qifa nabki*, "Stay! —let us weep," Jones's translation) of Imrul Qays's *Muallaqa* and then proceeding to lament the lost love, his cousin Amy:

> Comrades, leave me here a little, while as yet 'tis early morn:
> Leave me here, and when you want me, sound upon the bugle-horn
> 'Tis the place, and all around it, as of old, the curlews call,
> Dreary gleams about the moorland flying over Locksley Hall;
> Locksley Hall, that in the distance overlooks the sandy tracts,
> And the hollow ocean-ridges roaring into cataracts. (lines 1-6)

In the place of the abandoned campsite, the former dwelling place of the lost beloved, onto which the *qasida* opens, Tennyson's poem presents the desolate moorland home by the sea, which once bore witness to the love between the speaker and his cousin Amy. Just as the Bedouin poet weeps over the loss of the beloved amid the ruins left behind by the beloved's tribe, the persona of "Locksley Hall" stops by the ancestral hall, where his love had once bloomed, and recalls a lost—or, more accurately, failed—passion. It has been suggested that the main biographical source for the poem is Tennyson's own unhappy love affair with Rosa Baring (Ricks 181). In the wake of his failed relation, the speaker gives full vent to his frustrations and lamentations, and imagines ways to sublimate his problems by considering alternatives in the form of, say, "a life of action, or a colonial fantasy of sensual abundance" (Creswell 126). The *Muallaqa*'s night passage is famous, where we read:

> O hideous night! –a night in which the stars are prevented from rising, as if they were bound to a solid cliff with strong cables! (Jones, *Moallakat*, line 45)

And a little earlier than this, the poet says:

> It was the hour when the Pleiads appeared in the firmament, like the folds of a silken sash variously decked with gems. (Jones, *Moallakat*, line 23).

Similarly, in the "Locksley Hall" the narrator holds a night vigil, staring at constellations:

> Many a night from yonder ivied casement, ere I went to rest,
> Did I look on great Orion sloping slowly to the West.
> Many a night I saw the Pleiads, rising through the mellow shade,
> Glitter like a swarm of fire-flies tangled in a silver braid. (lines 7-10)

Finally, a violent storm ends Imrul Qays's *Muallaqa,* which begins thus:

> O friend, seest thou the lightning, whose flashes resemble the quick glance of two hands, amid clouds raised above clouds? (Jones, *Moallakat,* line 64)

Tennyson's poem likewise closes with a storm scene. The speaker's "comrades" sound the bugle-horn, and as he bids "a long farewell to Locksley Hall" (line 189), he asks for a storm to be visited upon his former residence:

> Now for me the woods may wither, now for me the roof-tree fall.
> Comes a vapour from the margin, blackening over heath and holt,
> Cramming all the blast before it, in its breast a thunderbolt.
> Let it fall on Locksley Hall, with rain or hail, or fire or snow;
> For the mighty wind arises, roaring seaward, and I go. (lines 190-194)

Although Tennyson masterfully mobilizes the *nasib* of the *qasida* in his poem, he, however, fails—on purpose, perhaps—to conform to the other thematic movements of the genre such as the *rihla* and the *madih.* Incidentally, even the *qasida* does not always honour such conventions in any strict and determinate form.

Regarding the metre of the poem, Tennyson has said that "Mr Hallam [Henry Hallam] said to me that the English people liked verse in trochaics, so I wrote the poem in this metre" (as quoted in Ricks 182). However, as Christopher Ricks has pointed out, the metre—the long eight-stress trochaic line—is likely to have been inspired by the long, magnificent *Tawil* metre of Imrul Qays's *Muallaqa* filtered through Jones's translation and transliteration:

> The spur to [the] use [of trochaics] may well have been the fact that, in the poem of Amriolkais, Jones's prose fell naturally into it: 'Thus I spoke, when my companions stopped their course[r]s by my side.' Jones has approximations like 'Thy condition, they replied, is not more painful than when thou . . .'; and half-lines like 'On that day I killed my camel', 'On that happy day I entered'. [Tennyson's] acute receptiveness to rhythms is famous…, and Jones's prose probably ran in his head. (182-183)

More precisely, as Mazen Naous has argued, it was Jones's transliteration of the *Muallaqa* in "Latin" characters, rather than his prose translation of the poem, which provides a compelling model for the meter of "Locksley Hall." This is so, as Naous puts it, because:

> …three consecutive hemistiches within the first six lines of [Jones's] transliteration conform to the seven and a half feet scheme…The metrical pattern of seven and a half feet manifests in fifty-six hemistiches of Jones's transliteration, enough to establish a precedent for the meter of "Locksley Hall." (20)

Thus, it may be safely observed that reading Imrul Qays in Jones's translation/transliteration would have offered Tennyson not only a fresh stock of figures, motifs and themes but also a new way of composing poetry stylistically. Additionally, as suggested by Raja Lahiani (28), "Locksley Hall" exhibits, albeit partially, an influence of the *Muallaqa* of Antarah ibn Shaddad (d. 608 CE) as well, which opens:

> Have the bards, who preceded me, left any theme unsung? What, therefore, shall be my subject? Love only must supply my lay. Dost thou then recollect, after long consideration, the mansion of thy beloved. (Jones, *Moallakat*, line 1).

This further helps illuminate the extent of debt that Tennyson's poem owes to the celebrated "hanging" odes of pre-Islamic Arabia.

Conclusion: On Translation, Imitation and Literary Influence

In his essay on the problem of literary relationships, the noted Egyptian-American literary critic Ihab Hassan points up the challenge faced by the student of literature to avoid "rank aversions and irrepressible enthusiasm" in the pursuit of influence, to elucidate "the relation of writer to writer, and writer to tradition, without yielding to a facile claim of influence" (66). In an attempt to offer a "sharper definition" of influence, Hassan distinguishes between what he calls "affinity"—

mere similarity between authors, works, etc. —and influence proper which entails "some manner of causality" (68). Quoting the English philosopher R. G. Collingwood, Hassan adds that it is imperative to ask "what there was in A which laid it open to B's influence, or what there was in A which made it capable of borrowing from B" (69). The two components of influence, similarity and causality—which should take into account multiple correlations and multiple similarities functioning in a historical sequence—are further modified by Hassan, for better clarity and precision, into the notions of "tradition" and "development." Whereas similarity is now understood in relation to "a developed system of norms, *a tradition,*" causality is supplanted not by "correlation" but by "the more flexible…notion of *development,* the modification of a tradition into another" (75, original emphasis).

In the final analysis, taking our cue from Hassan's insights above, we might posit that the influence of the *Muallaqat* on Tennyson's "Locksley Hall" is not one based on mere affinity but on a series of correlations and similarities unfolding in time. In the process the *qasida* tradition, mediated through translations and imitations, has undergone transformation or modification, even as it has engendered new poetic possibilities in the literary cultures it has travelled to. As Lahiani suggests, the relationship between "Locksley Hall" and the *Muallaqat*, Imrul Qays's *Muallaqa* in particular, in terms of form, content and imagery can best be appreciated as "imitation," to use a term from the parlance of translation studies. Neither "original" nor "translation," imitation seeks to "assimilate features of the original text by absorbing them into the poet-translator's own style and subject matter" ("Unlocking" 27). At a broader level, the literary influence as epitomized by the *Muallaqat*-"Locksley Hall" story once again underscores the mutually constitutive nature of the East and the West—the Global South and the Global North—as they have evolved and developed over millennia, notwithstanding Rudyard Kipling's proverbial "Oh, East is East, and West is West, and never the twain shall meet" (line 1).

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SOCIO-CULTURAL BAGGAGE OF INFERTILITY IN INDIA: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF PERUMAL MURUGAN'S *ONE PART WOMAN* AND INDIRA GOSWAMI'S *THE OFFSPRING*

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Abstract: *Infertility is on the rise at an alarming rate in India. According to The Indian Society of Assisted Reproduction, 10 and 14 percent of Indians face infertility. Factors like stress, unhealthy food habits, hormonal changes, polycystic ovarian syndrome, and alcohol abuse contribute to the rising trend of infertility. In a pronatalist culture like ours, infertility has punitive consequences; it is often stigmatized. Some of the writers who have dealt with the theme of infertility in India are Perumal Murugan, Indira Goswami, Manju Kapur, Gita Hariharan and Kamala Markandaya. This paper is a comparative study of the portrayal of infertility in Perumal Murugan's One Part Woman (2013) and Indira Goswami's The Offspring (2003). Furthermore, it examines the social and cultural consequences of infertility as portrayed in the texts. It also makes a comparative study of male and female infertility in the Indian social and cultural context. It argues that our pronatalist, patriarchal culture contributes to the stigma surrounding infertility and negatively impacts married people's identities and interpersonal relationships. The study concludes that in order to ensure everyone leads a happy life, every culture must be inclusive and accommodative.*

Keywords: *Infertility, Femininity, Masculinity, Culture, Identity*

In India and around the world, infertility is rising on a much larger scale than one might think. Some of the factors influencing the rising rate of infertility include the current stressed-out lifestyle, unhealthy junk food habits, alcohol and drug abuse, hormonal imbalance, polycystic ovarian syndrome, and a sedentary lifestyle. The World Health Organization has defined *infertility* as "a disease of the male or female reproductive system defined by the failure to achieve a pregnancy after 12 months or more of regular unprotected sexual intercourse." It can be of two types- primary and secondary. Primary infertility is when a person has never become pregnant, and secondary infertility is not being able to get pregnant or keep a pregnancy to term after having once been pregnant and given birth to a healthy child. The statistical information about infertility on National Health Portal website

submitted by Aruna Rastogi states that "infertility affects up to 15% of reproductive-aged couples worldwide. According to World Health Organization estimate the overall prevalence of primary infertility in India is between 3.9 to 16.8%." Thus, a significant number of couples are suffering from infertility in India.

There is a dearth of qualitative research in the field of infertility and childlessness in Indian English Literature. Though there is umpteen research on various other issues related to women like domestic violence, equality, man-woman relationship, and motherhood, but the topic of infertility is least researched. However, most research on infertility is conducted in the fields of social work, anthropology, psychology, sociology, population studies, and medicine, which are primarily qualitative. Poonam Sheoran and Jyoti Sarin (2015) conducted research on infertile women in Haryana to evaluate infertile women's living situations in light of social, religious, and cultural factors. It suggested that the infertile experience was influenced by three primary themes that were social, religious, and cultural, with the environment playing a pivotal role. Also, women have a tremendous responsibility to have children after marriage. Moreover, childless women occasionally experience social and financial hardships, irrespective of the socioeconomic or educational strata. Another study conducted by Lisa Roberts, et al. (2020), evaluated the mental health of a sample of Mumbai slum-dwelling women who have experienced infertility. They concluded that innovative services are needed to help women struggling with the dual stigmas of mental illness and infertility. According to Seetal Savla(2020), infertility is considered a cultural stigma because since birth, we are under constant pressure to conform to societal norms and keep our families and communities out of disgrace. Thus, these studies show that prenatal and patriarchal cultures do have an impact on infertility and those couples need psychological, financial, and social support. However, it does not explain how and why these cultures are influencing infertility, it also does not compare and contrast the experiences of male and female infertility.

The issue of infertility has been researched in the light of socio-cultural, religious, and psychological perspectives in various other fields. However, studies conducted in Indian English Literature on the portrayal of infertility in Indian works are negligible. Very few Indian writers have discussed the theme of infertility in their works. Perumal Murugan and Indira Goswami are among the ones who have tried to portray poignantly the sufferings of childless couples in their works. *One Part Woman* (2013) and *The Offspring* (2003), respectively. This paper attempts to study culture's influence on the notion of infertility in a patriarchal society. It also

explores how infertility affects men and women differently; the society's attitude toward them. A comparative study is done on the works mentioned above to serve the purpose of the research. It argues that our pronatalist, patriarchal culture contributes to the stigma surrounding infertility and negatively impacts married people's identities and interpersonal relationships.

One Part Woman (2013) is an intriguing book by Perumal Murugan on the struggles of a childless couple Kali and Ponna in a small village of Tamil Nadu. The narrative intertwines many superstitions with the attitude of a community where being pregnant is considered as the greatest prize for a married couple. The story narrates the plight of the female protagonist who is struggling to balance societal norms, marital happiness, and personal aspirations.

The novel begins with Kali and Ponna's visit to Ponna's place for the Karattur chariot festival. It has been twelve years since their marriage, and they are childless. Kali owns a farm which is their ancestral property. He spends day and night in the barnyard, toiling himself with tilling, sowing, watering, and harvesting. Ponna brings food for him and helps him in the barn. Though they both are leading happy lives, they feel a void because of the absence of a progeny. They have visited almost every temple and did penances and offerings to get a child. People even started to persuade Kali into a second marriage. Ponna experiences a similar challenge in coping with the constant expectations of her family and neighbourhood. She frequently reacts violently rather than simply ignoring the taunts from her mother and neighbours. Ponna engages in verbal battle, seeking quick conflict as a means of self-defence, while Kali retreats to hide from the humiliation of their barrenness. Ponna was asked to attend the eighteenth-day chariot festival for getting a child. On the eighteenth day, rules were relaxed; any willing man and woman were free to engage in sexual activity with mutual consent. On this day, childless women like Ponna could go to the festival and choose any man to beget child from him. All men who attended the festival on that night are considered Gods, and children born out of this custom are known as God's children. On the insistence of Muthu; Ponna's brother and other family members Ponna goes to the chariot festival. When Kali learns that his wife has attended the festival against his wishes, he becomes furious and depressed, thinking that she is dishonest and deceptive.

Indira Goswami's short story *The Offspring* (2003) presents a rare scenario of the male the perspective of infertility, which is not so often discussed in the literature. Set in Assam, the story criticizes some of the harsher and more sinister aspects of Assamese society, which is predicated on strong notions of morality, caste, and

austerity. The narrative's protagonist is Pitambar Mahajan, a middle-aged man from a poor caste who is childless. After his first wife passed away, he brought home a second wife to have a family. However, because of her rheumatism, she was unable to become pregnant. Hence the village priest Krishnakanta advised Pitambar to marry Damayanti, a widowed Bangara Brahmin from the village Satra, to get an heir. Nevertheless, she is regarded as a prostitute among the villagers. She has a notorious reputation for having abortions several times as a widow. Following the Pitambar's routine visit, Damayanti conceives as planned. Even though Damayanti consented to sleep with lower caste Mahajan, she had an abortion because she could not get over the dread of the filth that would accompany carrying his child. Pitambar's hope of carrying on his family's legacy was dashed when he learned of this. Later, he is seen digging in Damayanti's garden to have a final look at the foetus.

Culture, according to E. B Tylor, is "that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society"(1). It offers a framework for how individuals view and interact with the world. Culture also has the power to influence how people behave. Human conduct includes a large amount of culture. Our thoughts, feelings, and actions are affected by it. We are shaped into the individuals we are today by the culture that is passed down from generation to generation. The main components of culture include artifacts, language, norms, and symbols. Hence, society greatly influences the culture, which influences society in turn.

A pronatalist culture is where reproduction, nurturing, motherhood, and parenthood are encouraged. In India, there is also a practice of blessing a newly wedded bride by saying *Putravathi Bhava,* which translates ‘may you have sons.’ Hence there is societal and familial pressure to have children after marriage (especially sons). Swapan Kumar Pramanick and Samita Manna (2010) write, “Motherhood is a blessing for womankind” (xvi) as it is considered to elevate the status of a wife. Thus, motherhood is glorified in India, and those who are not able to produce children are stigmatized, irrespective of their gender difference. An infertile woman is often called by names like *manhoos*, *baanjh,* which translate ‘unfortunate’ and ‘barren,’ respectively. In the case of an infertile man, he is an object of ridicule in the hands of friends, family, and neighbors. Hence, to escape this shame, childless couples either seek medical help or visit religious places to do penances and offerings to get a child. Thus, India follows a pronatalist culture that encourages and expects all married couples to have children and stigmatizes those who are not able

following the norm. Perumal Murugan's *One Part Woman* (2013) and Indira Goswami's *The Offspring* (2003) give a more comprehensive picture of the intricacies of infertility in India.

In the coming sections socio-cultural impacts of infertility will be discussed with reference to the texts mentioned above. Social and familial pressure to conceive or to have a child, stigmatization and ostracization, fear of second marriage of the spouse, desire for a progeny, and desire to overcome infertility are some the socio-cultural impacts of infertility which is portrayed in *One Part Woman* (2013) and *The Offspring* (2003).

The first and foremost socio-cultural impact of infertility is social and familial pressure to conceive or have a child. The conventional definition of a woman's major social function is maternity, particularly in Indian culture, where motherhood is praised and revered. A woman's identity is defined by motherhood, which also improves her social standing and makes motherhood the only reason she exists. Hence a woman who is not able to conceive is pressurized to get a child at the earliest. According to Anjali Wigde, "A woman is considered complete or 'real' only when she becomes a mother. She proves her womanhood in this way and feels secure in her marriage because it is believed to bond the marital relationship. As a mother, she feels she has accomplished what she was supposed to do as an adult woman" (62). In *One Part Woman (2013),* Ponna, too, had to face the pressure of proving herself as a woman. In the beginning, everything was going on well, but later, people started to ask direct questions. Murugan writes, "Everyone had been patient for six months after the wedding. But there had been innuendoes even before that. Then they started asking direct questions. The only way to save oneself was to conceive in the first month of marriage. Otherwise, the interrogation would begin in some form or the other" (43). Ponna had to face pressure to conceive from her mother, too. "She kept a watch on Ponna's menstrual cycle that month. As soon as it came to pass, she told Ponna to drink the juice of some shoots on the morning of the third day. […] After that, Ponna got used to eating different shoots and drinking different potions. […] The goal was to beget a child, and she was ready to do anything to attain that goal" (43). As with women, males too are pressurized to have children. In *The Offspring* (2003), after being taunted by the villagers and the priest constantly, Pitambar is pressured to beget a child by hook or crook. He is pursued by the village priest Krishnakantha to marry Damayanti, a Brahmin prostitute to get a child. Thus, the pressure to have a child is both on the men and the women. But the weight is more on women side because of their biology. People are afraid to go against these norms because they have internalized the social

construction of gender and it has become so natural that it is hard to identify and go against it.

The stigmatisation and exclusion of infertile people is the second impact that can be traced in the primary texts. In India, fertility is considered as a blessing and infertility is considered as a curse. The people who are childless are considered as far from the normal. They are not allowed to attend auspicious functions. Ponna was humiliated in the puberty ceremony of Chellama's daughter by Chellama's brother's wife, she said "You stay away'' (112). According to Indian culture childless women are not allowed to attend puberty celebration as it is considered inauspicious. Murugan then asks "If a childless woman did the ritual, would it make the girl barren? Was she that inauspicious?" (112). But such ostracization is not seen in the case of males. Mahajan was ridiculed by the village tenants for not having a progeny they said "Ah! You do not have children. All your granaries are now overflowing with paddy! Who will eat them? And you are growing old. Now is the time to worship God and offer charity and alms" (Goswami). Thus, it can be seen from the textual evidence that infertile females had to face ostracization more than infertile males but they both are equally stigmatized because of their infertility.

Fear of the spouse's second marriage is the third effect of infertility that can be found in two select texts. Almost in all patriarchal cultures, it is seen that if the couple is infertile, the males are asked to remarry (even if the infertility is because of them). In *One Part Woman* (2013) Kali was asked to remarry to get a progeny by many, both directly and indirectly. Chellappan, who came to Kali's barnyard to buy a cow, broached the topic of Kali's marriage indirectly; he said that "That is just how some cows are. No matter what you do, they never get pregnant. Just quietly change the cow. If you say yes, I can fetch you one right away" (10). Ponna was aware of these happenings, and she was in constant fear of Kali bringing a new wife "During moments of intimacy, Ponna would ask, 'Maama, are you planning to abandon me and marry another woman? Tell me" (13). In Mahajan's case, people also advised him to get remarried because there was the least chance of his second wife's condition getting better and begetting him a child. It was Krishnakantha, the village priest, who advised him to marry Damayanti, the prostitute "Krishnakanta bent down and whispered in Pitambar's ears, "What about another marriage, eh?" (Goswami). Thus, in the case of an infertile couple, it is always the husband who is asked to remarry and not the wife because it is assumed that infertility is always happening due to the inability of women, not because of men. For society, it is also hard to accept that infertility can happen because of men. In many cases, men are not even ready to seek medical help for fear of putting their masculinity in danger.

The fourth is the desire for progeny. In *The Offspring (2003)*, the village priest Krishnakanta asks Pitambar, "So there is no hope of an issue, is there? Very sad! There will be no one to continue your family line" (Goswami). This is usually seen in the case of males. Since we live in a patriarchal setup, the males must pass on their family line and genes to the next generation. Widge added, "In most societies including India, men need to have heirs and prove their masculinity" (61). In the case of Ponna, she had three reasons to desire a progeny. The first is to get out of the shame of infertility. The second one is because she does not want to adopt a child. Ponna once said, "We don't need to raise someone else's child, maama. We won't be able to be as loving to it as we could be to our own child. […] If we manage to conceive one of our own, well and good. If not, we will just be the way we are" (20). The third reason for Ponna to desire a child is to get an heir to their property. She said "Go somewhere and get me a child!" […] "I don't want anyone to be able to say that this property of ours has no inheritor. Go now!" (231). Thus, it can be seen that the desire for a child is common to both males and females who are childless, though for various reasons. Nevertheless, it can also be noted that considering the primary texts, in the cases of Ponna and Pitambar, they are persuaded by the patriarchal society to desire a progeny.

The desire to overcome infertility is the fifth socio-cultural effect of infertility that can be identified in the select primary texts. Due the societal stigma and the desire to fit in to the patriarchal gender norms the people suffering from infertility have a desire to come out of that somehow. In the modern days people go for either IVF or surrogacy. Very few opt for adoption since in adoption still the shame of infertility remains. Since *One Part woman* (2013) Ponna is set in pre-independence era, when the technology was not so advanced Kali and Ponna's resorted to putting faith in Gods and Goddesses, visiting all known temples, doing penances and offerings. Finally, Ponna decided to go to the chariot to because she wanted to come out of the blame of infertility. Hence, she decided to sleep with someone else during the eighteenth day of Chariot festival. In the case of Pitambar Mahajan, he went to Damayanti to get a child. This can also be considered as an act to come out of the shame of infertility. Hence, both males and females suffering from infertility wishes to come out of it by some means.

It can be concluded that the societal norms and values, which are patriarchal constructions, support reproduction and value motherhood; in such cases, childlessness can become a stigmatizing condition that negatively impacts married people's identities and interpersonal relationships. In the case of Ponna, she went to the chariot festival without the permission of Kali. This act of Ponna enraged him, and he started to curse her. In the case of Pitambar, it was evident from the looks of his invalid wife that she is against what Pitambar is up to. Hence, in order to make this world a beautiful place for everyone to live, it is necessary to inculcate an inclusive attitude as an essential cultural attribute, which would accept the plurality

in the society and also accept the fact that it is not possible for everyone to fit into the patriarchal and societal norms, which does not mean that they are less of a human.

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WHEN SITA SPEAKS PALI AND DRAUPADI TAMIL: THE POLITICS OF REGIONAL REPRESENTATIONS

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***Abstract**: Epic retellings are instrumental in liberating a cultural phase from the normalcies of a bygone era by destructing discourses of the past by constructing new discourses. By challenging, subverting or negating the knowledge system of yester years manifested through the myths and legends of the cultural group, modern writers give new cultural colouring to the tales once told, images once created, representations once fashioned and knowledge once established. This paper attempts to trace out the diverse representations of Sita and Draupadi shaped by different socio-cultural and spatio-temporal currents. Regional versions of the Ramayana are Sitayanas in spirit and content for such representations offer a counter narrative to the much acclaimed patriarchal rendering of Valmiki Sita. The regional retellings the Mahabharata are Draupadi Mahabharata ,of the goddess of vengeance, who relentlessly fought for her space negating all the patronymic names, declaring herself as the queen of the palace of illusion.*

His-story tells that man always had a fascination for stories. Even when our race was nomadic, we eased our tiring days of labour with the soothing balm of stories, stories of Gods, goddesses, the wicked and the virtuous, coloured by the taste and culture of our times. Being a group overawed by the magnificence of nature, our race framed stories where nature expressed its omniscience and omnipotence. Later, as time passed by, nature got replaced by culture and the cultured human being became the omnipotent. This transit paved way for the birth of epics, where his-story got narrated with sound and fury. Whether it is *The Iliad* or *The Odyssey*, The *Ramayana* or The *Mahabharata*, the treatment of theme remained same, projecting the flawed but omniscient human being.

Literature in general and epic in particular are the products of the culture to which it belongs, since literary representations are shaped by culture and history. Culture

is often perceived as the systems of knowledge shared by a relatively large group of people. It is the cumulative deposit of knowledge, experience, beliefs, values, attitudes, meanings, hierarchies, religion, notions of time and space acquired by a group of people in the course of generations through individual and group striving. Often these shared experiences enter the collective unconscious of the group as myths and reincarnate time to time by way of various narratives, retellings or re-creations and continue dominating the psyche of the generations to come. Down the ages these re-creations get coloured, for narration is always shaped by the socio-cultural, and spatio-temporal framework. To put it in Foucauldian terminology, "at any given period in a given domain, there are substantial constraints on how people are able to think" (Gutting 32). There is a system of utterability or law of what can be said. This utterability frames representation and the do's and don'ts of culture, episteme, re-frame representation thereby triggering retelling.

The origin of the practice of retelling familiar or classical tales can be traced back to the days of ancient Greeks, whose feast of Dionysus occasioned retelling of classical tragedies and comedies. The Dionysia was a great carnival in ancient Athens, a tribute to Dionysus, the God of wine and merry making. The celebrated event of the festival was the theatrical performance of classical tragedies and comedies. Being the god of rebirth and revival, retelling of tragedies and comedies were made mandatory at the festival. Scholars are of the opinion that the Greek audience preferred to see popular or well-known plays re-staged, altered or revived, rather than financially assisting new plays of debatable quality. The revivals also presented a nostalgia for the glory of Athens.

Retelling is a comparatively popular genre. Retelling an epic means to pick that tale out of its frame and putting a different spin on it. Often retellings retain the unembellished frame of the original tale, but drape it with something different, keeping the main plot intact making everything else about it different. What is unique about retellings is that, though it deviates from the original, the reader can still identify the tale being retold.

The genre of Fairy Tale retelling has got a sub-genre called "Fractured Fairy Tales'' ("Once upon A Time…We Changed the Entire story"). In fractured fairy tales, the same story is either retold through the perspective of a different character or a continuation of the same tale is offered. This concept of fractured fairy tales can be made applicable to the retelling of epic narratives. Retelling of epics also adopt the same methodology, ie either offers a re-reading by providing

an altered point of view or offers a continuation of the original tale, revealing what happened thereafter.

The primary difference between the original tale and a retelling is the difference in plot points. It offers the reader a chance to identify the original tale with minor or major alterations. Sometimes the plot remains same with different characters. There are instances where characters are retained but placed in a different plot structure. Many a times, the retellings which focus on characterization offer refined, complex and fully realized characters with whom the reader of the present can identify more intensely than their counterparts in the traditional tales. The retold tales are as good as the original except some twists, which make them unique and exciting. The twists offered are the results of a question posed by readers of today, what if?

Retelling of epic narratives can be viewed as a sub-genre of the much talked about resistant writing. Retelling, as a genre is devised to read the much read and much told epic stories with an improved perception. And in that attempt these canonical texts, with their often-acknowledged patriarchal bias and marginalization of the subaltern, are interrogated for their silencing of certain voices, that of women, avarnas and the rakshasa. This silencing is justified as a means to design and perpetuate the moral codes of the respective societies.

Retellings on *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* have been a part of Indian literary tradition, for they often unfurl newer and newer interpretations, and remain there as a colossal body of literature which hasn't yet revealed what it has to say.

> Consequently, reading a cultural historical text like the *Mahabharata* is not a simple mechanical interconnection between readers and the text; instead, it is a dynamic interaction between individual and cultural histories. Individuals select certain aspects of their lives and the world around them to write their life stories and likewise they select certain aspects of the epic to rewrite the story. (Lakshmi 5)

Most of the retellings of *Mahabharata* fall under the category of perspective retelling where the epic tale is retold through the eyes of those who are often silenced or mis-represented. Such retellings have provided Sita, Mandodari, Shurpanaka, Urmila, Karna, Draupadi, Druyodhana, Bhima, Urvi a voice to retell the epic tale from their perspectives.

> Such retellings are also important reminders of how malleable old stories are, especially in a country as culturally and socially diverse as India. As you travel from one region to another, plot specifics vary, as do people's perceptions of different characters. Duryodhana might be the villain-in-chief in any conventional version of the *Mahabharata*, but there are temples in Kerala and Uttaranchal where he is worshipped as a just ruler. And not all *Mahabharata* traditions subscribe to a misty-eyed view of the Pandavas as heroes. Tribal communities who revere Ekalavya as a folk-hero — cruelly denied the status of the world's greatest archer — are likely to think of Arjuna and Drona as privileged schemers (Arjun Singh).

In India, folklore and mythology are not only a thing of academic interest, but also a factor of contemporary relevance, without the understanding of which the complexities of the contemporary Indian way of thinking, can be comprehend. The *Ramayana* has been made into many counter narratives in diverse social locations. Stressing the plurality of *Ramayana* narratives Romila Thapar writes "the *Ramayana* does not belong to any one moment in history for it has its own history which lies embedded in many versions which were woven around the theme at different times and places, even within its own history in the Indian subcontinent''. Each rendering of the *Ramayana* has its own manifestation at every historical situation. "Each of the versions is the cultural expression of a particular historical time. Every single version provides a plethora of information about the historical events of a particular society. The variations and interpretations incorporated into the mainstream meta narratives serve cultural and religious purposes" (Gangatharam et al. 878-79).

The story of Rama, Ramakatha, initially was a chronicle preserved against the pillages of time by the power of memory. In the course of time it yielded to changes, modifications and exaggerations. The *Valmiki Ramayana* of yester years was never a sacred book, neither an Ithihasa nor a discourse on Dharmic principles. It was only a Kavya, Adi Kavya, as it is popularly titled, which endured significant changes with the passage of time to become an Epic or an Ithihasa. With the emergence of the Cult of Rama in the medieval age, the kavya turned Ithihasa got refashioned as a sanctified discourse.

A K Ramanujan in his essay "Three Hundred Ramayanas: Five Examples and Three Thoughts on Translation" narrates a story where Hanuman went into the nether world in search of Rama's ring which fell on to the ground and latter disappeared. The quest of Hanuman ended seeing a platter full of signet rings with the name Rama. Hanuman asked the king of the nether world on how happened this

to which he replied "[t]here have been as many Ramas as there are rings on this platter. When you return to earth, you will not find Rama'' (24). So it will not be wrong to state that there are as many *Ramayana*s as there are writers attempted to re-present the life of the Vishnu incarnate.

As applicable to every other piece of writing, every retelling of *Ramayana* is coloured, depending on the cultural context, attitudes and comprehensive capability of to whom it is narrated. The story of Rama, often of Sita and the entourage of a good number of marginalized and minor characters, got newer and improved representations. Socio- economic, gendered, generic, and tonal multiplicities from tragic to commonplace, lofty to farce, elevated to colloquial are found in the writings of people belonging to the high, middle and low castes, in the works of male, female writers and the songs of the tribals.

> The cultural uses of the *Ramayana* are manifold and ever changing. Particular groups at particular times in history develop an elective affinity for specific characters. Valmiki currently attracts the affection of certain *jatis* of sanitation workers, Sita has traditionally elicited the empathy of long-suffering wives, and the proponents of a separate Tamil state have identified with Ravana. Clearly, the significance of the *Ramayana* goes beyond specific texts to encompass twin processes that lie at the heart of culture. Thus some tellings of the *Ramayana* affirm the hierarchy found in social, political, and religious relations, while other tellings contest that hierarchy. (Richman 14-15)

Retelling an epic means to bring it out from its frame and offering a different perception. Often retellings maintain the unadorned structure of the original tale, but decorate it with something unique, keeping the main plot intact making everything else about it different. The retold tales are as good as the original except some twists which make them unique and exciting. The twists offered are the results of a question posed by readers of today, what if ?. Retelling of epics can fall under two categories; "one where the old texts are reproduced with modifications but the ideology or the value system upheld by the source texts is adhered to….In the second category, the old source is adopted in order to ridicule or defy the value system suggested by it. In other words, it parodies the old text". (Mulla 1)

Most of the mainstream *Ramayana* stories including Valmiki *Ramayana* are patriarchal rendering of Ramakatha, marginalizing women, the classless and the commoner. Out of the raw material supplied by the meta narrative every society breeds its own version of literary representations. Using the same raw materials of the given period in history socio cultural interactions, by projecting certain events

and ignoring the rest, create counter narratives. Most of the counter narratives or regional narratives of *Ramayana* are against the dominant patriarchal Sanskrit *Ramayana*.

The Ramakatha versions framed by the unorthodox sects of Buddhist and Jains are devised to challenge the mainstream Brahmanical traditions of Valmiki. According to Buddhist version, Rama is Rama-Pandita meaning the wise one, Lakshmana is Prince Lakkha□a, the lucky one and Sita, the sister of Rāma, Lakshmana and daughter of Dasaratha. Unlike the canonical Sanskrit rendering, Rama and Lakshmana are sent to the forest for twelve years by Dasaratha to protect them from the evil plots of their step mother. Lady Sita insisted on following her brothers to the forest. The trio lived in a hermitage for 12 years. Upon the death of Dasaratha, the king of Benares, the trio returned and Rama-Pandita was crowned as the king and Lady Sita, his queen consort. The abduction of war and the sub plot of Ravana is ignored in the Buddhist version. The narrative is in Pali as against the scholarly Sanskrit. Some argue that the Buddhist rendering pre-dates *Valmiki Ramayana*.

The Jain tradition of Ramakatha places Ravana as the hero, to offer a more aggressive counter narrative. It is no wonder that the Jain rendering of the *Ramayana* story is called Pratipuranas, meaning counter/anti purana. The Jain version of *Ramayana* hardly extols the Hindu values and moves on a strong conviction that it is the Brahmanical patriarchal politics which maligned Ravana.Vimalasuri's Paumacharyam written in Prakrit challenges the Brahmanical rendering of the Ramakatha, and dismisses the vilifying statements of Valmiki version as misinterpretation. In the story, Ravana is epitomized as a Jain monk who acquired power through his penance and austerities and is one among the Sixty-Three salakapurusas of the Jain tradition who has promised not to touch any unwilling women. But a prophesy falls on him saying that he will be killed through a woman, Sita. Sita's fire ordeal is omitted in Vimalasuri's narrative instead she renounces the world and embraces Jainism. The story declares that Hanuman is not a monkey but the leader of a clan with the monkey emblem on its standard. The story concludes by making a remark that all characters in the tale embraced Jainism. In Sanghadasa Gani's Vasudevahindi version of *Ramayana*, Sita is born to Ramana and Mandodari. "It was predicted that the first child of Mandodari would be the cause of annihilation of her family. Ramana decided to abandon the first child…Mandodari gave birth to a daughter who was put in a jewel box…he placed it in front of a plough in a park-ground and informed Janaka that the girl had sprung from a furrow"(Shash 63-64)

The representation of Sita in the folk songs of Telugu women is of a definite feminine colouring and Velcheru Narayana Rao labels the folk renderings of *Ramayana* as Sitayanas . Though the Upper caste men in Andhra Pradesh view

Valmiki Ramayana as authoritative the Telugu Brahmin women favour their own versions. These songs do not mention many of the familiar *Ramayana* events. Instead, the women's songs are woven around Sita, her birth, marriage, her journey to her in laws, the games she played with Rama, Lava and Kusa. Even the Rituals in the women's songs pertain to more domestic matters, in which women are prominent.

Jatsaar songs sung by the Bhojpuri speaking peasant women often represent their complete identification with Sita. Sita's trial by fire is a constant and recurring motif in these songs. Like Sita, the heroines of these songs are often ordered to produce proof for their chastity. Return to mother earth or to surrender to the elements like fire are the choices these heroines are often left with. Though the motif ignites a fierce feminine image, empathy with Sita is the temperament they share.

There are more than fifty version of *Ramayana* in Oriya literature which present two distinguished representations of Sita; as a long-suffering queen and as a vivacious and innovative woman. By virtue of its very strong local colouring, the *Jagmohan Ramayana* departs from the Sanskrit rendering. Oriya women have identified Sita as the epitome of womanhood, *Grihalakshmi,* the embodiment of femininity, beauty, purity and the unfailing companion of her husband. "…Balarama Dasa's Sita may appear as a glorious victim because of her blind love for her husband even when she knows that Rama was brutally unfair to her in asking her to undergo the chastity test twice in public interest" (Das 181). Sarala Das's Vilanka *Ramayana* presents Sita as a warrior queen who kills the tyrant Vilanka.

In many of Marathi, Bengali folk renderings of the *Ramayana,* Sita is an essential orphan. She represents and bears the sense of rootlessness and loneliness women, especially rural women face. They are left to suffer with no one to listen to. The commonest epithet for Sita in Bengali versions is janam-dukhini, the one born to suffer. In a Marathi folk song, she, Sitabai, as addressed, asks "[w]hat kind of a woman am I? I was given away to Rama when I was five years old. What sort of a mother's love have I got? Dear Plum tree, dear Babul tree, Sita is telling you the story of her life. Please listen"(Sen 131). The girl child as an essential orphan is not a farfetched concept as far as Marathi Bengali culture is concerned and her ever alienated self is projected through these songs to voice the insecurity these women experience

In the Ramains of Himachal Pradesh, Sita is a popular figure. Sita, Janaki are common names among the Pahari people. The mountain lass Sita is represented in different costumes, habits and names in these versions, as different districts in Himachal Pradesh have different versions of *Ramayana*. Dressed in chola or ghaghra, she argues with Lakshmana, rrebukes Rama for playing dice while the

golden deer destroys her kitchen garden, refuses to go and fetch water unless a new cloth is offered. In these tales Sita is the agency who lets herself to be abducted and is not overshadowed by Rama. In Mahasuvi Ramain, Sita is born to Ravana and Damodari. Some tales in the hills mark her culinary skills as the reason for her abduction. Ravana perceives her as an ideal wife and homemaker and abducts her for she cooks well. This tale is sprung from the culture of the hills for these skills are highly valued there.

These counter *Ramayana*s questioned the dominant narrative of *Valmiki Ramayana*. Jain and Thai version of the tale focus on Ravana, his genealogy and exploit. *Adbhuta Ramayana,* Kannada and Telugu Folk tales focus on Sita, her birth, marriage and the ordeals she faces as the ideal wife. These counter retellings are attempts to destabilise the notion of the binary, the psychological divide spawned between man and woman, hero and villain, higher and the lower.

In the first book of the *Ramayana*, Valmiki states that it is the story of Sita. "A man who always fulfilled his vows, he [Valmiki] taught them the whole of this great poem, the *Ramayana*, which is the tale of Sita and the slaying of Paulastya[Ravana]" (Sheth). That means, *Ramayana* has to be Sitayana, for she being one of the delineating figures of Indian womanhood. So much and so long has been written about Janaki but there is no single version of her story. If "[t]here have been as many Ramas as there are rings on this platter'' there has to be as many Sitas as there are Ramas and as many Sitayanas as there are *Ramayana*s.

> Sita has been there, in the mass consciousness of our subcontinent, for very long time. She has been there since the beginning of or timeless history, in the different versions and recensions of the *Ramayana*, written or recited, and never forgotten. … she is there in song, in poetry, in the tears Indian women have been shedding through generations as they tread the Lakshmana Rekhas that barricade their lives…. (Gokhale, XIII-XIV)

In the many versions of *Ramayana*, which is the celebration of monogamous love as opposed to the polygamous practice of the *Mahabharata*, Sita is hardly presented as deviating from her undaunted love and loyalty to her husband and is often presented as doing everything possible to uphold the patriarchal virtues. "Sita was not only an immortal daughter of the earth…. She was also intensely human, although her vulnerabilities are lost in the accretions of myth and reverence. But Indian myth is never static, it is constantly in the process of reinterpreting and revalidating itself, and the society that it defines''(Gokhale XVII). It would not be wrong under the contemporary set of universal values, to perceive a Sita who is reluctant to return to mother earth.

"The *Mahabharata* has been read, critiqued, interpreted, sung, narrated, danced to, speculated on and theorized about for epochs now…Studies focusing on individual characters are more popular in recent scholarships, and these retell the epic from the point of view of one of its heroines, thus reclaiming female agency" (Anitha Singh).Draupadi, the daughter of King Drupada, Panchali, Krisna, Yajnaseni the fire born, is admired as the most beautiful of all women in Indian mythology and one of the most re visited character too. The attempts at revisiting Draupadi in Indian literature has always been productive and controversial, for she has been etched in the Indian cultural psyche as an assertive, emphatic, ambiguous character and thereby complex. Whatever be the cultural context, Draupadi has often been presented as independent, learned, vengeful, proud and ravishing, though she, the Ayonija, bore a patronymic name.

In the Tamil tradition, Draupadi is worshipped as a goddess. The representation of this heroine of Vyasa in the Tamil regional retellings like Panchali *Shapatam* by Subramanya Bharatiyar and stage/ street performances which include theru *koothu* and Bharata koothu, contributed to her deification in the Tamil culture. "Professor R. Srinvasan, in his introduction to *Nallapillai Bharatam,* has opined that it is the Draupadi cult which is responsible for the rapid spread of *Mahabharata*, especially in the narrative and the performative mode"(Different Strokes: Women in the Tamil *Mahabharata*s).

The story of Draupadi is retold across Tamil Nadu during the festival of Draupadi Amman celebrating her transformation from a Sati who is left to fend for herself to an avenging goddess who cannot be pacified by nothing other than the blood of her abusers. The Draupadi cult folk renderings focus on her representation as Vira Panchali, who defeats *Malaiyukacuran.* She is even identified with the cannibalistic demon. "To put it simply, Draupadi is a cannibal herself…/ The Telugu account…widely known and derived from Telugu *Mahabharata*, locates the revelation of Draupadi's cannibalism prior to the forest exile.(Hiltebeitel 290) "She is also Veera Panchali, who roamed the jungles at night as a demon feasting on animals, until spotted one day by Bheema, who promises to keep her reality a secret if she in turn swore to protect the Pandavas"(Shoba).

In the Gingee region, Draupadi is celebrated as the mother goddess. In the "invocatory songs to Draupadi the lady who resides in Gingee", Pucari sings of "…Draupadi's 'untouchability'- as already referred to in relation to her virginity, and suggesting not only purity but potentially destructive violence- in connection with her identity as the goddess (or mother) of fire…. (Hiltebeital 11). She is hailed as the protector of the five Pandavas and the Upapandavas, negating the canonical representation of Draupadi as a hapless woman. "For the

Pandavas who went to the forest, you were the helpmate… for the twelve years you protected them at your side" (7).

The Matriarchal, polyandrous and martial communities of the hill regions of Kannada deify Veer Panchali. Yakshagana performance of the Kannada folk theatre captures the valorous spirit of Draupadi, carrying bow and arrow entering the space stereotypically reserved for men. In this theatrical art form, she is the incarnation of the fierce goddess Chandi. She partakes in Kurukshethra saves the Pandavas and in no measure inferior to Arjun and Bheem "…*Draupadi Pratapa*, renders centrality to Draupadi, celebrating her valour and courage as a woman. The play depicts Draupadi as an incarnation of the goddess Chandi; as such, it lauds the power of "Shakti" and of the warrior goddess" (Misra 24-25).

In some of the folk renditions of the *Mahabharata* Draupadi is presented as a character with strong sexuality, having sexual relationship outside a polyandrous marriage. Bheel *Mahabharata* is one such rendering by the Bhil people of the Western Deccan region, where the snake King Visaka, who is entranced by the beauty of Draupadi, is presented as defeating Arjuna for Draupadi. As per this folk rendition Draupadi accepted the snake king as her sexual partner for some time. This rendering can be treated as coloured because Bhils love and worship Visaka the snake god and this tale was added by the Bhils to show the power of the snake god. In the Budhist version ku□ala jataka, Draupadi, who is addressed by the name Ka□ha is presented as having sexual relationship with the hunch back.

> Then the Great Being, with the knowledge of one who remembers his former births, making Pu□□amukha a personal witness, related a circumstance seen in a former existence, connected with the faults of women…. "Friend Pu□□amukha, I have seen Ka□hā, her that had a double parentage and five husbands , and whose affection was set upon a sixth man, a headless , crippled dwarf." (Ku□ala-Jataka No. 536 **)**

"Draupadi has been subject to varied kinds of storytelling and interpretations. She has been defined as 'an arrogant opinionated, selfish, untrustworthy young woman, and an inveterate troublemaker throughout her life' and held responsible for the devastations of the Kurukshethra war" (Singh "Feminism and Folk Epic"). In The canonical patriarchal rendering of the *Mahabharata*, the story of Draupadi is confined just to Draupadi Swayamvaram and Draupadi vasthrakshepa. However fierce was she, Draupadi of the epic is often remembered as the damsel in distress who was won by five brothers and saved by Krishna during her public humiliation. but the regional retellings of the story of Draupadi showcases the trajectory of Draupadi's journey from a damsel in distress to the goddess of vengeance, who relentlessly fought for her space and negating all the patronymic names associated with her, declaring herself as the queen of the Palace of illusion.

The analysis of various regional versions of *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* shows how cultural specifications of a period in history initiates changes in literary representations. The regional retellings of the epic tales are often shaped by the value system of the particular culture and in turn influence the system since they are registered in the memory of the people and are constantly evoked. Also, these narratives naturally tend to exalt women, especially if the society or the community has matrilineal or polyandrous ties. "The heroine in the folk versions of the epic is mostly more controlling and commanding than in the classical variants of the same epic" (Singh, "Feminism and Folk Epic"). The centrality of women in the narratives suggests the centrality of women within the social matrix of the region or the community by which the story is shaped and to whom the tale is told.

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VICTORIAN HYSTERIA AND SOUTH INDIAN HORROR CINEMA: CULTURAL INTERPRETATIONS OF FEMININE AGENCY

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Abstract: *This research paper attempts to link the historical Victorian hysteria to post nineties South Indian Horror Cinema.* Manichithrathazhu *(The Ornate Lock, Dir. Fazil, 1993) from the nineties Malayalam Cinema and* Bhaagamathie *(Dir. G. Ashok, 2018) from contemporary Telugu/Tamil Cinema are the primary texts that exemplify this parallel. Both films, though separated by a gap of 25 years, explore the theme of female agency manifested through hysterical women and the consequences that each brings forth as the diegetic resolution. The theoretical foundation of the paper is laid by the concept of the abject (Julia Kristeva), the monstrous-feminine (Barbara Creed), the seven theses of monster culture (Jeffrey Jerome Cohen), and the analyses of Victorian hysteria (Elaine Showalter). The significance of the paper lies in its exposure of the culture industry's interpolations of hysteria with feminine agency cutting through historical and geographical locations. The major findings of the paper illustrate the transformation that has come over the treatment of feminine agency in the thematic patterns of cinematic story-telling. Locating historical feminine hysteria as a cross-cultural phenomenon of suppressing agentic women, the paper focuses on its utilisation as a potential narrative tool that may unearth the possibilities of progressive gendered stances.*

Key Words: *Hysteria, Victorian Era, Horror, Agency, Transgression, Normative Femininity*

Introduction

"Frailty, thy name is woman." (*Hamlet*, Act I, Scene II)

Victorian era is considered as the heyday of colonial expansion on the one hand, and the era of cultural feminine hysteria on the other. Later, in the feminist studies conducted the twentieth century, the hysteric woman was analysed as the agentic woman who was forcefully labelled *hysteric* to contain her within the patriarchal

frameworks. The nineties Malayalam horror cinema -exemplified by the iconic *Manichithrathazhu* (1993)- also portrayed *hysteric* women as trouble-makers to the patriarchal institutions of sociological authority, earning severe criticism from the feminist studies conducted during the twenty-first century. This research article argues that hysteria is an imposed feminine illness attributed to silence the agentic women who poses threat to the patriarchal institutions of power during the particular socio-cultural, and geographic terrains of domination. By comparing the historically documented feminine hysteria of nineteenth century Britain and America and the nineties Malayalam horror cinema, the paper finds an interesting parallel of repetition in the characteristics exhibited, modes of treatment, containment and the cultural consequences of the disease. The paper further explores how the representation of hysteric women in South Indian horror cinema has undergone a transformation in the contemporary times. Exemplified by the Telugu/Tamil film *Bhaagamathie* (2018), the paper concludes that situated in the post-feminist era, cinema can become an Ideological State Apparatus that can channelise the spectatorial agency to inculcate progressive stances that welcome feminine agency as normal and equivalent to masculine agency.

The Agentic Hysteric Woman in Victorian Era

The French physician Auguste Fabre wrote in 1883, "As a general rule, all women are hysterical, and . . . every woman carries with her the seeds of hysteria" (qtd. in Showalter 287). Hysteria is one of the earliest forms of neurosis diagnosed in all of human medical history, and its history itself has been "an irresistible blend of science, sexuality, and sensationalism" (Micale 3). Classical Greek medicine named it after *hystera* (uterus), cementing it as a female disorder, and erroneously attributing a wandering uterus to be creating discomforts and behavioural abnormalities as it traversed from one organ to another. Ever since, the disease has been hopelessly in fashion, doing rounds across the West in each historical era, and staying relevant even to the present-day psychiatry. Chief symptoms include paraplegia, aphonia, epileptoid seizures, lassitude, drowsiness, emotional fluctuations, and hallucinations, all associated stereotypically with women over the ages and cultural peculiarities. Cruel measures of recuperation/medication were administered on the patients, like jetting the uterus, applying belts, injections, and even clitoridectomy (surgical removal of clitoris).

Victorian Era is considered as "the heroic period of hysteria" (Micale 3), as hysteria was prevalent amongst numerous women of Victorian England and America, the institutional care -separate madhouses and mental asylums- had to be administered to shelter them. Moreover, many neurologists (like the famous Dr.

Jean Martin Charcot) and psychologists (like Sigmund Freud) made case studies of these women, trying to replace the wandering womb theory by a psychological explanation. Freud attained international reputation through his interventions into hysteria, to an extent that "psychoanalysis can historically be called the child of the hysterical woman" (Rosenberg 652).

The sociological, psychological, and medical studies conducted during the course of the twentieth century revealed that hysteric conditions in women were de facto triggered by their familial and sociological roles and the resultant stress. Despite the radical social changes and immense commercial expansion, the gender roles in Victorian society remained largely inflexible. Women had to bear the brunt of the rapid social transformation, in which a host of social and economic factors (like unemployment and migration, urbanisation and loneliness, increasing size of the family) led them to hysteric behaviour involuntarily, and in some cases, voluntarily (Showalter 180).

Married women were overburdened by the frequent pregnancies, children's demands and hardships of housekeeping, out of which they found hysteric behaviour as a resort to rest (Rosenberg 657). Unmarried women, on the other hand, had very limited opportunities at socialising; if at all they were sanctioned, they were intended to find marital matches. Ambitious women hardly had any professional prospect that their time and energy were left unused, leading them to frustrations. Disobedient, aggressive, or unattractive women, especially those that did not prefer marriage, were the most prone to be labelled *hysteric*. Showalter records with a sense of surprise that these women ". . . were so guilt ridden about their deviation that they could be readily persuaded to accept psychiatric labels for their emotions and actions" (Rosenberg 180).

Since femininity has been constructed with the same complexity as is culture, the cultural reasons behind the causes of the disease seem more plausible. Anyhow, the deplorable conditions of women changed drastically by the twentieth century, as more women gained profitable employment (and ensuing mobility) outside their homes due to the First World War. Even though many men exhibited symptoms similar to hysteria due to the traumatic effects of the World War, they were carefully delineated as the *Shell-Shock Syndrome* to keep them differentiated from the stereotypically female disorder of hysteria.

Hysteria has been used abundantly in literature and other arts like painting and theatre. The imperialistic Victorian novel abounded with hysteric women, but most often they were sidelined and portrayed in negative shades. The development of postcolonial studies during the twentieth century have positively subverted the

Western patriarchal logos, thereby empowering *the mad women in the attics* to yield an agentic selfhood through the renewed persona that they acquired at the hands of resisting writers. Elaine Showalter also discusses the "hysterical narrative" that developed from psychology, narratology, feminist criticism and the history of medicine (Showalter 24). English vocabulary still retains hysteria in high currency through *hysterical laughter* and *hysterics*.

In film, hysteria has been mostly associated with the horror genre, owing to its monstrous-feminine characters whose raison d'etre are often crimes related to reproductive function, like rape. The possession film (the term popularised by Clover) has been the breeding ground of the disease, as a woman in the possessed state very often exhibits the same symptoms as a patient of hysteria. Johanna Braun, in the article "Hysteric Cure: Performing Disability in the Possession Film" discusses hysteria in the context of the possession horror film from the United States. She visualises the hysteric as a public performer in the mainstream Hollywood horror films, through whom the pressing issues of disability and mental health are studied.

The 1990s Malayalam Horror Film: Understanding the Cultural Context

This section tries to locate the politics of hysteria in the cultural backdrop of the horror genre of Malayalam Cinema. The 1990s is chosen as the decade in concern, as the nineties produced two notable horror films, that were psychological dramas as well as possession narratives, *Manichithrathazhu* (*The Ornate Lock*, 1993) and *Ennu Swantham Janakikutty* (*Yours Janakikutty*, Dir. Hariharan, 1998). These films were also timed so well to be considered as the responses of Malayalam Cinema towards the feminist movement that took the Kerala psyche by storm. The socio-cultural backdrop of the 1990s Kerala must be briefed to garner the significance of linking the horror genre of the times with Victorian hysteria.

The 1990s began an era of globalisation, liberalisation, and privatisation in Indian economy and markets, making India a global centre of international commerce and business. This brought forth considerable transformation in the Information Technology (IT) sector, as the possibilities opened by the Computer and Internet had maximum impact by then. The major cities in India like Mumbai, Delhi, Chennai, Bengaluru, Kolkata, etc. grew to become commercial capitals. The early nineties is a period of huge transformation in the history of Indian economy, as it redrew the boundaries of the limited commercial and technological prowess and extended India to compete with many developed nations in the global market. Nevertheless, globalisation and development had many setbacks too.

During the late 1980s and the early 1990s, the political feminist movement and the academic feminist scholarship gained unprecedented momentum in Kerala. Noted feminist groups began to appear in public during the late 1980s, some of them being *Prachodana* (1985- Thiruvananthapuram), *Manushi* (1986-87), *Bodhana* (1986-1987), *Sahaja*, Dalit Women's Society, *Prabuddhatha*, etc. Many NGOs that supported women's cause also surfaced. The 1990s witnessed women's massive participation in the National Conference of Autonomous Women's Organisations (1990), formation of K. Ajitha's women's counselling centre *Anweshi* (1993), NISA Progressive Muslim Women's Forum (1997), *Sakhi* Women's Resource Centre (1997), *Sthree Vedi* (1996-1997), etc. Political parties also began introducing women's segments that assured political participation to women.

Apart from the gender sensitisation achieved by the Non-Governmental Organisations, the decade also witnessed the introduction of the Women's Reservation Bill (which states that 33% of the Lok Sabha and the State Legislative Assembly should be reserved for women) in the Lok Sabha (1996), the visible number of women working in media houses, and public exposure of notorious sex scandals. The growing number of women student-migration to universities outside the state and the country resulted in the presence of more feminist-oriented writing that gradually appeared in scholarly journals of national and international repute (Devika and Sukumar 4472). Writers like Sarah Joseph initiated a new style of feminist writing termed *pennezhuth* (woman-writing) -similar to *ecriture feminine* of French Feminism- during this tenure. A decade of sudden transformations and profit, the nineties India and Kerala emulate the English Victorian Era of expansion.

However, mainstream society's responses to these blows on the face of the entrenched patriarchal logos were far from the affirmative. This reflected through many forms, including mainstream Malayalam Cinema, which celebrated hyper-masculinity and stardom on-screen. This meant the over-exultation of a mostly Hindu, feudal, upper-caste, male protagonist, whose physical strength, intellectual prowess, and homosocial companionship fought against all odds in the society to re-establish a lost order. Their names often evoked those of the Hindu gods, and their god-like actions controlled the entire narrative thread. An active mobilisation of the Hindu Right soon after the Babri Mazjid incident also served as a reason for the success of such films.

There were two major consequences for these films. The first was that they were celebrated across Kerala, especially by a male audience, who idolised their actors-turned-stars on high pedestals of star worship. Thus, Malayalee actors like

Mohanlal, Mammootty, Suresh Gopi, and the like were elevated to the status of stars, entrenched in the spectatorial psyche as superhuman figures of righteousness and exuberant masculinity. Secondly, these alpha-male films represented women in demeaning and vulgar roles, and were essentially misogynist. Item songs and sexist dialogues were common features, added to which "the valorization of the eternal mother" (Rajendran 62) doomed the possibility or any agentic and independent female character.

Reflecting the Victorian ethos of constructing a woman's life around the patriarchal institution of marriage, these films used women as mere marriageable property. This was also a reflection of the Kerala society of the times, which had established patriliny as the marital norm and patrifocal nuclear family as the only form of familial existence. Women's roles in such a family essentially involved that of a care-taker of the children and of a decision-maker in the domestic sphere, while men took over the public domain. Though feminist movement challenged these notions, the extent to which these found ripples in the lay people's households of Kerala remains a matter of uncertainty. It is in these socio-political and cultural contexts that *Manichithrathazhu*, the primary text, is situated.

Hysteria as a Feminine Disorder: A Feminist Re-reading of *Manichithrathazhu* (1993)

Released in 1993, directed by veteran director Fazil, and boasting a star cast comprising Mohanlal, Suresh Gopi, Shobhana, Nedumudi Venu, and Thilakan (all of them established actors in Malayalam Cinema), *Manichithrathazhu* was a huge commercial success. It further attained and steadily retains a cult status among film-lovers of Malayalam. The plot follows a thriller narrative surrounding a haunted mansion, and recast the typical mould of the conventional horror film by the introduction of a psychological perspective to it. *Manichithrathazhu* may be considered as a horror-comedy, psychological thriller, murder-revenge horror film, all rolled into one. It has also evoked much critical and academic attention as well, the feminist readings being the most prominent.

The survey of literature that have been produced on *Manichithrathazhu* showcases how a woman's body and her psyche are constructed perfectly to fall in line with the expectations of the patriarchal symbolic order. Any transgression from this established norm of heteronormativity is brought under a severe patrifocal scrutiny, rectified with immediacy and attention, and resolved with a renewed acceptance of the patriarchal logos in its primitive form, as was Victorian hysteria. Aneetta Rajendran notes how the traditional shamanistic exorcisms have accommodated more scientific approaches like the psychiatric treatment alongside it to update the

discussions on feminine transgression through films like *Manichithrathazhu* (61). When interviewed on the cinematic representations of feminine transgressions in a TV show *Facebooked*, writer S. Sharadakutty suggests that psychiatry becomes the tool in the hands of patriarchy to uproot the creative potential of a woman, rendering her specifically assigned positions in the heterosexual framework.

Manichithrathazhu's narrative nucleus is the privileging of the patriarchal institution of marriage, which also reflects the societal make-up of Victorian England. Though Kerala leads the nation in its factors comprising the Development Indices, particularly the Gender Development Index (including female literacy, infant and maternal mortality rates, etc.), a "closer scrutiny of prevailing cultural mores, particularly in relation to marriage practices and family structure, reveals a less promising picture of entrenched inequality in relationships between women and men" (Chacko 52). Nakulan and his wife Ganga are the couple in concern, newly-wed and visiting Nakulan's ancestral home Madampilly for a brief period's stay in connection with Nakulan's work.

Ganga is a modern, educated, well-read, and intelligent young woman, which immediately sets her apart from the women in Nakulan's household. Her fashionable sarees and salvars also distinguish her from the traditional sartorial patterns followed by the rest of the women. Ganga is also conveniently the only character who doesn't belong to Nakulan's family by descent; her status of being Nakulan's wife is what brings her to Madampilly. This creates her image as the Other, the *marumakal* (daughter-in-law), traditionally instigated as the trouble-maker in a patriarchal household. Ganga may be considered as a manifestation of the nineties progressive woman who has roots in Kerala, but has travelled outside Kerala for her higher education and future prospects. When she returns to Kerala, she has evolved into a thinking and agentic individual, a potential threat -an abject- to the masculine superiority at Madampilly.

Julia Kristeva defines the abject as that "which disturbs the identity, system, order. What does not respect borders, positions, rules. The in-between, the ambiguous, the composite" (4). The presence of the abject is an obstacle to the smooth functioning of the established systems of a society's structuration, and hence becomes a threat. "It lies outside, beyond the set, and does not seem to agree to the latter's rules of the game. And yet, from its place of banishment, the abject does not seem challenging its master" (Kristeva 2). Abjection creates disharmony, and its presence is so vocal that it cannot be ignored by the mainstream society.

Barbara Creed adapts the concept of Kristeva's abject to analyse women as the abject in popular horror film. "All human societies have a conception of the

monstrous-feminine, what it is about woman that is shocking, terrifying, horrific, abject" (1). She further studies the concept of the monstrous-feminine based on the myth of the *vagina dentata*, and theorises that akin to various feminine identities ranging from virgin to whore, the monstrous-feminine is also defined in terms of her sexuality (3). Gender is a pivotal structuring factor that defines her monstrosity. Women who are difficult to be assimilated to a patrifocal society are deemed to be a threat to its stability. Hence, they are othered, considered the abject, and are labelled the *monstrous-feminine* by virtue of their resistance against being the *normative-feminine*.

This traditional technique of associating an untamable woman to a *yakshi*/monstrous-feminine works itself out in *Manichithrathazhu*. Ganga's introduction is itself an evocation of her association with the monstrous-feminine. Unnithan (Nakulan's uncle) and Dasappan (a worker) are terrified watching a woman with loose hair, unpinned saree, and tinkling anklets walking through the premises of Madampilly, which is later confirmed as a fearless Ganga taking a stroll to explore the surroundings. Nakulan's and Ganga's decision to stay at Madampilly is strongly opposed by his uncle Thampi, who states that the haunted nature of the house is dangerous for married women from *other* families, already making Ganga vulnerable owing to her status as Nakulan's wife. However, these implicit suggestions of Ganga's otherness/abjection are ingeniously concealed within the diegesis, keeping the mystery about the lurking monstrosity intact.

Ganga's solitude is foregrounded when she starts living at Madampilly. She keeps herself company in the huge, but lonely house. Ganga often dozes off waiting for a Nakulan who is engrossed in late-night work. Ganga's unused libidinal and intellectual energies do not find vent in the mansion. Though there is not one scene in the film that reflects a marital discord between them, Nakulan's and Ganga's physical intimacy is markedly absent in the diegetic progress. None of their conversations are intimate; they are only functional. Nakulan's neglect of Ganga is an implicit suggestion, but one that does not earn prominence in the film. At Madampilly, she gets reduced to the role of a lonely housewife despite her education and former city life.

Fig. 1: *Ganga spends time reading waiting for Nakulan to come to bed. [Still from Manichithrathazhu (00: 23: 16)]*

Ganga tries to channelise her time and energy by reading and exploring the house. There are possibilities of Ganga being infatuated to Mahadevan (Alli's fiancée and a noted writer), partially due to her neglected wifehood, and because of her admiration for his literary stint. This is established later when Ganga assumes herself as Nagavalli and behaves intimately to Mahadevan, imagining him to be Ramanadhan, Nagavalli's lover. Her wrath falls upon Nakulan, whom she assumes as Shankaran Thampi (who murdered Nagavalli due to sexual jealousy), the barrier between them. The film does not address the question as to why Ganga/Nagavally finds Nakulan as her enemy; the only plausible explanation that may be found is that Shankaran Thampi *owned* Nagavalli, just like how Nakulan *owns* Ganga through marriage. However, *Manichithrathazhu* outrightly rejects the notion that Ganga's hysteria may have been the result of her marital disappointment.

Ignoring the admonitions of his uncle Thampi, a scientifically tempered Nakulan lets Ganga open the Thekkini. Ganga's place in the hierarchy is stated in clear terms by the permissions she needs to seek even to open doors in her house. Ganga's act of opening the forbidden door is, in the larger picture, an act of transgression by the woman in a patriarchal setting. Kristeva suggests that so many victims of the abject are its fascinated victims (9). Hence, she has already overstepped her boundary and proved that she, being the Other in Nakulan's family, is the harbinger of trouble. "The woman who oversteps the boundaries of her gender role risks becoming a Scylla, Weird Sister, Lilith, Bertha Mason, or Gorgon" (Cohen 9). Cohen's observation channels Ganga's transformation into the monstrous-feminine, the abject in Madampilly household. In feminist terms, her act of opening the door may be read as her agentic decision to tap into her potential of imagination/creativity.

Fig. 2: *Ganga imagines herself as the mythical Nagavalli. Nagavalli's painting is shown in the background. Still from Manichithrathazhu (01:55:11)*

As soon as Ganga

opens the door, she is intimated downstairs by Sreedevi, Nakulan's cousin. Sreedevi and Ganga are two different faces of femininity that *Manichithrathazhu* proposes. A broken marriage makes Sreedevi a *doomed-for-life* character evoking the spectator's sympathy, and justifies Nakulan's misgivings of her troubled psyche. Though she is perfectly normal post her divorce, her identity of being a divorcee hangs like an albatross around her neck. She is vulnerable to the accusing eyes of relatives (and the society at large) who accept madness as a normal consequence in a divorced woman, who has no other choices in life. Sreedevi is characterised as the sacrificial lamb, ready to take the blame upon herself for the prosperity of the family. Her sacrifice is later rewarded by Dr Sunny; the tail end of the film showcases Sreedevi thrilled at the prospect of a marriage proposal from him. Another marriage *saves* a woman who has once been divorced.

Ganga, on the other hand, is the transgressive *fallen* woman who endangers her marital relationship due to her fancy that takes flight. The perspective of the film is not that of Ganga; it is that of hegemonic patriarchy that severely reprimands any contravention, and resolves it by re-establishing the convention which here is restoring Ganga's and Nakulan's marriage. "The presence of the monstrous-feminine in the popular horror film speaks to us more about the male fears than about female desires or feminine subjectivity" (Creed 7). The plotline does not allow Ganga (the Other) to venture deeper into her imagined self; instead, her imagination is caught half-way, treated, and *cured*. The cure administered to the fallen woman is psychiatric treatment, a novel measure in a horror film, not experimented much in Malayalam Cinema before the success of *Manichithrathazhu*.

Essentially exhibiting the characteristics of a possession narrative, the film makes use of both traditional exorcism and modern psychiatry to cure the possessed woman, with an upper-hand wielded by psychiatry. However, the subject of possession does not change: woman, especially the one who has overstepped the roles prescribed for her in the symbolic order, and hence has invited trouble to herself and those around. The role played by local gossip and oral speech, that slowly gives way to mythifying the *monstrous* tale is also represented in *Manichithrathazhu*.

If Sreedevi's madness is only predictable owing to her divorced status, Ganga's transgression is unanticipated, and adds to the film's suspense. This is because of Ganga's well-defined social positioning of being Nakulan's wife. Obviously, her discontents and frustrations are concealed and masked by the sacredness associated with the heteropatriarchal marriage. The question of caste adds up to Ganga's

subject position. She is an upper-middle class Nair woman, placed neatly between the elite Namboothiri (Brahmin) and the lower castes in the *varna*/*jati* system of social hierarchialisation, the significance of which is later explained in the paper. These reasons mount up to build the twist in the film, a long monologue in which Dr Sunny reveals to Nakulan that his wife Ganga -and not Sreedevi- is the patient at Madampilly.

The characters of Nakulan and Sunny are carefully etched out to reflect patriarchal benevolence in addressing and resolving the woman's question, also scaling Mohanlal's (Dr Sunny) alpha-male stardom as superior to Suresh Gopi's (Nakulan) lesser masculine role. It is only towards the climax of the film that Dr Sunny's real professional status is revealed through Pullattupuram Brahmadattan Namboothirippad, an elder tantric expert who is invited by Thampi to resolve the issue. The awe for western medicine and education are also evoked through the representation of Dr Sunny as a western-educated researcher and contributor to modern psychiatry. At the same time, traditional practices of exorcism are also incorporated, instead of being rejected outright. Anyhow, a woman's transgression from her patriarchal identity is immediately dismissed as an illness of the mind, and not a conscious deviation.

The dramatic climax of *Manichithrathazhu* exhibits a homosocial bonding that succeeds in ousting the abject Nagavalli. Dr Sunny, Brahmadattan Namppothirippad, Nakulan, and Mahadevan, along with many men who assist them execute the plan. The combination of various levels of masculine associations happens during these occurrences. A psychiatrist, a tantric expert-cum-psychiatrist, the subject's (Ganga's) husband, and other men comprise this homosocial bond. Brahmadattan Nampoothirippad represents the Brahmin caste, highest in the caste hierarchy, and learned enough to deal with the superhuman. Dr Sunny is a Christian, outside the casteist framework, and represents the Christian West whose professional knowledge and expertise wields power. This leaves the caste hierarchialisation intact.

A number of back-to-back close-up shots that showcase the instructions of Dr Sunny, understood smoothly and followed immediately by other male characters establish the collective bond formed to fight the abject. The symbolic order devises its perpetrators to deal with the issue of feminine transgression, which would otherwise threaten its unquestioned existence and superiority. Traditional exorcist practices are combined with modern psychiatric treatment to achieve the desired result, which is to restrain a resisting woman and bring her back to heteronormative femininity, which for patriarchy is the norm and the normal.

Nagavalli is fooled into believing that she has attained her long-cherished vengeance. The hysteric Ganga is hypnotised by Dr Sunny, who revives her back to her identity of being Nakulan's wife. She wakes up, and thanks Sunny, Sreedevi, and Nakulan profusely for staying by her while she was mentally unstable. She also decides to move back to Calcutta, where she can become "only Nakulan's" (property). The nuclear family is privileged over the joint family, also listing *Manichithrathazhu* alongside numerous films propagating the national agenda of gendering in India.

Ganga is not even interested to learn about her *disease*, let alone returning to her imagined identity. Thus, the woman who oversteps her boundaries of prescribed societal roles is redeemed to understand, internalise, and perform her role of the dutiful wife, which she willingly accepts. The ideal woman is imagined as the union of two distinct figures, the "domestic woman" (provider of progeny, the manager of material and the guardian of souls in the modern home) and the "aesthetic woman" (the one who cements modern conjugality through ensuring pleasure) (Devika 1676). *Manichithrathazhu* becomes the grand narrative which vocalises this hegemonic patriarchal ideology that structures this brand of women, negating all the rest that do not fit.

Elaine Showalter writes about the surprising co-operation that middle-class hysteric women exhibited towards their patriarchal moral authorities and their means of socio-sexual control through psychiatric labelling and incarceration, "It is important to see how thoroughly many middle-class women themselves colluded in this process, how eagerly they embraced insanity as an explanation of their unfeminine impulses, and welcomed the cures that would extinguish the forbidden throb of sexuality or ambition" (175). Ganga does the same; she realises that she had done something out of the ordinary and seeks Nakulan's forgiveness, begging him not to hate her for her irrational behaviour.

Showalter also describes the tranquillity with which the once-hysteric women accept their post-treatment phase. The treatment meted out to hysteric women of Victorian era included severe physical and mental torture that very often led women to depression, death, or a state of permanent inactivity. "It is the infantilization and reprogramming of a woman who has so far outgrown her role that she must be broken down to fit back into it" (176). This is what is precisely carried out on Ganga. She is beaten up and physically restrained during the staged murder scene, and is misled into a false belief of having attained her revenge. In the hypnotism that follows, Ganga's psyche is totally remodelled to fit the descriptions of a perfect wife which she accepts with delight.

Hysteria as an Agentic Weapon: Reading *Bhaagamathie* (2018) as a Text of Feminine Agency

Bhaagamathie was a horror-thriller film made simultaneously in Telugu and Tamil, later remade into Hindi as *Durgamati: The Myth* (2020). This section compares the representation of hysteria in *Manichithrathazhu* to that of *Bhaagamathie* due to its dependence on a mythical queen Bhaagamathie's story that forms the crux of the narrative thread. However, *Bhaagamathie* is analysed in this article as an inversion of the thematic use of hysteria. Unlike *Manichithrathazhu* which used a hysteric woman as the mentally unstable Other who is a threat to hegemonic patriarchy, *Bhaagamathie* uses hysteria as a weapon wielded by an agentic woman who uses it for her ends. The following section elucidates how hysteria is manipulated as a motif to convey feminine agency in *Bhaagamathie.*

Chanchala is characterised as an agentic woman, who is able to deploy her agency and use her power for the benefit of the marginalised. She is an IAS officer by profession, her job already sanctioning her financial independence and authority, unlike the unemployed Ganga. She marries for love, and excels in her career. However, Ishwar Prasad (Irrigation Minister to whom Chanchala was appointed as Personal Secretary twice) cheats her and manipulates her position for his personal greed. Chanchala's loss is multiple: her husband, her profession, and the prestige that it had endowed her with, reducing her into a prisoner on remand. A shaken Chanchala also takes the moral responsibility of the villagers who were left homeless (owing to Ishwar Prasad's plans) upon herself. However, she does not despair. Instead, she plans her revenge from within the prison.

Chanchala learns about Bhaagamathie when she explores the Bungalow. The historical story of Bhaagamathie is a tale of the agentic queen Bhaagamathie who was betrayed by her army chief Chandrasenan. Chanchala intelligently uses the historical tale of Queen Bhaagamathie to prove her innocence, by posing as a hysteric possessed by the queen. She merges her revenge with that of Queen Bhaagamathie, as the greedy Minister Ishwar Prasad in post-independent India, is metaphorically a re-incarnation of the historical tyrant Chandrasenan of pre-independent India. "Feminine and cultural Others are monstrous enough by themselves in patriarchal society, but when they threaten to mingle, the entire economy of desire comes under attack" (Cohen 15).

Fig.3: *Chanchala poses as Bhaagamathie. The painting of the real queen Bhaagamathie who committed suicide is seen in the backdrop. Still from Bhaagamathie (01: 10: 04)*

Chanchala's enactment of Bhaagamathie employs her childhood training in magic alongside the research she does into the queen's history. Her hysteric acts of possession are violent, mostly involving fierce gymnastic actions. Her hysteric behaviour is attributed to schizophrenia, as her behaviour showcases delusions, hallucinations, and violent physical strength.

While *Manichithrathazhu* focuses on the intelligence and professional competence of Dr Sunny and his unique plan to recuperate Ganga (the patient), *Bhaagamathie* showcases Chanchala's will-power and clever execution of her plan, reducing the psychiatrist to a puppet playing to the charms of the magician. She convinces him that she is mentally sick through her hysteric acts. She even resorts to manhandle him, to establish her complex mental condition. The hysteric patient takes up more screen space, while the psychiatrist is reduced a dot in the picture. The sequence speaks about the limitations of psychiatry to unearth the intricate working of the human mind. As for traditional exorcism, the film does not even give a say, as the exorcist who comes to the bungalow exempts himself from conducting one, and says he can only identify an evil presence, but not deal with it.

Chanchala continues her hysteric behaviour to the climax when her hysterics reveal Ishwar Prasad's evil plans, and she is proven innocent. Thus, the film showcases Chanchala's active manipulation and execution of her agency through an act of hysteria which brings the downfall of her enemy. Not only is Chanchala freed of her crime, but she also resumes her initial status. Chanchala's use of hysteria as a tool disrupts the regular plot of the horror film wherein a hapless woman is caught inside a haunted mansion until a superior man comes to her aid, and brings a fresh perspective where the haunted mansion is itself explored for its possibilities of exploitation by a strong-willed woman. Psychiatry, traditional exorcism, and a criminal investigating agency are equally fooled by the intelligent manipulation of a woman's revenge plan.

Conclusion

Victorian hysteria was a historical phenomenon whose reasons of existence point towards the unequal gendered structuring of the Victorian patriarchy and its resultant hypocrisy. Though placed geographically, culturally, and chronologically apart, the Malayalam horror films of the nineties -explicated through *Manichithrathazhu*- surprisingly reflect the anti-woman stances of the Victorian society through Ganga, a victim of hysteria. *Bhaagamathie*, a contemporary horror-thriller, on the other hand, subverts the anti-woman stances followed by mainstream cinema, and utilises hysteria as an agentic tool manipulated by a woman to achieve her ends. This paper reflects how the attempts of hegemonic

patriarchy to maintain its superiority across cultures are internalised (in *Manichithrathazhu*) and subverted (in *Bhaagamathie*), both within South Indian mainstream cinema.

Though cinema is only a form of art and a popular entertainment industry, the fact remains that it reflects society, and very often, plays a significant role in interpellating societal practices through its underlying ideologies and projected themes. *Manichithrathazhu* vocalises the theme of feminine transgressions that get labelled as psychological disorders owing to the resistance of hegemonic patriarchy against the feminist movement in the nineties Kerala. The *hysteric* feminists are shown their place through a calculated psychiatric treatment that label any contravention as an act of insanity, whose redemption lies in conforming to the patriarchal logos. *Bhaagamathie* portrays the capability of an intelligent woman to overthrow the established dictum of hysteria being a feminine mental disorder by dramatising the same dictum to reach her goals.

Fig. 4: *Theatrical Posters of Manichithrathazhu (1993) and Bhaagamathie (2018)*

The posters of the films themselves symbolically represent the diegetic trajectory of the films. The foregrounding of Dr Sunny and Nakulan in *Manichithrathazhu*'s poster sidelines a hysteric Ganga; this may be contrasted with that of the agentic Chanchala who is the sole presence in *Bhaagamathie*'s poster. Ganga fits perfectly into the mould of hysteric women from Victorian England. Despite her education and modern outlook, she is a victim of culturally constructed mental illness, whose cure she finds in embracing patriarchal codes of conduct. She falls into the same helplessness that Nagavalli experienced years back. Nagavalli's revenge to Shankaran Thampi never materialises, though she is fooled into believing so. Similarly, Ganga remains Nakulan's subordinate, and her fate is sealed in her

wifehood. Unlike her, Bhaagamathie (Chanchala) achieves her revenge and breaks free from the patriarchal subordination which affects her in professional and political terms. She avenges the present-day Chandrasenan (Ishwar Prasad) and thus metaphorically sets Bhaagamathie's spirit free.

Both Ganga and Chanchala are left inside a haunted mansion, with a lot of time to brood. Chanchala is physically imprisoned, while Ganga is symbolically imprisoned within the confines of her marriage. While Ganga imagines her historical counterpart, Chanchala researches to consciously bring her to existence. Nagavalli transforms Ganga's later life and never lets her get out of her heteropatriarchal codes. Bhaagamathie is used by Chanchala to transform her own life. Hysteria is a weapon that she wields to take charge of her life and seek revenge on those who had encroached upon it. Jeffrey Jerome Cohen theorises that monsters are the watch-(wo)men who reminds us of the inhabitable and uninhabitable terrains of life. He writes,

"The monster of prohibition exists to demarcate the bonds that hold together that system of relations we call culture, to call horrid attention to the borders that cannot -*must* not- be crossed.

Primarily these borders are in place to control the traffic in women, or more generally to establish strictly homosocial bonds, the ties between men that keep patriarchal society functional." (13)

Ganga is brought back from inhabiting the space beyond the borders of transgression. Chanchala breaks those borders and inhabits the transgressive space, manipulating it for her intentions.

The commercial success of *Manichithrathazhu* led to its remakes in four Indian languages: Hindi (*Bhool Bhulaiya*- 2007), Bengali (*Rajmohol*- 2005), Tamil (*Chandramukhi*-2005), and Kannada (*Aptamitra*-2005), all of them commercially successful. The box office success of a narrative that reiterates a non-agentic woman's hysteric behaviour contained by superior masculine symbolic order discloses the acceptance and internalisation of heteropatriarchal superiority as the established gendered dictum that pervaded the collective consciousness of the public across India. This also happens a decade after the release of *Manichithrathazhu*, well into mid-2000s, indicating an unchanging gendered paradigm even after the turn of the century.

Released exactly 25 years after *Manichithrathazhu*, *Bhaagamathie* must also be read in a largely altered feminist worldview, which has come to accept women as not alien -though still rare- presence in professional and other public spaces.

Hysteria, once used to confine independent, intelligent women in the confines of patriarchal strongholds, has been successfully adapted in the hands of an agentic woman. Moreover, with the advent of modern medicine, hysteria has now become a dead disease, its symptoms diverging to comprise diseases like neurasthenia, hypochondriasis, depression, conversion reaction, and ambulatory schizophrenia. This is echoed in *Bhaagamathie* where hysteria is only a plot device, though it has retained its active status of being a potential narrative tool of agency. The commercial success of *Bhaagamathie* is an affirmative marker of the changing perspectives of the spectatorial psyche that has adapted to and accepted multiple representations of feminine equality.

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Figure 4. Bhaagamathie Theatrical Poster. (January, 2018). Retrieved September 08, 2021 from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Bhaagamathie_poster.jpg . Copyright 2018 Studio Green. Reprinted with permission as per http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/.

Figure 4. Manichithrathazhu Theatrical Poster. (n. d.). Retrieved September 08, 2021 from https://www.amazon.in/Manichithrathazhu-Mohanlal/dp/B06XP784CL. Copyright 1996-2021 amazon.com, Inc. Reprinted with permission as per http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/.

POST MEMORY AS TRAUMA IN ANEES SALIM'S *THE BLIND LADY'S DESCENDANTS*

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Abstract: *Memory studies is considered as an interdisciplinary field that uses memory as a technique for remembering the past. This paper studies the novel, The Blind Lady's Descendants by Anees Salim with cross references to the concept of post memory put forth by Prof. Marianne Hirsch, in her theoretical work, The Generation of Post Memory Writing and Visual Culture After the Holocaust (2012). Professor Marianne Hirsch, a critic and professor, at Columbia University, has written about the experiences of the past that make themselves known through stories, images and behavior they perceived while growing up.*

The study elucidates the depiction of personal trauma as post memory through the association of the present generation to the personal, collective and cultural trauma of the past generation in the novel, The Blind Lady's Descendants by Anees Salim. The novel is written in the form of a long suicide note of a twenty a -six-year-old boy, Amar Hamsa. The wave of trauma instigated by the death of his sister, is followed by Amar's discovery of the suicide of his maternal uncle, Javi. The inklings of post memory make its appearance through Javi's diary. The story of Javi, who shares a similar physical stature with him, induces Amar to blend into Javi's life and trauma. As specified by Hirsch, the transmission of trauma takes place deeply and affectively, cemented by his own imaginative investment, projection and creation. Post memory leads the former narratives, Javi's narratives, to dominate Amar's consciousness, entirely evacuating his own story. Thus, the chord is pulled between Amar and Javi through the diary. Post memory induces Amar to the same fate as Javi, making it seem like his choice.

Keywords: *Post memory, trauma, imaginative investment, former narratives, narrative reconstruction.*

Introduction

Marianne Hirsch familiarizes the concept of post memory in her work, The Generation of Post Memory Writing and Visual Culture After the Holocaust

published in 2012. The work portrays the effects of generational trauma upon the victims' descendants during the course and aftermath of traumatic events recorded in history. Post memory necessarily involves the intergenerational or transgenerational act of transfer of trauma and traumatic impact. Fundamentally, it speaks about the impact of disastrous events in the course of history on the second-generation descendants of the victims. The trauma infused on the people as a result of these events infiltrates into the memory of their inheritors and tweaks their memories too.

> "Postmemory is a powerful and very particular form of memory precisely because its connection to its object or source is mediated not through recollection but through an imaginative investment and creation. This is not to say that memory itself is unmediated, but that it is more directly connected to the past. Postmemory characterizes the experience of those who grow up, dominated by narratives that preceded their birth, whose own belated stories are evacuated by the stories of the previous generation shaped by traumatic events that can be neither understood nor recreated. (Hirsch 2002, p.22)

The concept of post memory has been examined by Hirsch with specific references to the culture of visual optics and photography during the time of the world wars. The impact of the struggle, ordeal and the harrowing experiments done on them inflicted a lifelong and also cumulative impression on them. This was passed down to the next generation too, by way of stories, photographs or any media existing at the time. It is called a return of traumatic knowledge to the next person in generation or any descendant of the victim reminding him of the experiences he or she never lived through. They tend to have mental images or visuals of distressing events in the past with very vivid relatability and proximity to the self.

> "Postmodern, for example, inscribes both a critical distance and a profound interrelation with the modern; postcolonial does not mean the end of the colonial but its troubling continuity, though, in contrast, postfeminist has been used to mark a sequel to feminism. We certainly are, still, in the era of "posts," which continue to proliferate: "post-secular," "post-human," "postcolony," "post-white." (Hirsch, 2008, p.106)

Post memory as a literal term, shares the layering of the other terms that begin with 'post'. The literal meaning denoted by the term post is the mark of 'an end or a turn of a century.' It refers to a continuation of a phase not marked by the same

characteristic features of the former phase. For example, post feminism marked the end or a transition in the former feminism phase while post memory marks the continuation of a person's memory through the agency of another. The person bears no first-hand witness of the experience or of the event himself but has flashes of it penetrating his memory and remembering.

Post memory happens as a consequence of the process of traumatic recall. It is seen as one of the novel ways in which the relationship between the generation before and generation after could be defined. The process of transfer or transmission happens between the people involved in various ways. First of all, it is to be noted that the transmission of traumatic experiences happens only between people who share a legacy of trauma. The process involves three major stages of identification, imagination and projection. Identification involves identifying oneself with the victims and hence taking over their stories and experiences as their own. Once insinuated in their own conscience, imagination sets to work to create images and photographs mentally so as to induce trauma in the present circumstance. Projections let the images and other forms of media control the psyche of the person inducing him to be a carrier of the trauma he never went through.

Anees Salim's The Blind Lady's Descendants is written in the form of a long suicide note of Amar Hamsa, the protagonist of the novel. Amar Hamsa is a member of an orthodox Muslim family which has its own internal fissures and politics. He is the child of two individuals who, according to his opinion, should never have married at all. Hence, a broken family, parental discord and pertinent sibling rivalry with his eldest brother and sister, marks the childhood of Amar. He breaks the strange norms of the middle-class household by first, becoming an atheist and later, by disclosing all of their safely guarded horrified truths in the suicide note. The situation of Amar as a little boy in the household is quite worsened when his second sister, Sophiya, dies by drowning. Sophiya remained his only solace in the harsh and damp household and with her death, the flames went out, leaving him in pitch darkness. It is then that he finds a diary of his maternal uncle, Jasi from the dingy old bungalow. The memory of Javi poured out by himself in the diary, invokes the conscience of Amar while it connects the two of the same household through trauma bonding. Slowly as Amar reads through Javi's words, he reconstructs the world on Javi's terms, steps into his uncle's shoes and tries to make sense of the surroundings with it. Identifying the similar chords that connect Amar and Javi, amplifying one's influence over the other, Amar moves onto life exactly like Javi. This projects the impact and intervention of post

memory in the life of individuals, hit by trauma and dragged on to the past by the connection with history.

Discussion

2.a. Inherited Memories

"This boy is looking more and more like Javi to me." (Salim, 2014, p.59)

Amar's family friend, Dr. Iqbal utters these words while seeing Amar for the first time. These statements made by the people in the vicinity of Amar throw light on the psychological turn of mind he experiences before striking up a chord of connection with his late uncle. While the similarity is jarring and unavoidably present right before the eyes, this marks the starting of further associations, internal and external. Hence, the intrusion of traumatic memories into Amar's brain is a direct result of exposure to Javi's tales and the relatability of their belief systems.

> "The challenge for us in the next generations is precisely to acknowledge and to signal our own distance from the traumatic events that preceded us and not to appropriate them for ourselves. Of course, our own investment can be great, and trauma cannot so easily be contained, it seeps out of its bounds, connecting disparate subjectivities. Inherited trauma transmitted familially – or even culturally – can have significant effects on our lives, but it is not we who have suffered persecution or deportation." (*An Interview with Marianne Hirsch*, 2016)

The diary is not the only source of information or media for Amar that acts like a window to the past. His mother, Asma, also shares her memories about Javi that kindles a light inside Amar. Javi lays bare a jigsaw puzzle of their household, involving the many dimly lit corridors of minds of the people who live there. This is left bare for Amar to resolve or provide answers for. It is through the intervention of these memories that Amar attempts to solve it or at least arrive at plausible answers before giving up. Suddenly, Amar finds himself facing questions regarding his life's purpose as against the existentialism he has fought with all throughout those young years in the company of his family. Finally, there comes a stage when Amar starts thinking and acting exactly like Javi. The different places and objects remind him only of Javi's occurrences there.

Kaja Silverman, an American art historian and a critical theorist, in her theoretical work, *The Threshold of a Visible World,* (Silverman, 1996) talks about heteropathic memory. The memory explores the relationship between the self and the other,

especially both belonging to the same familial roots. It describes a situation whereby the memories, desires and struggles of another gets implanted in the psyche of the self. As a result, the acceptance of their struggles as one's own and fully transforming into them by word and action. The initial process of identification happens through 'identification at a distance.' The person observes and listens to the story and each step he takes in the direction of the individual has a result of distancing himself from the self. Hence, he aligns himself to the other person through displacement.

With each story and experience that is shared to Amar, he finds himself moving further away from himself. He aligns with his uncle's wisps of memories and walks further never to find himself again. Amar dissipates into Javi and this is brought about by the effect of inherited memories. He never walks back again nor even considers the option of stepping back to a life that is his own. He falls in love with the same woman as his uncle and even opts for ending his life the same way as he did. This puts forth that the impending doom is a consequence of the effect of post memory evidently.

Aleida Assman, German professor who has worked on cultural and communicative memory, maintains that 'the memory boom reflects the general desire to reclaim the past as an indispensable part of the present', in her work, *Transformations between History and Memory* (2008).

Diary is seen to institutionalize the memories of Javi by being the novel of his life secrets. When Amar starts reading the diary the transfer and communication of experiences happen through flashes of imagery. Another unit of this transmission is the family itself. The concept and features of post memory talks about the ways in which second-generation fiction transmits painful narratives and the effects of the pain inculcated in the reader leads them into a psychological crisis. It is at the moment the stories start blending into each other, 'the other'(Javi) displaces 'the self'(Amar).

2.b. A Sense of Living Connection with the Dead

Post memory elucidates on the different mediators of past memories onto the second generation. It includes literature, testimony, photographs and various modes of technological resources of the present world. Here, the diary is a literary source and a mediator of memories for Amar. The intervention of history and the transference of the same has been done through these mediators. However, certain intricate similarities in the lives of both act as a catalyst in the process. Here, in the case of Amar Hamsa and Javi, the intensely vulnerable childhoods both had is the

facilitator of post memory. During the intimate exchange of bedtime stories, Amar found his connection with the uncle who shared much more than physical similarities with him. The trauma of Sophiya's death too was one of the events in Amar's life that sped up the course. Hence, the diary can be considered a wordless emotive milieu to the terrible tale.

'Acts of Transfer' are the ways in which memories are shared, across individuals and generations observed Paul Connerton (Connerton, 1989), British anthropologist, while describing the different ways in which the transfer of memory happens.

Throughout the story of Amar, the events unfolded by itself as a fairy tale or a nightmare or a myth. The workings of a logical mind are suspended in all of the above three cases. Hence, practical mindset and logical thinking does not border the developments in a mind tarnished by the impact of post memory. The memories or events are simply internalized without complete or total comprehension. They remain a hazy fog persisting inside the brains of the people infested with it.

2.c. Re memory to ascertain the Broken Chords?

Sigmund Freud has classified memories into two types: deep and ordinary (Hutton, 1994). This is explained in terms of the three levels of consciousness classified by him, the preconscious, conscious, and unconscious. Deep memory signifies itself as the repressed memories or desires inside the person while ordinary memory refers to the normal account of memories inside a human brain. In addition to this, post memory requires the knowledge of a concept of rememory to explain the delayed sway of post memory.

Rememory in its literal terms refers to a transposition. It involves a descent through history into the world of the dead. Here, Amar descends into the world of Javi, who died years before. He uses the channel of the diary to travel back in time so as to forge a connection between his dead uncle and himself in a traumatic household. The features of rememory include communicability, its permanence and its ability to be shared to another person. There lies the justification for adopting the prefix 're' for the term memory. This prefix specifically has been used because the term's characteristics carries with it, a certainty of repetition. This repetition occurs almost like a threat that voices out the truth of its ability to be re-enacted and repeated.

> "Some things you forget. Other things you never do...Places, places are still there. If a house burns down, it's gone, but the

> place, the picture of it- stays and not just in my rememory but out there in the world."
>
> "Can other people see it?" asked Denver.
>
> "Oh yes. Oh yes, yes, yes. Some day you be walking down the road and you hear something or see something going on. So clear. And you think it's you thinking it up. A thought picture. But no. It's when you bump into a rememory that belongs to someone else. (Morrison, 1987)

This is a resonation from one of the characters in Toni Morrison's work, Beloved, an example of rememory in the work. The description Morrison has given alludes to the interventions and workings of rememory.

Salim's novel contains the infusions of rememory from the beginning till Amar decides to take his own life. One of the examples is the train tunnel where both Javi and Amar used to spend time with company or alone. The train tunnel signified the arrival of an impending doom for both of the people. The second and the most significant intervention of rememory is the phase of love in Amar and Javi's life. Javi possessed an affection for his cousin Suhuda right from the beginning of his youth. However, they never got together nor did their love story bloom the way they wished. A classic paradigm is noted here with respect to Amar as he observes himself falling in love with her just like Javi. This is an instance of rememory as it happens as a result of the influence of post memory on Amar. Formerly, he did not possess any romantic or lustful emotions for Aunt Suhuda. He developed these only after blending with Javi and his memories.

When the sea was calm behind our school, leaving the breakwater dry for days and the hoot of trains came into the classroom, I thought of bad luck visiting our home. (Salim, 2014)

Rememories affected Amar quite intensely as the dingy realities of the bungalow meant the same to both Javi and himself.

Conclusion

> A revised understanding of postmemory as activism can help us to analyze literary uses of the past in a more critical vein. Instead of lavishing our approval indiscriminately on historical novels as though they were an unquestionable boon for society, we can begin to gauge the effects of these fictions against the

> intention of their authors and likewise distinguish between more and less productive attitudes toward the past.
>
> (*Postmemory as Trauma? Some Theoretical Problems and Their Consequences for Contemporary Literary Criticism*, 2018)

The recent developments in the field of trauma studies and memory studies put forth their ideas on the legacy of trauma and its persisting effects. Post memory is one of the effects of the continuation of a traumatic experience. The carriers of trauma belong to the previous generation while the recipient of memories belongs to the community of the second generation. In the novel, The Blind Lady's Descendants, the protagonist, Amar undergoes traumatic recall through the diary of his late uncle Javi. This diary, the suicide note of Javi is the mediator of past trauma, thereby leading to the intervention of post memory.

Amar's household consists of his mother and father who were not on good terms with each other since their marriage and also an elder brother, Akmal and an elder sister, Jasira. It is the death of his second sister Sophiya in an accident that inflicts trauma upon Amar since Sophiya had been his only solace in the household. This is also one of the reasons why he was lured into Javi's memories through the diary. His neighborhood and family had impressed upon him the resemblance to Javi in his physical stature. While reading the diary, he discovers the mental connection to his uncle too, which entices him to step into Javi's being. While the rest of the household remains blissfully unaware of the changes or the blaring parallel that Amar bears to Javi, post memorial inklings work their way out into the person.

Anees Salim is able to capture the jilt produced by the impact of persistent and continual trauma. This is significant for the recognition and treatment of trauma, especially in the present scenario. The field has been explored much and psychology is also trying to grapple probable solutions to reduce or mitigate the traumatic impact on different people. Discovering the key to Amar's life, lays bare the cumulative effects of unrecognized depression and the intensified impacts of a broken family with sibling rivalry. This, combined with the intrusions of post memory through the diary, caused Amar to fall back into the pit his uncle fell, years before. This points to an inescapable vicious cycle of trauma when left unrecognized would lead to similar effects on different people.

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DIVERGENT NIHILISTS IN THE FACE OF DEATH: LEVIN AND BAZAROV

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Abstract: *Tolstoy and Turgenev shared an ambivalent relationship, turning hostile over questions of progress and faith. This article will draw a contrast between narratives on death in Anna Karenina and Fathers and Sons. Levin and Bazarov comprehend sickness and death through their authors' larger attitudes towards poverty, disease, classism, and Orthodox Christianity in Russia. This reveals their separate forms of Nihilism. Nikolai's tuberculosis is tied to his sexuality, drinking, and atheism. Levin offers no dignity to discourse on death. Religion for the dying becomes a desperate last plea. In contrast to this is Turgenev's pragmatic hero Bazarov. He is fearless of the mhuzik dead by typhus, which costs him his life when he is infected while performing autopsy. Death becomes a mystery to both Levin and Bazarov and while the former is envious of those who possess its knowledge, the latter feels indifference. The article will explore how prolonged proximity to illness transforms language. It will also focus on the philosophical musings on the unfathomable chasm that opens up between the dying and the living.*

Keywords: *Nihilism, 19th century Russian Literature, Tuberculosis, Tolstoy, Turgenev*

Russian nihilism was confined to a small but influential group of its citizens. This group drew people from aristocratic, intellectual and the proletariat class. It was a direct result of the failed 1848 revolution in Paris which had inspired Russians to raise voice against Tsarist oppression and the practice of serfdom. Along with this, the death of Tsar Nicholas I in 1855 loosened the hold of censorship over writers allowing widespread dissent. The literature of the time presented characters and themes battling with the opposing forces of nihilism against peasant values and religion. Ivan Turgenev's *Fathers and Sons* dealt with nihilism in the character of Yevgeny Vassilyich Bazarov and Leo Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina* in that of Konstantin Dmitrivich Levin and his brother, Nikolai Dmitrivich.

The primary identifiers of Russian pride at the moment were its fast expanding cities, industries, railways and the wars fought to fulfill duties of faith and Slavic brotherhood. These pursuits were prioritized over rural agriculture, a starving peasantry and an extremely inefficient, even non-existent, public health care

system. For Russia to assume its role of world's spiritual leader all these issues had to be addressed. There emerged opposing camps, those who believed in Westernization and those who valued Russian folk and popular culture. Hence, began the era of emancipation of serfs who made up eighty percent of Russia's population, setting up of universities and schools, advancement in science and technology and the race towards armaments. Alexander Herzen, Russian political writer, was known as the Father of Russian Socialism. He had great influence on Leo Tolstoy. Herzen, after being disappointed in European values, put his faith in the Russian commune, i.e. *mir,* and agrarian socialism, as the new guiding principle for the world. (Freeborn, 230) Tolstoy championed these values back home as an answer to the nihilistic tendencies of his own spirit and those around him. Turgenev, on the other hand, looked to Europe for Russia's salvation. Leo Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina* and Ivan Turgenev's *Fathers and Sons* were written during this period. Probing into the narratives of death and illness in the two works reveals how perceptions of mortality were intertwined with the class and the politics of those infected. Levin and Bazarov's comprehension of sickness and death are an extension of the authors' larger attitudes towards the social and moral issues plaguing Russia. In the character of Bazarov, Turgenev draws attention to Russian nihilism which was based in intellectual and social iconoclasm, whereas Tolstoy writes about a spiritual nihilism which he felt plagued everyone but the Russian peasants. (St. John Murphy, 8) The key difference between the characters of Levin and Bazarov were that Tolstoy identified with Levin, he was Levin, whereas Turgenev stood against Bazarov despite being fascinated by him.

The consumptive Nikolai in *Anna Karenina* contains all the attributes which were associated with the illness at the time. He is sensitive, he is consumed by his passions, intellectually brilliant and his personality is one of indulging in excesses. Tuberculosis though highly infectious was free of any stigma or ostracization because of the class it affected. Along with the poor and the destitute it spread among the aristocrats, the artists and the wealthy. This accorded a degree of allure to the infection. Unlike other diseases that were on a rampage during that time, i.e. cholera or typhus, tuberculosis was even coveted.

> "In fact, the tuberculosis epidemic was probably the first price the middle class had to pay … for its capitalist revolution. It was not just the exploited employees who were dropping like flies; … the leisure classes also died from the disease, despite their ample board and enviable idleness." (Latimer, 1018)

The sufferer of the pulmonary tuberculosis or Consumption exuded an aura of melancholy, despair and sorrow which was enhanced by the elongated, emaciated face, bright feverish eyes and a dull pallor. These were ennobling traits to the romantic sensibility of the age. From writers to painters all sought the lean, bloodless countenance of a consumptive. And yet the reality of physically suffering through the disease and meeting one's end was agonizing. Teetering into an existential crisis was not uncommon for the patients.

Nikolai, the aristocrat becomes the sole sufferer, a passive offering by the artist at the altar of radical beliefs. Meanwhile the lower orders he bravely associates with in the novel are reprehensible even in their misery and compassion for him. Consumption was the last stage of the tuberculosis infection and there was no returning from its diagnosis. A long drawn out death triggered all sorts of questions pertaining to life and the human soul in an excitable and hyper sensitive Russian imagination. This is one of the reasons why many novels from 19th century Russia have lingering descriptions of the sufferings of a consumptive. It blends seamlessly with the widespread themes of cynicism and human affliction. Typhus was spreading during the same period in Russia. People weakened by hunger had low immunity and improper hygiene especially in the winter months. Typhus was a disease of a lower social order compared to consumption. The conditions making infection viable leaned heavily towards groups living in poverty. This included the urban poor, prisoners, soldiers off to war and the homeless. Typhus disproportionately killed young men more than women and children.

In Turgenev's novel *Fathers and Sons,* Bazarov contracts it from a dead *mhuzik* on whose body he was performing an autopsy. In Russia, doctors and physicians constituted sixty percent of the total casualties from Typhus. Bazarov goes on to develop the major symptoms of the disease, first a fever, a nose bleed, followed by a peculiar rash and finally mental confusion. His suffering is romantic in its tenor not by virtue of his profession and dogged pursuit of science alone but also due to his recent disappointment in love. He does not belong to the decrepit peasantry and poor who usually contract the disease. However, the prolonged poetic element is absent from Turgenev's literary description of Bazarov's illness and eventual death. It is because the time period from sepsis to death was not too long. Unlike a diagnosis of consumption where there could be remissions, relapses and many years before a patient capitulated to it, typhus worked quickly. Time forced a consumptive patient to confront and deliberate over acts of living, faith and courage in the face of imminent death on a regular basis. Turgenev wrote *Fathers and Sons* as a battle of wits being fought between an older and a younger

generation in Russia, the former progressives and the latter out and out nihilists. His decision to have Bazarov die from a disease so abrupt and so unforgiving was taken as an offense by the young radicals and nihilists. They blamed him for being biased and taking the easy way out against a nemesis he was incapable of outwitting.

> "Bazarov's is a tragic death not only in its accidental futility, in the extinguishing of a life so full of hope, but also in its suggestion of Bazarov's superfluity, as if in his arrogance he had stolen forbidden fire and suffered the punishment of all mortals." (Freeborn, 284)

His fate reminds one of a remark made by Lenin, "All attention to this problem, comrades. Either lice will conquer socialism, or socialism will conquer lice." (Patterson, 379)

When the first half of *Anna Karenina* was written, the seeds of Tolstoy's later anarchic radicalism were nascent. In the second half of the book he was caught in a crisis of unbelief. These tensions were revealed in Levin's lack of faith, disillusionment with life and also in his contemplation of suicide. Dmitrii Sergeevich Merzhovskii, a Russian critic, saw Tolstoy's spirituality as a species of nihilism; one which rejected of Orthodox Christianity without offering a corresponding affirmation. This occurred during the most productive period of Tolstoy's life, both artistically and personally. Tolstoy's progressive politics while in agreement with the broad strokes of what Nikolai stands for, i.e. emancipation of the serfs, inefficiency of Russian bureaucracy and irrationality of Orthodox practices, did not advocate for a complete break from all institutions of Russian life. These included the Church, family unit, politics, the aristocracy, land ownership and a certain national pride. At the stage of writing Nikolai, Tolstoy's spiritual nihilism had not completely overtaken him. Turgenev, however, had predicted what was to come for Tolstoy spiritually,

> "I have lately received … 'Confession' of Tolstoy that has been forbidden by censorship. I read it with the greatest interest. A remarkable piece of writing… if carried out to the end would lead to the saddest denial of energetic human life… this is a kind of Nihilism." (Schuyler, 194)

At this time the Hereditary Theory of infection was in vogue. Nikolai's unbridled passions took most of the blame with a curious lack of sympathy for his physical state. Discussion of his physical state is always accompanied by a reminder of the 'wrongness' of his beliefs. There is pity and revulsion directed at him as a participant and enabler of his afflictions. Nikolai is held majorly at fault for having

broken off familial ties and choosing to live with a gypsy mistress, Marya Nikolaevna. This along with his alcoholism and contempt for all things of value to any 'civilized' Russian is hinted at as the cause of his fall. Levin's opinion is not as harsh as that of his older brother Sergei regarding their dissolute sibling. He is ambivalent, as was Tolstoy at the time, in his non committal stance on the issues plaguing Russia. Levin's views on Nikolai's situation can be summarized as follows- hypocrisy in love and marriage was distasteful but to grant the status of wife to a mistress or prostitute was taking it too far, alleviating the condition of the peasant was noble but to live among the most wretched was unnatural and deliberately inviting trouble. The sufferings of Nikolai become 'retribution' against these follies.

> "…intellectual sensitivity and culture were linked with the disease as irresistibly as were unconventionality or hypersexuality." (Dan Latimer, 1023)

Moral pronouncements were always dubious to Tolstoy. Perhaps the later Tolstoy, who was to give up all Russian upper classes' delusions, would have taken a kinder view of Nikolai's fate. As far as the novel is concerned the emotional fallback for Levin remains confined to the sibling bond, childhood nostalgia and as a reminder of his own inevitable death. Bakhtin points out how Tolstoy was a writer who did not show "death from without but within". The dying person's consciousness was of utmost interest to Tolstoy. Death was never about the grieving, surrounding friends and family. As such scenes of death in Tolstoy had no element of collective grief but of individual terror and isolation (Emerson, 70)

In *Anna Karenina* Tolstoy is drawing the line that must not be crossed in the pursuit of justice by presenting the similarities and differences between Nikolai's views and those of Levin's. The moral degeneracy of Nikolai has physical manifestations; the science of infection has not entered this discourse yet. Ironically the word of caution which Nikolai's end was meant to offer to the readers of the novel would have prevented the spread of Consumption. Living in overcrowded areas, lack of hygiene and sanitation, alcoholism, malnutrition, proximity to those affected with the disease were the reasons behind the endemic. If Nikolai had stuck to his privileged lot despite his passionate nature, he might have lived for much longer. For the poor this choice could not exist but as a character whose death attempts to make revelations regarding the human soul and ideologies, it was significant.

> "The psychic disruption of the worker as he or she was torn away from a world which, in spite of its poverty, was one where the worker had felt at

> home…, one where ancestral values were clear…The new urban life offered unusual new cruelties and solitude, certain hopelessness as well…including alcoholism and other chemical substitutes for a natural sense of well being." (Latimer, 1019)

Oblonsky too frequented these 'houses' of ill repute and Vronsky went off to the Russo-Turkish war, both situations documented to be hotbeds of the endemic but their prolonged suffering would not have achieved the impact that the death of the 'radical' Nikolai did. This makes it a telling artistic choice on Tolstoy's part. In a way, Tolstoy and Turgenev mirror each other in choosing the character which discomfits their conventionality the most as their sacrificial lamb.

On first seeing Nikolai, Levin finds him looking pathetic; he notices the expression of his eyes as being 'suspicious'. These terms are not objectively applicable to Nikolai. They are subjective and a projection of Levin's own understanding of his brother's state of mind. The constant fidgeting and twitching of his brother are revolting to him. This repulsion is a response in him, not an attribute of the movements in themselves. Tolstoy avoids giving descriptions of Nikolai's elevated genius which appears heightened by his nervous protruding eyes, emaciated face and lanky frame. There is only the painful reality of his labored breathing, 'remains of lungs', and 'empty chest'. His brother is not an object of pity but horror, an embodiment of death to be feared. Nikolai presents his analysis of what Russian politics and the Russian peasant needs. It is written by Tolstoy as a succession of clichéd radical views disallowing serious engagement with what he is saying. Nikolai's revolutionary politics is reduced to a footnote. After a quick overview of his personal relations with Marya, his treatment of her, to his habits of eating hungrily and greedily, his politics makes him appear more ridiculous and insincere. The only reaction the diatribe evokes in Levin is of his attention being drawn to the red patches which appear on Nikolai's skin when he gets increasingly excited. The diseased physical form is inescapable and colors every thought and speech of Nikolai's.

Tuberculosis was known to trigger a period of Invalidism in the patient. Invalidism implied that one's mental and physical faculties and resources were obsessively put to the use of betterment and preservation of health. When Nikolai is introduced in the novel his consumption is in its last stage. It is made evident that not more than a few months remain before he will succumb to it. When he shows signs of hope after Kitty arranges the communion for him it seems as though his diagnosis could have been the key cause behind his abrasive Nihilism. Perhaps his illness marred any hopes of a 'civilized' marriage for him. Marya, while comforting him becomes

another means to hold in contempt a society whose doors are forever closed to him. If association with him was awkward for friends and family before it is now impossible. It can be argued that Nikolai's political Nihilism follows in the wake of his illness. This ambivalence and loathing of his own self and life makes his radical politics seem depressing and not liberating. He demands Levin to respect Marya as his wife but later humiliates her by calling her a 'slut'. It is not hypocrisy or weakness but an objective lack of any confining set of values which he can trust and abide by. Levin on the other hand is a skeptic at best. His spiritual nihilism persists even in the wake of his blissful family life and enviable social status. The presence of disease in *Anna Karenina* is a plot device to further the philosophical framework of the narrative; unlike *Fathers and Sons* where Typhus and Bazarov's nihilism attempt to add to the commentary on the politics and the abysmal state of healthcare in Russia.

Levin remarks how as a young man Nikolai turned to religion to bridle his passionate nature but his family and social circle mocked him for it. Later when he let go and dived headlong into the gratification of those same passions everyone despised him. After the disappointment at Scherbatskys where Kitty rejects his proposal for Vronsky, Levin is submerged in self loathing. In abject despair he is reminded of Nikolai whom he has been avoiding all this while. In his moment of shame and vulnerability Levin understands how close he is to Nikolai. He understands how even the most privileged and self satisfied man lives at the edge of a precipice of despair. This exposes the delusion that a great chasm exists between the 'respectable' and 'unrespectable'. Instead of extending a helping hand or working towards leveling the ground of inequality, society chooses to shun and despise, destroying all hopes of rehabilitation. Tolstoy developed this thought later in his fiction in *Resurrection.*

The three brothers in *Anna Karenina* are intellectuals in their own right, differing by degrees in their commitment to radical thought. Their ailments as such are shown to correspond with the views they hold on to. Nikolai's unchecked passions have had a very physical consequence for him. Sergei's dried up intellect has pervaded his life with a stony loneliness that is made evident in his unfruitful romance with Varenka and Levin is balanced between the two. He understands Sergei's mind and Nikolai's soul. But he sides with neither of them. His ailment remains spiritual. Tolstoy struggled with accepting that in Nikolai's illness was a random savagery of a disease which was taking over his country during that age. He focuses on pinpointing the specific flaws in Nikolai's temperament which if avoided could help one evade the same fate. Even this had a certain scientific basis.

Theophile Laennec, a student of the disease and inventor of the stethoscope, said that 'unsatisfied desires', nostalgia, and passions of 'profound melancholy' can and do lead to the onset of the disease. The experience of an illness prolonged and a death postponed reveals the shifting nature of the emotions. Human adaptability lends fickleness to our perception of suffering even when it is of those closest to us. When Nikolai does not die at the expected hour a triviality sets in. Death becomes a thing that happens to everyone and the fuss around it is an undignified inconvenience. It is 'impolite' to talk of it, unseemly to expose it to the healthy and selfish to draw attention to it.

Turgenev was hounded for his immovable Moderatism his entire life. Yet the same Turgenev, in Bazarov, created a fearsome nihilist against whom all the well bred Pavels and mild natured Arkadys of Russia paled. Bazarov is the "apostle of nihilism" or one of the "new men" who reject all authority except those laid down by the laws of natural science (Freeborn, 285). The way Bazarov contracts typhus and meets his end does not reflect as pervasively upon the entirety of his politics as it does with Nikolai. There is more of a cruel chaos in Bazarov's fate unlike that of Nikolai which has a pronounced tragic element to it. His death is a senseless waste whereas Nikolai's is a life wasted. Turgenev sets up Bazarov's beliefs to be a violent black hole swallowing all and releasing nothing. Other characters are given a progressive politics while Bazarov is given a lack of politics, a negative space that requires all to be destroyed first. The young nihilists in Russia who stood by Bazarov could, however, choose to believe that it was love for a woman which led him to his end and not his pursuit of natural sciences alone. Anna Odinstova's rejection makes him careless of his life, it also makes him betray the emotionless objectivity of a nihilist, and he drowns himself in his father's medical practice. This makes him perform the autopsy on the dead peasant where he contracts the infection. The older generation might say it was his heedless pragmatism that led to an early, avoidable death.

When Bazarov gets the deadly cut the country doctor does not even have a lunar caustic to give to him. The state of vulnerability in which these doctors performed their duty in a country ravaged by the infection was bleak. The dignity of profession offered to doctors depended upon the class of the patients falling to their care. The German doctor who comes with Anna Odinstova at the end is a celebrated being. But the military and rural practitioners were shown to be eccentric, reckless and misfits in good society. Even though, statistically, they bore the brunt of all contagions. Bazarov is shown to be contemptuous of the upper classes but he does not deliberately seek out the company of the lowest. He is

shown to admire the genteel, duchess like graces of Anna Odinstova. There is none of the moral passion or compassion for the poor in him. The bleeding heart is missing. Even in his contemplation of his own death he sees this same meaninglessness, the same that he might have seen in the deaths of all the peasants and all the rich men. Rejection of all moral abstractions, philosophies and high flung emotions is paramount to him.

> "He [Bazarov] is neither demonically evil in practice nor morbidly garrulous in theory… While brusque, and intolerant of fools, his revolt against society never takes sadistic or masochistic forms." (Clive, 216)

For a scientific nihilist we always remain bodies and physiological functions. Love becomes a combination of flesh and chemical reactions and illnesses become a nuisance ending in death which has nothing to offer but decay. For a spiritual nihilist, like Tolstoy or Levin, we are bodies only when nearing death else we are minds and souls. Anna Odinstova was a splendid body which Bazarov would have liked to see on a dissecting table, same with the sick peasant whose body was a splendid specimen as far as the cause of furthering science was concerned. For Levin his brother's body became a site of decay and disgust even while he was alive. The difference between Levin's and Bazarov's nihilism is also evident in their reactions to rejection in love. Levin is humiliated and Bazarov delves into further apathy and cynicism. Bazarov can laugh at himself, something the ideologically committed Levin cannot do.

Bazarov's father tiptoes around him, helplessly offering nothing but silence to his wife. This is the inability of language to contain an experience violating the law of nature, that of a parent outliving the child. His father settles on the word 'crisis'. When Bazarov gets impatient with his father and asks him to call his blood infection by its scientific name Pyaemia, it again exposes the limitations of scientific terminology in capturing an experience which transcends the body. To name a thing is not always to comprehend it. Bazarov while contemplating his own death offers nothing to the readers. One wonders at Bazarov though. He clings to the desire of life, the 'present-ness' of it. The old peasant, who died, he says, at least had the time to tire of this desire. But even for a follower of the natural sciences this desire is not out of place. Every living organism functions on the principle of increasing the longevity of its life. He is at the cusp of realizing a great mystery to life when he says that 'death is ancient but it comes fresh to each of us'. A few more leaps and he would have known that this applies to everything; kinship, love and friendship. Knowing the formula does not make all experiences formulaic.

Bazarov refuses communion and Nikolai offers a prayer close to his death as a mere 'comedy' being performed for Kitty's benefit. The flicker of hope it gives rise to is an embarrassment to everyone once his condition starts deteriorating again. It is not only due to the Russian temperament that all artistic and literary works dealing with this period contain characters that are in a state of flux, in doubtfulness regarding long standing human and divine institutions. The heroes are anti heroes with thoughts and beliefs contrary to the conventional understanding of the values a protagonist must stand for. Much of the thoughts and speeches of Levin, Nikolai and Bazarov are shocking, awkward and unpleasant. Bazarov's flaws are neither moral nor ethical yet there is violence in his personality. His refusals to extend courtesy to any age or custom make it impossible to feel affection for him. The presumed adherence to any sort of social contract is completely lacking in Bazarov's personality. In hindsight it isn't too great a folly since in Russia, of the time, the social contract at the level of the Nation and its people hadn't emerged. The Russian State was failing majority of its population in matters of food, security and healthcare while simultaneously saturating their lives with Orthodox beliefs, fear of the Tsar, and jingoistic Nationalism. This was a mockery of any delusions of viewing its society as a united entity.

> "…if Bazarovism is a disease, then it is a disease of our time, and must be endured to the end, no matter what palliatives and amputations are employed. Treat Bazarovism however you please- that is your business; but you will not be able to put a stop to it, it is just the same as cholera." (St. John Murphy, 12)

In such an environment it was not difficult to understand where Bazarov's acerbic attitude towards reverence for Art and Aesthetics was stemming from or why Nikolai could not reconcile himself to his class. A hungry artist creating masterpieces in Europe and being celebrated by the masses was not the same as expecting the hungry Russian people to celebrate their great poets simply out of a taste for Culture and Patriotism. By the end of the nineteenth century however, Nihilism as a movement in Russia did not survive. Its leading figures were either dead or had been exiled and internal problems of Russia branched out into different ideologies. What Nihilism achieved successfully was the break of Russian intelligentsia from Romanticism and a movement into secularization. In political sphere, Nihilism evolved and led to Marxist-Leninist thought within Russia.

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DISSOCIATIVE AMNESIA AND MEMORY: A CRITICAL STUDY ON SYLVIA FRASER'S *MY FATHER'S HOUSE: A MEMOIR OF INCEST AND OF HEALING*

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Abstract: *My Father's House by Sylvia Fraser is an impressive attempt to depict the realities and horrors of father-daughter incest. Even though it is an incest memoir, the memory of the act is long forgotten or dissociated from the true self. The non-fiction thus throws light into the concepts of memory gap and dissociative amnesia and illustrates how dissociation helps to maintain the equilibrium of a person's sanity. The paper cross examines how these gaps in memory as well the reclamation helps to overcome the physical and mental trauma suffered as a result of sexual abuse. Fraser distinctively portray reality from her regained memory. It analyses the ways in which the abuse transformed the trajectory of Fraser's life and her immediate relation to the outside world.*

Keywords: *Incest, Sexual Abuse, Memory Gap, Dissociative Amnesia*

Life writing is a much-debated genre of thought these days with the surge of memory studies. Partly, would be because, as British biographer Hermione Lee says, 'when the distinction between biography and autobiography is deliberately blurred sort of'. One might form the idea that autobiographies or, testimonies for that matter, rely purely on the dynamics of memory to take its course on writing/telling. That is the reason why Sylvia Fraser's 1987 non-fiction book *My Father's House: A Memoir of Incest and of Healing* need to be validated. *My Father's House*, even though it is an incest memoir, the memory of the act is long forgotten or dissociated from the true self. Fraser, after forty years of amnesia, found herself diving into a whirl pool of shadowed memories which brought forth the painful reality of incest, abuse and trauma. It is difficult for the author as well as the reader to comprehend the upwhirling of memories triggered here and there and for the ease of understanding, Fraser has made use of typography to demark her reality from her memories.

> I have used italics to indicate thoughts, feelings and experiences pieced together from recently recovered memories, and to indicate dreams. (Fraser)

This typographical distinction is to provide a definite boundary between how things were before and after her memory disturbances. It can be considered as a deliberate effort by the author to find the missing pieces to her coherent soul. The italics represented her recovered memories.

According to the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, dissociative amnesia is an inability in a non- medical condition to recall important, usually of a traumatic or stressful nature, that is too extensive to be explained by normal forgetfulness. Dissociative amnesia is one among the group of dissociative mental disorders. 'It involves disruptions or breakdowns of memory, consciousness, awareness, identity, and/or perceptions.' It happens when an individual tries to block out a particular incident or information, accompanied usually by a stressful or traumatic event. In such cases, the memory loss goes well beyond normal forgetfulness and induces memory gaps in a person's life. The memories are not erased but deep buried in one's subconscious mind brought to surface by any triggering incident/s. Fraser's buried memories was the after effect of her abuse at the hands of her father. Fraser created a split personality to break away from the sexual abuse she endured.

> When the conflict caused by my sexual relationship with my father became too acute to bear, I created a secret accomplice for my daddy by splitting my personality in two. Thus, somewhere around the age of seven, I acquired another self with memories and experiences separate from mine, whose existence was unknown to me. In future whenever my daddy approached me sexually I turned into my other self, and afterwards I did not remember anything that ever happened. (Fraser 15)

And her real, socially projected self becomes the 'other', while her split personality takes control of her life. All the memories of abuse get buried within this the split personality, making it difficult for the 'real' Fraser to understand what was happening to her.

> Down down down the stairs I go, dragging Teddy Umcline by one ear. It is midday. My daddy, who works the night shift, is in his blue-striped pyjamas, I hitch at the pink sunsuit that Granny Cragg made for me, waiting to be invited into his bedroom. My daddy give me candies. My

> daddy gives me chocolate-chip cookies. Of all the people in the world, I'm my daddy's favorite. (My daddy and I 5)

Fraser's earliest memory of her abuse did not allow her to completely own her truth that her father was abusing her. It is not a submerged memory as it is not italicised. It can be read as a form of denial from her 'real' personality to acknowledge that truth. To overcome the emotional imbalance created by the abuse, initially she focussed all her hate and anger into inanimate objects and other people rather than the father, her abuser. For example, her house, her brown stockings, and very importantly her own body. She pushed the memory of pain which slowly turned into fear and guilt and consoled herself that she is her father's favourite child and that is all she needs to consider. This is where the split personality Fraser created helps her. It helps her to swamp her physical pain as well as the mental anguish of being betrayed by one's own father to her shadow self. This facilities Fraser to lead a 'normal' life because she is not over burdened with the emotional weight of her truth. so, whenever her father abused her, her shadow self is the one suffering it and once it is over, the 'real' Fraser no longer had any memory of it. The gaps in her memory literally signifies the absence of the 'real' Fraser throughout her childhood whereas the abuse was inflicted upon her split image. Fraser's life is a baffling contradiction with/ without her knowing the bits and pieces of it.

Although forgotten memory may be inaccessible to consciousness, it sometimes continues to influence behaviour. These submerged memory and associated trauma influenced her behaviour in more than one way i.e., Fraser experienced nightmares and convulsions.

> I am running running running. My rubber boot catches an invisible wire, pitching me forward on my belly. When I come to I am lying in the snow screaming while my hands tear at bare branches. My sister fetches our mother. "She's having another fit. She's turning blue!". (11)

Psychological studies show that, non-epileptic seizures are induced as a result of sexual abuse. "They resemble epileptic seizures but lack the physiological symptoms of genuine epilepsy and are psychological in origin. physiological symptoms of genuine epilepsy and are psychological in origin". Fraser continued to have convulsions all throughout her childhood. Slowly her fits were given little to no importance.

Fraser's behaviour also underwent considerable changes during this period. Even though she still obliged her father, she recalls that she started to develop a genuine aversion towards her father, though she knew not the reason to do so. Not only her

father, anything and anyone who resembled her father or his actions. Like, she stepped back whenever she had to establish a physical contact with anyone for that matter, Fraser recalls that she hated to give her grandmother a kiss whenever they visited her:

> I struggle against the heaving of my stomach, the yammering of my heart, trying not to experience, before I have to, that instant when the sweet smell of Other grandmother's gardenia powder overwhelms me and my lips are swallowed in the decaying pulpiness of her cheek. Why this revulsion for an old woman's kiss? (19)

Later when the gaps in her memory stared to fill, she realised that her grandmother's caved-in cheeks resembled the texture of her father's scrotum. Her active memory failed her for almost forty years where she tried to find answers to numerous questions. She bethought how she hated having anyone over at her house, even for a birthday party. For her house was an epitome of something dark, unnameable. She failed to understand the deep-rooted cause for her hatred and fear.

Her father's abuse transformed the trajectory of her life in multitudinous ways. Fraser's high school days, as she recounted, resulted in the creation of a third personality, who craved for and thrived in attention. She channelled all her energy into moulding herself into an epitome of sexuality. One can see it as a defensive mechanism where Fraser is attempting to regain her power where her sexual appeal just becomes a tool. According to Cynthia Roller, Donna S Martsolf., et.al, children who underwent sexual abuse result in engaging in high-risk sexual behaviours like "having sex at an early age, having many sexual partners, having frequent or unprotected sex, and having sex while using drugs or alcohol to excess". Fraser stared seeing her as a sexual being above all. But this also limited her from forming any sort of intimate relationship with anyone. Her three personalities were at constant conflict with each other. During this time Fraser remembers Mr. Brown, their tenant, grabbing her by the wrist. But she has no recollection of what ever that happened afterwards. Her other self completely hid the memory of her rape for forty years. When all memory came back, she remembers what he said to her that day "Don't try to fool me kid. I know what goes on in this house. Don't you think anybody's got any ears?". This made her question whether her sister and her mother were aware of what was happening to her all those years.

As per clinical studies conducted by L C Terr it is observed that recollection of a single time traumatic experience is fairly easier while that of a repeated series of abuses are more likely end in amnesia. Fraser especially endured chronic abuse, occasionally having a normal life in between of two years, and that is one of the

main reasons for the persistent utilisation of dissociative defences i.e., amnesia, into adulthood. Her other personality blocked out the entire memory of sexual abuse for forty years till an incident in her late forties triggered it to the front. This also threw her personal life off the grid. She was not able to understand the reason for all those shelved anger and frustration in her. the outer shell was broken partially with her marriage when she allowed Daniel to enter into her personal life. Still, she needed the validation from her parents to go forward with that relationship. One gets the impression that, marriage was an escape route for her to move out of her father's territory. Fraser could not even come to terms to have children after marriage.

The sexual violence Fraser was subjected to concealed her true self. The dissociative amnesia can then be considered as a coping mechanism, so that she can take control of her own life without the omnipresent 'father' in this case. The shadowed self in Fraser but needed the 'father' figure and that might be reason she indulged in an extra-marital affair with Paul, her childhood best friend Lulu Lawson's aged father. Fraser was aware of the devastating effects of such a relationship which ultimately resulted in her divorce. This actually problematises the whole equation Fraser had with her father. It puts the reader in a dilemma to read Fraser in terms of moral grounds. It also threatens the genuineness of the above said 'reclaimed' memories. There are instances in her memory where she attempts to call out the abuse, but all in vain. Why Fraser never confided in her mother, or sister is a serious question to ponder upon. There is an unconscious effort to place her father in a God-like pedestal, who possessed complete autonomy over her.

But one can also see the relationship with Paul as a passing milestone in reclaiming her submerged memories. She was slowly triggered to the extent of realising how volatile she is in terms of her mental health. With her father's death, there came a new found freedom for her to explore the questions that she never, asked or answered. Rather he came alive or his memories, after his passing only. Her real, social personality never dared to cross the threshold of her shadowed one till then. The breaking point was when she came to know about Gerald. It was the news of Gerald's attempt to molest Bab's daughter that pushed Fraser to confront her other self. Her introspection leads to the only answer she was searching for the past forty years. Her memories came in bits and pieces, in intrusive images/ flashbacks of reliving or re-enacting the traumatic experiences. These reactivated memories are "highly charged experiential states, that encompasses frightening representations of

the event as reproduced through some or all perceptual modalities and concomitant emotional, cognitive, and behavioural responses".

My Father's House helped to open up the subgenre of memoirs about incest survival. Even though the depiction of incest is unsettling, the way Fraser mustered up the courage to open her wounds and corroborate her claims is inspiring. The work not only limit itself to being an incest memoir but a very influential work on the concept of dissociative amnesia and memory gaps. Wading through the fog of memories, Fraser could eventually meet the 'self' she left behind long back. In a way her amnesia and regaining of memory transgressed her personality by widening her understanding of trauma and survival. The work clearly put forth varied opinions supporting and contradicting the actuality of Fraser's claims.

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REFLECTIONS ON HYBRIDITY AND POST-IMMIGRATION NOSTALGIA IN CONTEMPORARY RUSSIAN-AMERICAN FICTION: TEXTS AND CONTEXTS

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Abstract: *The aim of this paper is to analyse the various strands of hybridity found in fictional narratives by contemporary Russian-American writers. In this paper, the discussion on Russian-American identity is centered on the theoretical analyses of the postcolonial concept of hybridity. Hybridity is one of the emblematic discourses of our era. It captures and celebrates the spirit of cultural fusion and difference. It is mostly associated with culture, but not limited to it. It shares a deeper relationship with race, language, ethnicity, and identity. Since hybridity involves a fusion between two (or more) distinctly dissimilar notions, the occurrence of a cross-cultural movement is a prerequisite (Kraidy 5). The current study shall take into account works by writers written in English who live in North America.*

Keywords: *Hybridity, Russian-American, Post-Soviet Literature*

(I)

With a rapid rise of globalisation in the twenty-first century, hybrid identities, transculturalism and diasporic/immigrant experiences have been some of the key areas of study in several disciplines, most notably in the domain of postcolonial studies. Such discussion on cultural hybridity and identity formation increasingly emphasise on the geopolitical locale of the (post)colonised nations, the so-called First and Third World countries. In doing so, the countries comprising of the so-called Second World, primarily, the East and Central European nations, have received little to no attention in such formulations as they never ventured into a (post)colonial territory. Yet, questions of hybridity, transculturalism and identity conflicts equally apply to such nations – especially, to Soviet and Post-Soviet territories, specifically- to the Third and Fourth Waves of Jewish immigration- from Soviet Russia primarily, though not exclusively, to Israel and the United States. This large-scale immigration from Soviet Russia sparked the creation of a multitude of hyphenated identities in the new areas of habitation which led to the rise of identity designations such as Russian-American, Russian-Israeli – to name a few.

One of the remarkable features of the twenty-first century immigration is how Russian writers realise their literary coming of age in various diasporas and writes about it in a language other than Russian (which, in most cases, is their native language). One of the largest constellations of such writers can be found in North America, primarily in the United States. It won't be incorrect to state that contemporary Russian-American came into being in 2002 with the publication of *The Russian Debutant's Handbook* by Gary Shteyngart. He was soon followed by a plethora of authors such as Lara Vapnyar, David Bezmozgis, Sana Krasikov, Irina Reyn, Ana Ulinich, Olga Grushin and many more. Most of the writers mentioned above are of Jewish origin (with the exception of Ola Grushin) and have moved and settled in America as a part of the Third or Fourth waves of Jewish immigration from the then Soviet Union. It is interesting to note here is that not all the writers mentioned above called Russia their home. David Bezmozgis, for example, is from Latvia. Sana Krasikov called Ukraine her home. In spite of this, when "(post)Soviet Jews lived in places other than Russia, Russian was still their native language and primary cultural identification, and thus the term "Russian-American" applies to these writers as well" (Furman 20) (even though David Bezmozgis immigrated to Canada, America in his case should be read as North-America). Hence, we can sum up that contemporary Russian-Americans writers can be characterised as – Russian speaking Jewish immigrants residing in North America and write in English.

One of the quintessential traits of Russian-American fiction is its strong portrayal of immigration sensibilities. Contemporary Russian-American writers disassociate with the thought of becoming 'American' which was often seen in the works of their Jewish literary ancestors such as Mary Antin (Furman 20) and instead focus on the dissimilarities in assimilation and integration in the foreign land. Their identity overall is a mixture of Jewish, Russian, and American fragments.

(II)

In this paper, the discussion on Russian-American identity is centered on the theoretical analyses of the postcolonial concept of hybridity. Hybridity is one of the emblematic discourses of our era. It captures and celebrates the spirit of cultural fusion and difference. It is mostly associated with culture, but not limited to it. It shares a deeper relationship with race, language, ethnicity, and identity. Since hybridity involves a fusion between two (or more) distinctly dissimilar notions, the occurrence of a cross-cultural movement is a prerequisite (Kraidy 5). The current study shall take into account works by writers written in English who live in North America. Often scholars tend to view such works as either American or as Jewish-

American – as most of these writers are of Jewish faith. But, in doing so, they often downplay their Russian connection which otherwise forms an integral part of their identity. However, it will be unfair to prune such literary compositions from the celebrated pedigree of American and Jewish literary traditions. But to claim that they fit *only* in such a rubric won't be a fair estimation as well. It is interesting to note that Gary Shteyngart, often considered as the pioneer of Russian-American literature, has his work anthologised both in *Lost Tribe: Jewish Fiction from the Edge* (a collection featuring Jewish-American authors) and in *Wild East: Stories from the Last Frontier* (an anthology of writers from/dealing with Eastern Europe) (Furman 21). To fully understand the term Russian-American, one must acknowledge that being Russian-American is neither fully belonging to either of the terms bordering the hyphen. It is the in-between space between the two terms across the hyphen that nurtures and nests the newly formed identity. Just as the writers, their literature too is hybrid - both Russian and American, and neither solely Russian nor solely American; it is preciously Russian-American (Furman 21). Attempts at understanding such a complex literary and cultural formulation will not be possible without the outline formulated by Homi Bhaba while discussing the idea of a "third space" (Bhabha 36), a sort of in-between space located between the existing systems and territories. In the case of Russian-American authors, this emerges between the constant negotiations between the two diverse cultures thereby giving the writers and their writings a hybrid "third space" for cohabitation.

The concept of hybridity occupies a central discourse in postcolonial studies. It is "celebrated and privileged as a kind of superior cultural intelligence owing to the advantage of in-betweenness, the straddling of two cultures and the consequent ability to negotiate the difference" (Hoogvelt 158). This is particularly so in Bhabha's discussion of cultural hybridity. Bhabha argues that a new hybrid identity emerges from the interweaving of elements of the coloniser and the colonised challenging the existing notions of cultural identity. Postcolonial studies outrightly rejects the assumption that no culture or identity is essentially pure (Ashcroft *et al*). Bhabha writes, "all forms of culture are continually in a process of hybridity" (Rutherford 211). Bhabha projects hybridity as a liminal or in-between space "cutting edge of translation and negotiation" (Bhabha 38) occurs which he called as the third space:

> For me the importance of hybridity is not to be able to trace two original moments from which the third emerges, rather hybridity to me is the 'third space' which enables other positions to emerge. This third space displaces

> the histories that constitute it, and sets up new structures of authority, new political initiatives, which are inadequately understood through received wisdom. (Rutherford 211)

In the context of Russian-American writers, the hybrid identity positioned within this third space can be viewed as a "lubricant" (Papastergiadis 261). The ability to transverse cultures and effectively negotiate and mediate difference creates a new meaning and identity. This encounter is befitting with regard to the Russian-American context – as the new identity formed is neither completely Russian nor American and is both Russian and American at the same time. The writers inhabit the third space which goes on to construct a hybridised Russian-American immigrant identity.

(III)

Translingualism – first used by Steven G. Kellman in his book *The Translingual Imagination* (2000) refers to writers who write in more than one language or at least in a language other than their primary one (Kellman) – characteristics which is keenly observed in the works of contemporary Russian-American writers. Kellman further wrote that much of translingual writing is the literature of immigration (Kellman 17) – something visibly true in the case of Russian-American writers. Contemporary Russian-American writers such as Gary Shteyngart, Lara Vapnyar, David Bezmozgis, and Irina Reyn who immigrated from Soviet Union to America at a young age adopted and adapted English as their native language and uses it almost exclusively in academic and creative circles. However, hybridisation occurs in their texts by their deliberate use of Russian words and phrases – for instance, words like "khui" and "pizda" in Shteyngart's *Absurdistan* to "velikaia russkaia dusha" in Vapnyar's *What Happened to Anna K* – there does not seem to be any dearth of such usages. Such hybridity is also exhibited in themes, characters, and locale. For instance, Sergei Dovlatov, the famous Soviet journalist and writer, wrote the following in *A Foreign Woman* about his postimmigration Russian neighbourhood located in Queens, New York:

> We have Russian stores, day-care centers, photography studios, and barber shops. There is a Russian travel agency. There are Russian lawyers, writers, doctors, and real estate agents. There are Russian gangsters, madmen, and prostitutes. There's even a Russian blind musician. (Dovlatov 4)

Sergei Dovlatov's portrayal of a Russian neighbourhood in Queens, New York reveals the convolutions of postimmigration culture. The community is united by

dislocation from Russia and makes effort to build a Russian or Russia-like locale in New York which is their new place of settlement which makes them feel at 'home' in a familiar setting.

(IV)

A large number of contemporary Russian-American texts are fuelled by nostalgia – *nostalgia for a foreign land*. The phrase *nostalgia for a foreign land* is borrowed from Roman Katman's seminal work *Nostalgia for a Foreign Land* which offers a pioneering discussion on Russian-Israeli writers writing in Russian during the last few decades:

> While the Israeli Russian literary scene was formulated by the 1970s immigration with figures such as Anna Isakova, Irina Vrubel-Golubkina, Mikhail Grobman, Maya Kaganskaya, and Mikhail Gendelev, to name a few, the 1990s mark a new and distinctive period in the writing of Isareli-Russain authors, as demonstrated by Katsman. (Maoz 149)

The term nostalgia often refers to a need or longing for the past or past events. It can be anything that cannot be accessible in the present. In literature, nostalgia often triggers a longing for the past – music, food, dress, artefacts etc are a few major approaches that creates nostalgia. Nostalgia can be experienced by an individual alone or it can be a shared experience. When shared, nostalgia creates a sense of belonging – which is instinctively linked with shared community feeling. For immigrants and exiles, nostalgia is a constant presence – it might burn out but never fade away. For every immigrant, nostalgia is an inimitable experience – unique and sometimes capricious. It is very difficult to define. For instance, in David Bezmozgis' *Natasha and Other Stories* we see how nostalgia creates and affirms community feeling among the Jewish community as seen from the description of their Saturday morning rituals, "Most of the old Jews came because they were drawn by the nostalgia for ancient cadences, I came because I was drawn by the nostalgia for old Jews. In each case, the motivation was not tradition but history" (Bezmozgis 119). Everyone who congregated at the synagogue overcame feelings of unhomeliness by experiencing a shared feeling of harmony and accord, which resulted from the shared customs, traditions, and religious beliefs.

In her seminal essay "Estrangement as a Lifestyle: Shklovsky and Brodsky" Svetlana Boym writes:

> The word *nostalgia* comes from two Greek roots - *nostos* (home) and *algia* (longing) - yet this composite word did not originate in ancient Greece. It is only pseudo-Greek, or nostalgically Greek. The nostalgic disorder was first

> diagnosed by seventeenth-century Swiss doctors and detected in mercenary soldiers. This contagious modern disease of homesickness - *la maladie du pays* - was treated in a seventeenth-century scientific manner with leeches, hypnotic emulsions, opium, and a trip to the Alps. Nostalgia was not regarded as destiny, nor as part of the human condition, but only as a passing malaise. In the nineteenth century, the geographic longing was superseded by the historical one; maladie du pays turned into *mal du siecle,* but the two ailments shared many symptoms. (Boym 511)

Boym furthers her discussion on nostalgia by categorising nostalgia into two types "The first one stresses nostos, emphasizing the return to that mythical place somewhere on the island of Utopia . . . The second type puts the emphasis on algia and does not pretend to rebuild the mythical place called home" (Boym 511). The former is reconstructive and collective and the latter ironic, fragmentary, and singular (Boym).

As mentioned earlier, experiences or artefacts which herald nostalgia can be different for different people – and to attempt at providing a universal definition of nostalgia often be an unrewarding attempt. It depends on this strange unpredictability. Nostalgia goes beyond individual psychology:

> At first glance, nostalgia is a longing for a place, but actually it is a yearning for a different time--the time of our childhood, the slower rhythms of our dreams. In a broader sense, nostalgia is rebellion against the modern idea of time, the time of history and progress. The nostalgic desires to obliterate history and turn it into private or collective mythology, to revisit time like space, refusing to surrender to the irreversibility of time that plagues the human condition. (Boym 18)

For Russian-American nostalgia caught up in a different way. After relocating to America from their Soviet homeland, these immigrants are often caught up in the liminal space of neither there not here – physically they might be in a new country, but emotionally and psychologically they are still caught in their native land and the progression to call the new place a home is rather measured. After immigration, people are often seen to shelve their original identity and make efforts to adopt and adept to a new one in their new places of residence. However, this usually takes time – and for many this is an ongoing process that lasts lifelong. It is in this ongoing process that once experience the myriad strands of postimmigration nostalgia.

Nostalgia is not just remembrance of a place, but it works for time as well. Lara Vapnyar in *There are Jews in my House* does not represent nostalgia with respect to a place but to that of time:

> Six weeks ago, when Raya and Leeza first came to live at Galina's place, it had been different. Galina and Raya spent the evenings talking, mostly about the prewar life that seemed now unreal and perfect. They retold some minor episodes in meticulous detail, as if the precision of their memories could turn that prewar life into something real, and failure to remember something could unlock the door of Galina's apartment and let the war in. (Vapnyar 5)

In the aforementioned passage we can see how Raya and her daughter Leeza is seeking refuge in the Galina's house. Separated from their home in Soviet Union, Raya and Leeza is seen 'preciously' remember memories from a prewar time and life which seemed 'unreal' to them as they start recollecting.

Postimmigration nostalgia is complex – it not only encompasses a feeling of loss and detachment of a physical place, but also captures fragmented feelings of unhomeliness trapped in moments of time. We cannot separate the temporal and locative aspects of it – both are equally important and are mutually dependent.

Language is one of the fundamental harbingers of nostalgia for any immigrant. The native tongue has colossal power in harvesting feelings of nostalgia. This can be seen in Irina Reyn's protagonist Anna K. in *What Happened to Anna K.*.:

> "*Moia dorogaia* Anna." He kissed her quickly on the lips. Did anyone say those words in the exact way that he did? The singular way he dragged out the word "dear" in Russian, how melodious, *dorogaia*. There was no American man that could hit the precise nerve of nostalgia with that word. (Reyn 17)

This shows the immigrant's organic attraction to her mother language – in this case, Russian – and how the language brings out feelings of nostalgia. In Anna K's case, the use of the Russian word "dorogaia" by her lover hits her 'nostalgic nerve'. According to Milan Kundera some words evoke a claustrophobic intimacy which leads to feelings of overwhelming yearning. Such words, according to him, are shrouded with grief, sympathy, remorse, and an indefinable longing (Kundera).

One of the interesting facets of postimmigration nostalgia is that it can act as agents of integration for people from analogous cultural background. For instance, in David Bezmozgis' *The Free World* we see two Soviet immigrants travelling from

Vienna, Austria to Chicago, United States bond over a conversation about Russian women and size of train compartments:

- What were you talking about with that old rooster?
- The greatness of the Russian woman.
- Your favourite subject. You almost missed the train . . .
- The compartments are half the size.
- This was true, Alec thought. Say what you want about the Soviet Union, but the sleeping compartments were bigger.
- You want to go back because of the bigger compartments? Karl asked. (Bezmozgis 9)

Similar conversations can be seen in Gary Shteyngart's *Little Failure* where Russian immigrants living in New York gel over Russian soap operas and television documentaries, "A new Russian soap opera set in the Stalin era comes on and I hope that it can move our conversation in a different direction" (29). The Russian television series captures one of the most enthralling periods in Soviet history, The Great Patriotic War.

Many a times food too can construct deep nostalgic episodes among immigrants. For instance, in Shteyngart's *Little Failure* we see several instances where the author uses food to depict postimmigration nostalgia. At the centre of one such instance is mushroom soup:

> "Decent soup, but not like ours back home," my father says. "Real white mushrooms from the forest near Leningrad, cooked in butter, and then you make the soup with sour cream and with lots of garlic. There's nothing better!" Already, the nostalgia. And the echoes of patriotism. But somehow this little packet of Knorr has produced enough mushroom soup to feed three refugees. (*Little Failure* 85)

Shteyngart uses something as trite as mushroom to invoke nostalgia. This instance is very symbolic – at first, they are instantly reminded of their homeland which they just left and secondly, the acceptance of their fate as 'refugees' in an unfamiliar land.

(V)

In the light of postimmigration nostalgia, it will be unfair to estimate that the postimmigration locale shall always prove to be favourable grounds for

immigration. For instance, talking about her own immigration Svetlana Boym writes in *The Origins of Nostalgia:* "The second home that I made for myself in Boston didn't feel like home anymore. It became a maze of displaced objects, souvenirs of past lives, gifts from forgotten friends, extension cords connected to nothing (124). Such feelings are relatively widespread in an immigrant's life as it often stem from feelings of cultural alienation and the incorporation of new identities.

Talking about cities, one cannot undermine the role of the city in postimmigration narratives – especially in the works of authors Gary Shteyngart and Irina Reyn. We cannot isolate the significance of 'the city' from their literary formulations. In both of their works, New York City finds a special significance. For most Russian-Americas, New York City proved to be a favourable place for settling after immigrating from Russia. In fact, till this day New York City has one of the largest Russian-American population among all American cities. Not just this, New York City calls itself home to the largest Russian population and Russian-speaking population in the Western Hemisphere. The largest Russian-American communities in New York City are located in Brighton Beach and Sheepshead Bay in Brooklyn. Interestingly, Brighton Beach has been nicknamed Little Odessa due to its population of Russian-speaking immigrants from Ukraine and Russia (Idov). Out of the 5.5 million Russian-speaking people in the Unites States, about 1.6 Million reside in New York Tri-State area and nearly 600,000 reside in the City of New York representing 8% of the population (Ameredia).

In "The Ultimate City: New York and the Russian Immigrant Narrative," Yasha Klots examines the importance of New York to Russian immigrant literature:

> Since at least the end of the nineteenth century, when New York became one the major centers of Russian literature in diaspora, it has gained enough individuality, thematic as well as stylistic, that it has become possible to speak the so-called *gudzonskaia nota* [the Hudson note] of Russian poetry and haps even of the "New York text" of Russian literature. As a repository urban impression migrating from text to text, generation to generation, New York has a tangible literary dimension, especially potent in immigrant narrative. (38)

Russian language literature is no stranger to 'the city' occupying centerstage in its works. The cultural significance of portrayal of cities, for instance St. Petersburg, has etched a new genre of literary works in Russian language literature – the Petersburg Text. Yasha Klots writes "It can be argued that 'mapping' New York City within the English coordinate system entails a breakup with the Russian

literary tradition, whose mode of urban poetics has largely drawn on the 'text' and mythology of St. Petersburg (39)." Although both St. Petersburg and New York City differ in several aspects, including cultural, geographical, and political history, yet there are several grounds of commonality as well, "The eccentric and multicultural New York, a city that stands apart from the Old World just as it does from the rest of America, generates a universe of its own kind with Russian émigré literature as one of its orbits" (Klots 38).

The narrative between a place and literary narrative is vital. This becomes even more vital when the narrative deals with themes of dislocation, and by definition, postimmigration narratives deals with themes of dislocation and relocation which depend on a physical space. Hence, while reading postimmigration narrative, we cannot separate the text from the city and vice versa.

(VI)

Russian-American fiction is not only Russian or only American – and to attribute only one such characteristics to their works and disregard the other will be erroneous. Instead, such works should be read and celebrated for their remarkable, varied, and wide-ranging cultural, historical, and literary representations which strongly endorses such works in the line of "third space" of literary hybridity. They also form a part of the cannon of the already existing diasporic/immigrant literature of North America – like, Indian-American, Japanese-American – although in a nascent form.

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THE INTRICACIES IN THE INEVITABLE ROMANTICIZATION OF MEMORIES- A RE-READING OF SETHU'S *ALIYAH-THE LAST JEW IN THE VILLAGE*

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Abstract: *The primary goal of the article is to problematize the notion of "home" and to study the desire to heed the call of 'Aliyah' through reading the historical fiction Aliyah-The Last Jew by Sethu. Throughout history, memories of uprooting, dispersion, and journeying have shadowed Jewish identity. The "return," or the acquisition of a real or mythical homeland, is crucial for the realization of Jewish people's destiny. Sethu's novel Aliyah-The Last Jew in the Village centers around Cochin's Jewish community, which has lived there for several years and now wishes to return home in response to God's call. The novel portrays the contrastive feelings of the main characters facing the dilemma of resettling in an unfamiliar land that they call "home". These disconcerting emotions were realized when they heeded Aliyah and settled in Israel. The objective of the paper is to create a trajectory that observes these unsettling emotions, as portrayed in the novel, and follow the extent of it in Israel.*

Keywords: *Cochin Jews, Reverse Diaspora, Hybridity, Acculturation, Memory, Historical Fiction*

Aliyah is a Hebrew term that signifies "ascension" or "moving up." The process of being called forth to read the Torah in the synagogue was formerly known as Aliyah. Since the Torah scroll is frequently read from a raised platform, the words "chosen," "selected," or "called up" by the assembly came to be widely used. This physiological elevation also symbolises the privilege and duty that comes with reading God's Holy Word. As a result, when a worshipper is chosen to read the Torah, he is "called up," or given an Aliyah. Aliyah also refers to a Jew's decision to return to his or her country of Israel.

On May 14, 1948, Israel became an independent state, and its boundaries were accessible to Jews from across the world. Between May 1948 and December 1951, around 684,000 Jews migrated to the new nation. Never had so many diverse cultures, dialects, and nationalities come together in such a limited geographical region in such a brief time to create a new collective identity. Despite the reality that only a small percentage of Jews visited Jerusalem, it was still their spiritual

home. The holiness of Jerusalem was vital to their identity. The devotion to Jerusalem was a custom that drew their fellow people from around the world. They also had a great sense of affiliation to other Jews, both domestically and internationally. While Jews from other countries migrated to Israel because of anti-Semitism, the urge for Aliyah and the desire to live and die in one's own homeland prompted Indian Jews to migrate, as they had never experienced a dreadful holocaust.

The Kochi Jews are believed to have reached Kerala in the ancient past during King Solomon's rule for the spice trade. The Roman annihilation of Jerusalem's Second Sacred Temple in 70 A.D. sparked a Jewish migration from Israel, culminating in the diaspora. As a result, several Jews landed by sea at Shingly (Cranganore) in 72 A.D. Kodungallur, also called Muzhiris by the Greeks and Shingly by the Jews, was Kerala's earliest Jewish settlement, where the rulers warmly welcomed them and allowed them to dwell (Katz 359). Whilst Kodungallur became the centre of the Jewish community, synagogues were constructed at Parur in 1164 and Chendamangalam in the 13th century in Kollam. The Kadavumbhagam Synagogue was founded in Ernakulam in 1200 A.D. Natural calamities damaged Kodungallur's port in 1341, necessitating a new port to be built in Cochin and the construction of the Cochin Synagogue in 1345. The influx of the Portuguese during the late 15th century, coupled with the expansion of Cochin as a major economic hub, drove migration to Cochin, where the king endowed them with basic amenities, including property. With the infiltration of the British in 1765, Jewish wealth began to dwindle, and the economy continued to worsen in the ensuing years. Guttman accounts in his seminal study, *Writing Indians and Jews: Metaphorics of Jewishness in South Asian Literature*, "In the case of the Cochin Jews …the incorporation of Kerala into the British raj meant the end of the community's protection by the local Maharajah, a change that arguably diminished the community's local status" and obstructed their financial and societal status (129).

Once Israel became a nation in 1948, the Cochin Jews established a special Cochin Aliyah Fund and started to sell private and communal assets to fund their travel. A Jewish immigration bureau was founded in Bombay in September 1950. Indian Jews who regarded Israel as their homeland were worried by the early government policy of giving priority to anti-Semitic European and Arab Jews over American and Indian Jews who had never experienced oppression or homelessness (Roland 247). The Jews of Cochin were the only individuals who were able to finance their own journey to Israel. The Jewish population of Cochin has fallen to a

"diminishing" number over more than 50 years of Aliyah, with the dispersed traces constituting a significant part of Jewish and Kerala history (Fernandes xi).

Aliyah-The Last Jew in the Village is a historical account of a community, a region, and their culture. It centres around the Jewish community of Cochin, which has been a part of the city for many decades and now wishes to return to their country in response to God's call,

"There is a belief that every Jew across the world holds close to his heart- the belief that someday almighty God will surely call his people back to their holy land, Israel. For that reason, when they celebrate Passover every year and read the holy Haggadah, the Hebrew words they utter-'bashana haba'ah' Yerushlayim'-come from the heart. That is, 'the next year in Jerusalem…'" (Sethu 88).

The novel revolves around Chendamangalam, a town where all major religions have their own shrines and where there has not been any religious extremism or communal strife. Amid the bustle around Aliyah, the Jewish protagonist is torn between his familiar hometown of Cochin and the unfamiliar nation of Israel. As a freshly formed state, Israel welcomed Jews from around the world to settle there. This causes widespread dissatisfaction among Cochin's Jewish communities, particularly in Kunnumpuram. The Jewish population of Cochin, which has been part of the city for several decades, has unanimously stated its intention of returning to their homeland in accordance with God's calling, "We are not going there looking for gain. We will have to manage somehow like we do here. But to be able to say that it is one's own land, that is a matter of pride…" (87).

The notion of 'home' is more than an architectural style in the sense that it is a safe place or a psychological state where one emotionally, morally, socially, and cognitively develops, evolves, exists. It solidifies and collectivises one's intrinsic tie to members of one's family, social network, and society at large. 'Home' provides a place for rest, peace, security, and other necessities for living a happy and self-developed existence. The yearning for serenity or rest that constitutes a fundamental impact on human life is the goal of constructing or yearning for a 'home.' 'Home' is a 'purer space' where an individual's heart is ensconced with love for its infrastructure, compositional aspects, and formative and fostering effects. Home is the harbouring place of the soul and a "site of the domicile" (Terkenli 327). In diaspora, home becomes a symbol for the restoration of one's past and the quest for refuge in the romantic or melancholic imagination of the mind.

In diaspora literature, the term 'home' is employed for both scholarly dissemination and artistic efficiency while reflecting on the innumerable events of one's life. The physical aspect for fundamental protection, financial investment, territory, identification, a social and cultural component, and the significance of belongingness are all addressed by the idea of 'home' in diaspora imagination, The territory of home as a type of setting satisfies a number of social and psychological needs; home is the sole area of control for the individual; home is the most appropriate physical framework for family and family life; home is a place of self-expression; and home provides a feeling of security (Rapoport 30). It encompasses a broader range of chronological, geographical, physical, epistemological, and psychological aspects of an individual's location, "Both in physical and philosophical performance 'home' assimilates individual's 'objectivistic' and 'subjectivistic' positions in phenomenal consciousness" (Nayak 3). It is a sentimental sense of togetherness that bonds one's thoughts, feelings, emotions, and situations. Any tie to 'home' is dynamic and turbulent in the numerous facades of attachment. The diaspora consciousness disturbs individuals' cultural, political, and psychic space with memories of their home. The angst of 'home' pervades the Diaspora community's quest for a lost geoposition, productivity, and decision-making. Displacement, estrangement, and migration do not eliminate the importance of home in an individual's psyche. Therefore, in diaspora studies:

> The notion of home therefore is much more complex than approaches to diaspora premised on the power of nostalgia would us believe. It is intrinsically linked with the way in which the processes of inclusion or exclusion operate and are subjectively experienced under given circumstances. It relates to the complex political and personal struggles over the social regulation of 'belonging' (Tsagarousianou 52).

In *Aliyah*, Sethu explores problems of identity and belongingness through the narration of the dilemma faced by a community imprisoned between two homes: their surrogate home and their Jewish ancestral home. The idea of the wandering Jew, the perpetual outsider, destined to displacement and crossing over, resonates throughout the story. This is evident in the statements of one of the Jewish characters, Binder Daveed, who says, "I will tell you truthfully Solama. I am a Jew through and through, and I am proud of being one. But I cannot be just a Jew, can I? There is a world outside being a Jew. A strange topsy-turvy world that we do not understand" (270). Despite this dilemma, their fervor to return to their homeland surprises all. Inhabitants of Kunnumpurum are taken aback by the Jews' newfound patriotism for a nation they have never heard of, and they begin to criticise them for

their quick search for salvation. This is stated in their remembrance of the immigration of the Jews—a group of people who arrived in need of a home, who decided to stay distinct from the rest of the communities in the area, yet grew roots so deep that they never comprehended the extent of their relationship to their land:

> "With the tenderness of a mother, with innumerable memories, the soil remembered the time they came, the wretched state in which they had been. For the travellers who were exhausted by their wanderings, the land offered shelter at first, then a transit point. Slowly the breeze of this land became a source of solace, the water elixir. Thus a people whose feet were constantly on the move found a firm hold on this land. Grew roots. And those roots, they grew deep into the soil, unknown to anyone…A people who had learnt to live without growing close or distant, without becoming friends or foes, remained in the background always, content to row with the current, and thus confined their world within the boundaries of a street. As for those boundaries, they were their armour of sanctity as well." (Sethu 86)

This was not a migration in search of greener pastures, rather a complete dismantling of all ties, a complete erasing of the past, to start a new life in a foreign nation with no probability of returning. Exiled vagrants from history were returning to their native land in the expectation of starting a new life. This is very well realised in the words of Salamon's uncle, Elias, "That is why I say, even though I love this land and its people a lot, I will certainly go. Not for anything else, just to be together. Not to stay back alone …" (257). The herd mentality, a sense of collective identity that gives safety, lies at the root of the purposeful choice to leave the host land in favour of the promised land. Memory allows us to live in communities, and group and community living allows us to make memories. Given the fact that most Jews were average people prepared to live with constrained dreams, this cultural memory enabled the community to prosper in a distant place (Assmann 110).

A distressing search for an identity is depicted in the narrative, which is hampered by a struggle of affiliation, which is particularly observed in the decision taken by Salamon as he chooses to stay back in the land where his memories were born and raised. Unlike Salamon, the rest of the Jewish population followed the call of their homeland though they were worried about what lay ahead, "Perhaps the government did intend to create a place for all the Jews in the world to live together. But would the poor Jews of Kochi be included in that group? Would the black Jews, who were barely two thousand in number, become an irritant in their

eyes? Eliahu Meir wondered" (Sethu 123). Both certainly remain in a constant search for a home and identity as they are marked by the breaking of links and the blossoming of new national identities.

The Israeli government has taken several measures to gather Jews from around the world adhering to *mizug galuyiot* ("gathering of exiles"). Yet, the new nation has seen the rise of several new Israeli diasporas, particularly during the last few decades. This resulted in the formation of minor nations within the country or "reverse diasporas." A formal return to the homeland does not "unmake" diasporas; rather, it creates a reverse diaspora, which has major repercussions for co-ethnic immigrants' cultural integration in their home countries. Indian Jews expressed their Jewish solidarity by choosing to resettle in Israel, anticipating a shift from their marginalised status in India to an equal standing in Israel. However, they were gradually isolated from the mainstream due to their cultural differences. Not only did the immigrants have to adapt to a different system, but the government also had to change the settlement plan to accommodate them. The procedure of incorporating newcomers through a mix of cultures to develop one enriched and unified Jewish national culture is termed as *Klitat ha Aliyah*. Israel hoped to replace the diasporic recollections of various Jewish communities with a sense of attachment to their homeland by doing so. However, it saw the advent of a hierarchical Jewish society. The "Ashkenazi Jews" held a higher position in the social order as they were the personification of Jewish heritage, culture, and modern ideas. The Cochin Jews were discriminated against for being a generation of 'Oriental Jews', "The idea was to create 'one people one heritage', but behind these ideals were glaring realities of superiority, paternalism and ethnocentrism" (Sreekala 37).

Afro-Asian Jews were viewed as 'primitive' and requiring a change to fit into the Israeli culture, "initially we didn't speak Hebrew… There were some people who called us *kushim* (Blacks) and *primitivim* (sl. primitives). We are dark-skinned. Jews from different places look different. What can we do about?" (Sreekala 109). At present the Cochin Jews, except for a few families that live in urban areas such as Jerusalem, reside largely in *moshavim* (an agricultural settlement) at Nevatim. Anthropologist, Shalva Weil narrates, "the first group of Cochin Jews who arrived in Israel were herded from place to place, and in an early attempt to isolate them (for fear of contagious diseases), they were taken to outlying *moshavim* like Nevatim in the South" (Weil 4). The novel *Aliyah* depicts the outbreak of filariasis among the people of Cochin that became an obstacle for the Aliyah of Cochin Jews, "It was after the first group left that the agency began

to make excuses. There was filariasis everywhere in Kochi...Filariasis is the worry. God alone knows who all have the germs of the disease in them. Suppose when they reach that land the germs reproduce and multiple, and the legs of the people of Israel too begin to swell…? (Sethu 252, 253).

According to a journal, *Israel: A Diaspora of Memories*, Israel is now constituted of a diversity of other reminiscences:

> Twenty-first-century Israel is facing different and sometimes conflicting visions of its past, present and future – visions built both inside and outside the country. Some of these visions aim to consolidate a strong national identity based on the recovery of the ancient Jewish heritage, while erasing, silencing, or ignoring the multiplicity of other memories. Others are oriented towards integration and mutual understanding of all the inhabitants of this country, so as to appease historical memories that remain painful and antagonistic" (Baussant VIII).

Even though the Cochin Jews immigrated to Israel because of their Jewish identity and in search of their ancestral home, they are ethnicized and marginalised because of their 'Indianness'. Cochin Jews live in segregated communities that are homogeneous and show an ethnic class clustering. Though the younger generation is gradually drifting away from the community's memories, the older generation is adhering to them and ensuring that future generations do not forget the country that had provided them with sanctuary for many years.

Conclusion

'Home' refers to a large corpus of personal experiences that diaspora writers cover in a wide range of reactions. Inside the general framework of nationality and identity, the construction and surrounding of 'home' as identity has family, cultural, and nostalgic overtones. The socio-cultural aspects of 'home' are inextricably linked to family life. *Aliyah-The Last Jew in the Village* is a fictional narration of a Jewish family who differs in their opinion about Aliyah- the return to their fatherland. It is a historical novel that narrates the dilemma faced by the Cochin Jews who were both happy about finally getting a chance to return to the country where their ancestral roots lie and equally perplexed about the problems that may ensue in the land that they have never stepped foot on. Though many Jews left India with high hopes, they were ostracized for their ethnicity. Although they have succeeded to reach "home", they dearly remember their life spent at Cochin where they never faced any marginalization. The elders of the Nevatim moshav have even contributed to setting up a museum, The Cochin Jewry Heritage Museum, in

remembrance of their Cochin roots displaying their historical artifacts and holding onto the memories of Cochin with utmost sincerity.

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POLITICS OF CONVENTIONAL MODERNIST AESTHETIC EXPECTATIONS: A CRITIQUE OF DJUNA BARNES' *NIGHTWOOD*

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Abstract: *The novel Nightwood by Djuna Barnes is often read as a critique of Modernist conventions by critics even while remaining within the framework of Modernism. On the basis of the theories compiled by Shari Benstock and Susan Stanford Friedman of marginalized Modernism, this paper views Nightwood as a deviation from the mainstream, high Modernism. Different language and narrative techniques have been employed in Nightwood to resist some of the deceitful modernist conventions. The novel involves the over-exaggeration of some of the typical modernist techniques like fragmentation and the use of flamboyant language. There is a lack of chronological and social thread that binds the reader with the characters. The attempt in this article is mainly to identify and analyze some of these techniques and reach an understanding of how the text parodies earlier modernist works. Nightwood echoes surrealistic tones as it plays with the idea of reality and illusion as presented through language. The novel exposes the futility of language in the construction of reality and subsequently exposes the meaninglessness of the frequent usage of ornamental language in Modernist literature. The conscious and the unconscious are intertwined within the story, radiating an essentially surrealistic aura. Through her novel, Djuna Barnes asserts the place of surrealism within Modernist rhetoric.*

Keywords*: Modernist conventions; language techniques; fragmentation; Surrealism.*

Canons of Modern Literature

"On or about December 1910, human life changed…. The change was not sudden and definite like that. But a change there was, nevertheless; and, since one must be arbitrary, let us date it about the year 1910." observed Virginia Woolf about the seismic shift brought about by Modernist interventions. (Woolf 4) All hitherto held

perceptions and sensibilities underwent an extensive makeover during the dynamic era of Modernism, which has often been marked by its promiscuous aesthetic choices and a broad assortment of artists. Sophistication, introversion, and internal skepticism were prevalent in Modernist narratives. Oftentimes, these works have also been criticized for their needless display of technical brilliance. However, Modernist literature assumed a strong stance against the regressive politics and conventions of society. In an attempt to protest the parochial attitudes of the masses, Modernism resorted to a celebration of whatever was considered sin and upheld the right of the artist to express their ideas fearlessly.

The narrative style of Modernist fiction is one that manifests excessive flamboyance with recurring allusions to various literary and other histories. Often, the narrative is fragmented and appears to be sewn together into a cohesive collage. The novel as a genre underwent nothing short of a revolutionary transition at the hands of the Modernists. Transcending the levels of popular entertainment, the novel journeyed towards the depths of inner reality and self-consciousness. Modernist narratives, it can rightly be said, assumed as much eminence as Renaissance Drama did within literature. The novel began to be studied and analyzed scientifically during the time, with critical emphasis on aspects like plot, texture and structure. Novels began toying with the idea of reality and illusion through a deliberate distortion of surface realities. Readers started believing in the superiority of an inner reality or consciousness over the familiar surface reality that can be easily observed and documented. Modernist novels deliver ideas predominantly in the form of metaphors and symbolism instead of resorting to linear logic.

This paper attempts to locate Djuna Barnes' masterpiece, *Nightwood* published in 1936, within the canon of Modernist literature. Through an extensive analysis of aspects like language, symbolism and narrative technique employed in *Nightwood*, the present study envisages a decoding of Modernist affinity in the novel. A discussion of how the novel rewrites and resists Modernist conventions while at the same time remaining within the limits of Modernism adds to the focus of the topic along with a detailed enquiry into the surrealistic traits that are abundant in *Nightwood*. The narrative structure of the novel is one that defies all conventional expectations. This deliberate noncompliance to set standards can be read as a resistance to the literary expectations of readers. The present study traverses to enquire how successful *Nightwood* has been in exhibiting resistance towards conventional literary expectations.

Modernist literature has always been the subject of frequent and extensive critical scrutiny. Djuna Barnes' novel *Nightwood,* which provided a strong critique of mainstream Modernism and an endorsement of Surrealism, is still considered one of the most influential works of the late modernist period. The novel has both been applauded as well as criticized frequently in academic research. Tyrus Miller (1999) through his study on late Modernism observes how Djuna Barnes' *Nightwood* offers its readers something mechanical. Miller states that Doctor O'Connor's character is somewhat robotic and that the second half of the novel is merely an unsolicited repetition of the firStanford Some of the remarks on *Nightwood* concludes that Barnes endorses only surface meanings and not deeper ones. Therefore, the similes within the text should only be understood at face value and should not be considered as related to allusions in any other literary texts. The obvious lack of a unifying narrative in the novel is seen in connection with the brilliant execution of Irony. The surrealistic techniques used in the novel defy both aesthetic conventions and empirical reality. A systematic examination of the narrative and linguistic techniques employed in *Nightwood* is done to subvert the conformist practices within mainstream Modernism.

Subverting the Hypocrisies of the Modernist Aesthetic

The late Modernist novel *Nightwood* becomes remarkably pertinent to this study because it blatantly exposes, ridicules and subverts the hypocrisies of the Modernist aesthetic. *Nightwood* is renowned for its boldness and its depictions of homoeroticism. The novel's wide critical acclaim and reception therefore warrants the need to examine its contents. This study employs a rigorous textual analysis to show how language devices and narrative techniques are employed to effectively subvert the regressive conventions of mainstream Modernism. Textual analysis is a methodology employed by researchers to understand the language, symbols or pictures within the selected text. (Allen) Such an analysis helps to gain insight into the way meanings are created. The social, political, historical and cultural influences on those meanings can also be studied using this methodology. Textual analysis has been chosen as the methodology for the present study taking into consideration its reliability and efficiency.

The observations in this study will be made in the light of Shari Benstock's and Susan Stanford Friedman's theory that there exists an alternate strand of Modernism which they termed the "Modernism of the Margins". This section of Modernism took birth around the 1920s and predominantly included works by women writers. The relegated segment of Modernism involved the participation of prominent women writers like Djuna Barnes, H. D., Gertrude Stein and Marianne

Moore. All these writers advocated for the cause of feminism and its inclusion within the framework of Modernism. On the basis on this theory, Djuna Barnes' *Nightwood* is considered and analysed to be a modernist work of the margins. The pertinent research questions it raises are which are the language techniques employed by *Nightwood* to subvert the hypocritical Modernist conventions and how the novel explores surrealistic questions about reality and illusion.

Nightwood within the Framework of Modernism

What can be observed in the works of Djuna Barnes is a conspicuous non-conformity to the traditional notions of aesthetic production which were celebrated in most other Modernist works. Literature of the 'Late modernist' period has often been considered by critics to have showcased an evident subversion of the ideals that had been normalized and cherished by earlier Modernist writers. A section of early Modernism exalted in conservative ideas regarding the clarity of religion and patriarchy. Quite predictably this sparked resistance from other writers, especially women like H.D., Gertrude Stein and Marianne Moore, who envisaged a more tolerant version of Modernism. According to Shari Benstock's and Susan Stanford Friedman's theory, an alternate strand of Modernism took birth around the 1920s and the 1930s. This Modernism, which has been termed the "Modernism of the Margins", critiqued most of the mainstream and predominantly male-dominated Modernist conventions. Through the inclusion of techniques like surrealism, this new segment of Modernism handled hefty topics like the fluidity of meaning and the illusion of reality. They also over-exaggerated some of the conventional Modernist techniques to subvert the inherent hypocrisy of the movement. The growth of such novels indeed proved to be a backlash against classic English Modernism which proudly advocated subtle anti-woman sentiments. Some of the major Modernist poets like Ezra Pound despised the 'womanish' Romanticism and the 'crepuscular' spirit of the Nineties. Pound, in fact, considered women merely as objects of poetic inspiration and not as creators of Art. His indignation towards Djuna Barnes is conspicuous in a limerick he wrote right after the publication of *Nightwood.* "There once wuzza lady named Djuna/ Who wrote rather like a baboon…" goes the poem. (Pound 286)

Exaggeration of Modernist techniques

In her novel, Barnes adopts the technique of exaggeration, among others. She takes the Modernist conventions to the extreme in an attempt to expose some of the pretentious aesthetics of the era. Flamboyance, excessive style and unusual fragmentation of the narrative can easily be noted in the novel. Modernist novels have usually been evaluated on the basis of technical and regimental parameters

that center solely on the quality of language. The meaning of the text assumes only a secondary position to formal exhibitionism. Barnes' *Nightwood* can be read as a protest against these needless Modernist conventions that foreground ornamental language as if nothing else counts in the evaluation of an art form. The evident lack of reader participation in Modernist novels has been exaggerated and mocked through *Nightwood* while remaining within the very framework of Modernism.

The reader begins to experience a work of fiction only through a concrete storyline to which they relate and empathize. However, what *Nightwood* offers its readers is the rather excruciating task of putting the story together, akin to solving a complex puzzle. The novel lacks any chronological threads or coherent biographies of the characters to help decode its narrative. Doctor O' Connor, the self-proclaimed narrator of the novel exclaims at one point, "I have a narrative, but you will be put to find it", thus teasing the readers beyond normal Modernist conventions. (97) Critics opine that the totality of the novel cannot be deciphered by narrowing it down to a single sequence of actions as it is devoid of any conventional narrative structure. Enrique Garcia Diez (1989) observes that "the eight chapters of *Nightwood* are like searchlights probing the darkness each from a different direction in order finally to illuminate the same tangled situation!" (71).

The plot of *Nightwood* is deceptively simple. The story revolves around a group of Americans in post-war Paris. The first character to be introduced is "Baron" Felix von Volkbein, a man who is gravely obsessed with the illusion of an aristocratic past. He befriends anyone with a title, due to his eccentric affinity for anything remotely related to the concepts of nobility and royalty. Felix falls in love with and gets married to Robin Vote with whom he begets a son. Robin, essentially a homosexual, abandons Felix in pursuit of lesbian love. Robin starts living with her lover Nora, but eventually wanders away from her and starts a new life with one of her other lovers, Jenny. Another major character is the transvestite Doctor Matthew O'Connor who is an Irishman from San Francisco, presiding as interim host. His presence is pivotal in the unfolding of the narrative.

The storyline of the novel can only be decoded through an analysis of the conversations between Nora and Felix and the Doctor. They recount their sorrows to the Doctor, who acts as a confidant to both of them. Although Doctor O'Connor is a patient listener, he often bursts into endless monologues that only pave the way for the further digression of the narrative. For instance, the whole of chapter five is a monologue of the Doctor, talking to Nora. Barnes' intentional employment of a pathetic narrator to carry forward her story will be analyzed further in this paper. Through the conversations between Doctor O'Connor and the other characters, the

reader grasps the nihilistic undertones within the novel. There is apparently no element of hope, no real love and no happiness whatsoever in any of the protagonists. The ever-pervading nihilism reaches its peak in the final chapter where we find an utterly distressed Robin taking refuge in Nora's mansion, where she is accompanied only by Nora's dog. Robin is seen crawling on the ground, her forehead pressed against that of the dog and barking vehemently at it. As the novel concludes, Robin chases the dog into the dark corners of the mansion, overruling any likelihood of catharsis for the reader.

Like most Modernist novels, *Nightwood* too resorts to the technique of 'Fragmentation' instead of straightforward action. Fragmentation involves placing together independent and fragmented sections to form a coherent narrative. This became a narrative routine in almost all Modernist fiction although it caught the readers off guard when first introduced. Fragmentation, which has often been criticized for its inability to attain reader participation and involvement, eventually became standard practice within the Modernist rhetoric. However, this narrative practice has been overstated and taken to its limit in Djuna Barnes' novel, possibly to critique the very technique of fragmentation. Due to excessive fragmentation, *Nightwood's* storyline lacks a skeleton. What can be termed the storyline is only a complex juxtaposing of static and independent tableaux that are linked through the interconnection of characters. The conspicuous absence of any naturalistic elements or any comprehensible description of circumstance makes it next to impossible to understand the plot or even the characters of the novel. This extreme complication of plot and narrative has been read by critics as being an imitation of complex Modernist works like those of James Joyce and William Faulkner. However, in spite of extensive research, it is almost impossible to get a concrete and fair understanding of Barnes' intentions and the writer's plans remain elusive. Like a mysterious painting, *Nightwood* indulges itself with intangible ideas.

Inclusion of Surrealism

The publishing of *Nightwood* in1936 not only affirmed the position of Surrealism within Modernism, but also signaled the beginning of a different direction for modernist aesthetics. With the introduction of surrealism, Modernist literature headed towards a substantial transformation, shaking off the influences of its realist and naturalist predecessors. The years following the First World War unveiled the unprecedented savagery of the Western world, toppling all hitherto held perceptions. Surrealism was in fact the need of the hour as it was uniquely suited for a holistic understanding of lived experiences through art, and its representations in fiction. It presented an entirely novel approach to the evaluation and experience

of fiction that offered an appreciation of aesthetic and cognitive aspects of the human psyche. The birth of surrealism was thus welcomed with intensity and warmth as the technique facilitated abundant attention to the subconscious and a detailed description of the human mental life. *Nightwood* inspired and paved the way for a considerable number of Modernist works that inculcated the surrealistic pattern into their framework. The employment of surrealism during the late Modernist period contributed to the peculiarity and enigmatic critical status of literature during the era. It brought about a seismic shift in the conventional understanding of lived experiences and opened up an avenue for unique aesthetic expressions within Modernism.

The narrative of *Nightwood* is characterized by an abundance of surrealistic instances. Barnes has in fact been compared to Salvador Dali in her execution of surrealism. Like Dali, Barnes too indulges in the distortion of familiar objects in implausible and unrecognizable ways. An example of such an episode within her novel is when Nora, blinded with grief over her lost love says, "My ear shall turn in the socket of my head; my eyeballs loosened where I am the whirlwind about that cashed expense, my foot stubborn on the cast of your grave." (89) Here, the organs are recognizable, but their actions are not. This seemingly nonsensical lamentation of a "half narcotized" protagonist however erupts from her very consciousness and negates the need for language as a channel for understanding. It is possible to acknowledge Nora's helplessness in a similar vein to an abstract art work of Salvador Dali or Joan Miro.

Nightwood upholds the Surrealistic premise that dreams translate best to reality than waking, conscious thoughts. This novel can in fact be considered a desperate quest in search of answers to the age-old surrealistic dilemma about Reality and Illusion. Barnes employs language in a manner that questions the very subjectivity and consciousness of her readers. The surrealist tradition of equating the conscious with the unconscious is best observed in a scene where Felix bursts out into uncontrollable laughter upon hearing the phrase "time crawls". The phrase stands out to the reader, and has no source in perceived reality and defies all rules of logic, as we know it. However, the collective acceptance of the phrase and the normalization of its usage in common parlance signals an intrusion of the unconscious into conscious thought. The surrealists envisaged a state of reality where the interactions between the conscious, the subconscious and the unconscious could take place unimpeded. What Djuna Barnes offers through her novel is a fictitious realization of this surrealist dream. The meaning and narrative of the novel are constructed solely through the perpetual merging of Reality and

Illusion; Conscious and Non-conscious. *Nightwood* presents a systematic deconstruction of the very foundation of conservative western thought. An emphasis on the fluid nature of reality is quite obviously a critique of binary logic and scientific rationality. This very approach is reflected in the way *Nightwood* handles issues of gender and sexuality as well. The main characters of the novel (the transvestite Doctor O'Connell and the lesbian lovers Robin, Jenny and Nora) embrace their queerness in a way Modernist characters have never done before. Djuna Barnes, drawing inspiration from her own homosexual inclinations, advocates for the cause of queer normalization. Through a subversion of the absurdities of binary logic, *Nightwood* echoes Judith Butler's concept of gender performativity.

Another assault on Modernist genre conventions of the novel is presented through the clever employment of language. As the plot of *Nightwood* progresses character voices get blurred and it becomes increasingly difficult to distinguish the characters from one another as well as from the narrator. This chaotic intertwining of voices in the novel elevates the work to surrealistic standards and also facilitates a critique of conventional Modernist expectations. The language of *Nightwood* is such that it reveals multiple levels of reality, making it next to impossible to label a singular reality as the authentic one. The Modernist concept of 'language' is the primary path to reality has been subverted through the rhetoric of shifting realities in *Nightwood.* Djuna Barnes through her novel proves that language cannot in fact chronicle life. She showcases how a preexisting, concrete and singular sense of reality cannot always be achieved through language. Neither the readers nor the characters themselves can rely solely on language for a comprehensive understanding of reality. The essence of the futility of language is evident in one of Doctor O'Connor's confessions, "I have not only lived my life for nothing, but I have told it for nothing". (110) This statement of the doctor further highlights the nihilistic undertones of the novel which imply that nothing anyone does is real or meaningful. We understand that language is merely an anthology of words and has only a fleeting and volatile relationship with reality.

In another shocking aberration of Modernist narrative conventions, *Nightwood* has refused to assign 'core' personalities to its characters. Any typical novel is invariably marked by the presence of characters whose actions and thoughts are consistent with their core personalities. However, Barnes' characters are denied any unique or personalized identity traits, proving that the concept of identity is not foundational, but quite on the contrary only a mere illusion. The characters of *Nightwood* create imaginary inner selves for themselves based on the surface

happenings. This runs completely in contrast to the conventional Modernist protagonists whose unified egos get expressed consistently through external happenings. The surrealist trait within Modernism, therefore, displays stark contrasts to the realist and naturalist patterns that were frequently spotted in Modernist novels.

Narrative Technique

Nightwood lacks a conventional and comprehensible narrative structure, making it difficult to identify sequences of action for the purpose of explanation. The very fundamental connection of the reader to the narrative is subsequently obscured. The poetic language of the novel only circles around itself, rejecting any actual reader involvement. Critics have often compared the novel to Eliot's Gerontion, which too was characterized by its complex narrative structure and hermeticism. Both works inspire only feelings of awe and un-involvement from its readers. In *Nightwood,* the readers are exceedingly distant from the story and therefore unable to part take in or even get exposed to the pathos that unfolds. However, Djuna Barnes has left enough traces for her readers to construct their subjective realities from within the framework of the novel. Through symbolism and through the appointment of Doctor O'Conner as the narrator, Barnes seduces her readers into the story by helping them to mildly untangle the mysteries of the novel.

Doctor Matthew O'Conner is the self-proclaimed narrator of the story and takes upon himself the responsibility of carrying the narrative forward. A disproportionate amount of narrative space has been occupied by the doctor, practically elevating him to the position of the sole narrative voice. However, in spite of his empathetic demeanor and capacity to comprehend the darkness of life, O'Connor is a congenital liar, a thief, a known incompetent and worst of all a pathetic storyteller. He fails to produce a rational, cohesive narrative space and the reader is left with no option but to closely follow his actions and monologues in the hope of deducing the meaning of the text. Ironically enough Barnes acknowledges the inefficiency of the doctor. In a meta-commentary, she remarks, "once the doctor has his audience… nothing could stop him." O'Connor is often seen acknowledging his own inadequacy in carrying forward the story. For instance, during an important conversation between Nora and the doctor, he carelessly shifts the topic to an irrelevant personal story and pedantically goes on and on about it. At one point when Nora expresses her lack of interest, the doctor simply dismisses her by saying "Don't get restless- I am coming back to the point" (Barnes 144) This acceptance of the incompetence of her storyteller and the absolute apathy she showcases towards the issue only reaffirms the superiority of the author over the

reader. By allowing one of her characters to shape the narrative and fabricate the reality of the novel, Barnes presents a kind of latent disdain towards the narrative expectations of Modernist readers. Most readers were conditioned to become submissive and unquestioning detectors of clues and linguistic tricks within the text. *Nightwood* can therefore be considered a ridiculing of the excessively servile attitudes of Modernist readers.

What Djuna Barnes presents through her extreme indifference towards the reader could be, as critics assume, a critique of Modernist narratives that assign sole importance to flaunt the formal patterns and structures of their ornamental language. Most Modernist novels tend to exalt language over meaning. She lets her narrator loose, authorizing his pathetic narrative style even though it impairs the very meaning of the novel. The absurdity of Doctor O'Connor's narrative is such that it is only natural to assume that Barnes could have been ridiculing the Modernist concept of valuing linguistic exhibitionism over the very meaning of the text.

Another narrative aberration within *Nightwood* is the inclusion of the last chapter which stands out as a purple patch. The final chapter has been widely considered to have undercut the major themes of the novel and it presents a disruption of numerous conceptions that have been propagated in the earlier sections of the text. Many of the characters act unlike themselves towards the end and the presence of Doctor O'Connor is entirely ignored. Some of the Modernist writers, including T. S. Eliot who showered appreciations on other aspects of the novel strongly recommended the removal of this chapter. "I urge strongly the omission of the last chapter which is not only superfluous, but also really an anti-climax", Eliot had suggested. (Plumb 149) However, in spite of this advice, Barnes decided to keep that peculiar chapter which attracts conflicting readings even to this day. The logic behind her obstinacy can only be explained in surrealistic terms. What this chapter presents is an outright toppling of all hitherto held ideas of meaning and reality. Characters are seen behaving in completely unexpected manners, thereby affirming once again the absence of core personalities or identities for any of her characters. For instance, Nora who was throughout the novel madly lamenting her separation from Robin is now suddenly portrayed as being emotionally recovered. Likewise, Robin, the independent and strong wanderer, seems to lose agency over her life and is depicted as being completely depraved. In the last scene, we find her reduced to a mere animal. This abrupt, unforeseen climax of the novel can only fairly be read in the light of surrealism. The very essence of meaning, reality and consistency are questioned through the final regression of *Nightwood.* This unpredictable fall of the

narrative can also be read as a critique of mainstream Modernist conventions that uphold the importance of a consistent and reliable narrative structure.

Conclusion

Nightwood has to this day remained one of the most ambiguous and extraordinary artworks ever created. Barnes offers penetrating observations about the human psyche and the fleeting nature of reality through her novel. Apart from asserting the position of Surrealism within Modernist rhetoric, *Nightwood* also offers a critique of various literary conventions that were staunchly followed during the period. The novel presents a parody of the linguistic exhibition that marked most of the mainstream Modernist works. As critics like Benstock and Friedman observe, Barnes' novel represents the marginalized folds within the Modernist tradition. *Nightwood* has inculcated various unorthodox techniques within its narrative in order to resist the patriarchal and exhibitionistic tendencies of Modernism. Barnes also critiques the average Modernist reader who unquestioningly accepted the needless ostentation of high Modernism. For this purpose, she chose to deliberately complicate the narrative structure, thereby obscuring the very meaning of the text. Barnes assigns her readers the excruciating task of putting together the fragmented narrative into a comprehensive whole. It is also possible that she intended to take a dig at the common Modernist technique of 'fragmentation' through the over-exaggeration of the same. In spite of such critical evaluations, it still remains ambiguous what Barnes' original intentions were while creating *Nightwood*. We still wonder if she had complete authority over her plot, style, and characters or if it spiraled out of her control, swallowing the novel.

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THE EVOLUTION OF AN IDEAL WOMAN: A STUDY OF AUSTEN'S HEROINES AND THE SUPERNATURAL WOMEN OF POP CULTURE

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Abstract: *Jane Austen, in most of her novels, has portrayed her heroines as strong-willed, intelligent, and highly influential. Bearing flaws of their own and often compromising in some situations, she has drawn her characters, who show some promise for the future evolution. In this paper, I will try to shed some light on the evolution of the women from the budding stage of feminism, taking up some of Austen's characters, and some women from the pop culture novels. Bringing in Beauvoir's concept of 'Other', which means how they are treated as an entity devoid of any identity of their own, and Wollstonecraft's views regarding the rights of women, and the education they should receive in order to avoid being merely considered as an object, I intend to look into the possible concept of the "ideal woman", and how one can live up to this title, traversing over time.*

Keywords: *Feminism, patriarchy, dominance, hegemony, women*

The 18th and the 19th centuries were very much significant for women, as it was a time when a completely new facet of their identity was coming into focus and also the first wave of the fight for their rights was arising. In general, what we understand by the "condition" of women during that time is not so much polished or refined; in short, they were subjugated. In 1837, the term "feminisme" was coined by Charles Fourier and since then the birth of feminism took place (McCann et al. 14-14). With the main aim to establish equality in the social, economic and legal front the struggle of the women started to grow. Mentioning about the first wave of feminism, it took U.S. and Europe by storm in the mid-19th century. It demanded equal rights to vote, rights to marriage and way in to education for the women. The second wave began in the 1960s and its main agenda was Women's Liberation Movement. The third wave feminists started to break down the barriers of racism and sexism and also replied back with their awe inspiring survival stories on the face of violence (Brunell, The third wave of feminism).

So the question now arises is that, who can be considered as the "ideal" woman? Who falls into the category of flawless, bold and motivated woman, who can break the shackles of the unjustly made boundaries, and make a name for themselves? In this regard, I will try to draw a comparison between women of two different centuries and will try to chart the growth of them keeping in view, the 19th century heroines of Jane Austen and the portrayal of the supernatural women lot of the 20th and 21st centuries. In this regard, another question may pop up, and that is, Why Jane Austen and why not the other women writers of her time like Maria Edgeworth, Fanny Burney or Elizabeth Carter? Although, the mentioned women writers hold a very strong place in the history of English literature as far as vouching for the rights of women was concerned, but it was Jane Austen, according to me, who had shook the literary world by her six full-length novels that shows the gradual evolution of women like no other. Austen has been hailed as the earliest feminist of her era and she is still the most read, her works are the most adapted and still she is very much relevant in today's culture. The question of marriage being one of the central topics of her novels, however shows another side of it – marriage out of love and keeping a woman's self-respect intact. While many women writers were talking individually of some of the grave issues of the society of that time, Austen, painted an entire rainbow of these serious problems and also walked on the path of mitigating those with the creation of her strong female characters.

Here, by the supernatural heroines of the 20th and the 21st centuries, I mean, the female protagonists from the pop culture novels written by Stephenie Meyer, L.J. Smith and one American drama series by Joss Whedon. Isabella Swan from "Twilight", Elena Gilbert from "The Vampire Diaries" and Buffy from "Buffy the Vampire Slayer" are the three characters, who are sketched in such a manner, that they show a remarkable growth, as their evolution progresses as an ideal woman. A very common question may arise now that, why have I chosen the supernatural characters when there are plenty of modern human characters are in display in so many novels? So, firstly, in this era of popular culture, the characters, who have attracted the teens and the young adults in its entire might, are the supernatural ones. Also, apart from being one of the most popular genres of the modern era, fantasy literature also showcases some strong women characters, who represent fierce attitude, not-so-timid nature and possess decision making capabilities for themselves. There is no doubt about the fact that they possess an add-on in terms of super human powers. But, it will also be interesting to see, whether this power gives them an advantage physically to be better than the 'human' women, or they also, to various extents remain subjugated under the patriarchal dominance. In

order to answer the question of the "ideal woman", the situation has to be viewed from an angle of patriarchal hegemony. To chart the growth of the inner conscience of women, the realization of their own worth and capabilities, it would be the fittest to go back to the 19th century. It was during that time, Austen had created some of her masterpieces and it was also during that time, the feminists had started to make a statement about their identity.

But before taking up some of Austen's celebrated works, with three different shades of female protagonists, let's first talk about the general notion about women, as well as their image in the world of patriarchy. Women, as already told by the French existentialist philosopher Simone de Beauvoir, was considered as the 'Other'. Man was the subject, absolute and essential (JSTOR, Second Sex); whereas, women were looked down upon as the object and the inessential ones. They were taken to be incomplete beings, the damsels in distress, who were always waiting to be saved by a man or fulfilled by a man. If married, they were the property of their husbands and if not, they were bound to be under their fathers' control. An overall idea was established that women were supposed to stay at 'home' look pretty; whereas men were entitled to be the bread-earners of the family and to save women from difficult situations. With the dawn of the early 19th century, things started to change a bit and the women begun to be politically active. Even in the Islamic religion, some glaring positive changes could be seen as far as the rights of the women was concerned.

On this note, it would be an incomplete discussion, if I don't talk about another major concept of the 19th century, and that is, the concept of "New Woman". This term was first coined by Sarah Grand in 1894 (Diniejko). A "new woman" had in general the following attributes, which were a matter of critique of the society. Those type of women were intelligent, they were independent as well as educated. They were not only hailing from the middle-class background, but also most of the women were factory workers. These women re-structured and reformed the gender roles, and also came out of the dominance of the patriarchal norms. Gradually gaining rights to divorce, right to property and education, these women started off to establish their own identity in the society by writing novels about strong, independent women, becoming social reformers and fighting for the rights of their own sex. (victorianweb.org). Many women writers were, during that time, sketching some of the strong female characters, with attributes of not a sufferer, but a fighter of the baseless social norms. But Austen, for me, within her six esteemed novels, have not only shown their strengths, but also their weaknesses in its full glory. Her heroines make mistakes, they stoop down, they suffer, but at the end of

the day, they get up to fight for their own rights, realize their mistakes and reform their attitudes to not compromise with the wrong demands of the society. From here, I have come up with the concept of an "ideal woman", whose search can actually be initiated, through this concept of the "new woman". There can be actually no such thing as "perfect" but there can be a construction of "ideal", through a process of accepting, adapting and changing – not as per the society's needs, but their own needs and wishes.

Jane Austen was one of the most prominent and successful novelists of the 19th century, and she had started sketching some of the quite interesting and radical women characters, who would bring a change in the perception about women in the society. But, whether they can be called "ideal" or not, standing in the modern era, is going to be a matter of debate. Some of the very common themes in Austen's writings are realism, marriage, and social criticism. She had portrayed some of her heroines to be strong-willed, influential and a keen knack towards education. On the other hand, there were some exceptions too in the form of some of the subdued heroines as well. An author can best reflect her own thoughts through her writings and Austen provocatively, yet with considerable subtlety showcases her views on the miserable condition of women during her days. Also, it was all not dark and gloomy for the female lot, as through her characters like Elizabeth Bennett and Emma, she provides us a picture of a change, which these protagonists traverse over the course of the novel. I will take up three of the most famous heroines of Jane Austen, out of the three most famous novels written by her – one is "Pride and Prejudice", "Emma" and "Sense and Sensibility". These women in Austen's novels hold feminist ideologies and are at the same time intelligent enough to decide not to remain as a showpiece on the mantle of the fireplace of her husband's house. In "Sense and Sensibility", we can see the balancing of emotions within Eleanor and in "Pride and Prejudice", being judgmental very fast almost costs Elizabeth and Darcy their union. On the other hand in "Emma", Austen charts the growth of the protagonist from naivety to adulthood. Women, during the 19th century, were merely destined to take care of their household and after stepping into the arena of adulthood, were supposed to get married. It was a matter of absolute no importance, whether they loved their partner or not, or even comfortable in marrying him or not. It was solely based on finding a shore, where they can harbor themselves for the rest of their lives.

Eleanor in "Sense and Sensibility"

Such a character is Eleanor of "Sense and Sensibility", for whom, love is a matter of secondary importance when it comes to taking family responsibilities. She is a

typical 19th century woman, who always keeps a check on her emotions and pays unnecessary heed to the social life and its criticisms. Her sister Marianne on the other hand, has been portrayed as a complete opposite of her sister and as Elizabeth Gregory says, "Marianne is passionate, romantic and impetuous, the "sensibility" of the title, and is led by her heart rather than her head when it comes to men" (Gregory, para 3). Although she had been sketched as an utterly romantic character, who always liked to remain submerged into the depths of the romantic novels and used to think of having her own fairytale one day, but she also suffered from the pangs of an unfulfilled love because of this unrealistic nature. Eleanor is a perfect woman with a balance of emotions, sound judgement and rationality. She feels love, like every other normal human being does; but she also does not get carried away with that feeling and put her family's social prestige in danger, and also her own. Both these characters strike a balance in the entire proceeding of the novel and shows, their own faults and mistakes. Austen, in a very perfect manner shows us through her heroines that, extremes of anything is not ideal and definitely that won't make these characters the "ideal" women.

Emma's Evolution

In "Emma", we see a young adult woman, with some very childish notions about love and life. But, she is a character who knows how to take control, she is "opinionated" and "meddlesome" (Coniam). She is rich, but she is naïve. Meddling in other people's lives and literally playing with such a pure feeling of 'love' by match-making, puts her in some embarrassing situations, only to learn from her experiences and realize her mistakes. Emma is beautiful, accomplished and has a sense of humor which makes her an admirable woman. But does it make her an "ideal" one? As per Wollstonecraft, education is a very important factor and should be so for a woman, for if anything goes wrong in her marriage later in life, she would at least be capable of establishing her own identity as an individual. But during the time when Austen was writing, even if a woman belongs from a rich family and is accomplished, her final destination would be marriage.

The Journey towards Becoming an "Ideal Woman" – "Pride and Prejudice"

However, in one of the masterpieces of Jane Austen, which is "Pride and Prejudice", we see an example of almost an evolved woman, both in terms of knowledge and wit. In this novel, Austen portrays the 18th and early 19th century social life of England; which is nothing but the patriarchal society. It has been portrayed as a time, when men had the upper hand in almost everything and in terms of social dominance, they had their influence of wealth. Amidst this, emerges a character called Elizabeth Bennett, who is not ready to bow down before any

man, unless and until he matches her notion of a perfect match. She rejects Darcy's principles as well as his proposal of marriage on the ground, that he is too proud of his status. The entire concept of marriage was highly controversial during that time, as marriage was only treated to be a mode of a convenient lifestyle for a woman and for men, simply pleasure.

According to Jane Austen, an accomplished woman is someone, who is exceptional is singing, dancing, drawing and modern languages (Bogel). She is the definition of "ideal woman" according to her but, it is partially true as per the modern sense. Yes, her heroines are strong-willed, independent, intelligent as well as rich (in some cases). But, they are not free from their share of imperfections. A reader, will often find difficult in considering them as "perfect" or "ideal" but out of all these characters, Elizabeth Bennett stands out as a woman, who takes the first step to be a person, who marries not only because of convenience; but after loving the good and the bad side of Mr. Darcy. In a society, where refusing for marriage was considered to be a matter of shock for everyone, Austen makes it completely normal and valid in the form of Anne Eliot of "Persuasion" and Elizabeth Bennett of "Pride and Prejudice". These two women, in its truest sense, stands for the integrity of their sex, and progresses to bring about a change in their way of life.

The Vampire Heroines of Pop Culture

Traversing forward to the modern era, we find ourselves landing onto the arena of pop culture, where the dominance of fantasy literature, among other genres can be seen in its full potential. These heroines of the supernatural world, gives the young female adults of this era some major goals of being fiercely independent. The authors of the two insanely popular novels, which are – "Twilight saga" and "The Vampire Diaries", portray their female protagonists as the representatives of third-wave feminism. The inclusion of another very popular show by Joss Whedon will be made in the latter half of the discussion, in order to make a strong statement regarding the issue of the "ideal woman". So the female characters in "Twilight" and "the Vampire Diaries" have been sketched as everything that comes under being a typical independent, smart, modern kind of a woman and they also are very much able to look after themselves, without the aid of a male counterpart. Isabella Swan, the female protagonist of the "Twilight saga", written by Stephenie Meyer, is a girl who, is modern and independent in many sense but a portrayal of an Austen heroine is some other ways too. Her decision to move in with her father to give her mother some space with her new husband, is a bold step taken by a young girl. At the same time, as soon as she meets Edward, she completely submits herself to him, in terms of protection and dependency. The fashioning of

"femininity" by the modern authors, through their supernatural characters, tend to look at the problems between what to expect from a 21st century societal construct and the construction of the characters from the previous era literature. As far as Bella is concerned, she is dangling somewhere in the middle of these two eras. On one hand, we cannot do away with the fact that she is actually modern in many ways, as she holds knowledge about various issues, she is eager, she knows how to drive, she is allowed to have night outs with her friends, and also takes some decisions on her own about her life. But, on the other side of the coin, she is an old-fashioned character in many ways. Stephenie Meyer (2007) had quoted in The Story behind the Writing of New Moon: "We can't all be slayers". Bella is a character who is very much relatable with the ordinary human girls of the society. The feeling and anxiousness of not being able to "fit in", constantly bugged her as it bugs the teens of our human world regarding "fitting in". Her notion about herself completely depends on Edward – the young, gorgeous and attractive vampire, whom she has fallen in love with. Edward's words, "You don't see yourself very clearly, you know…you didn't hear what every human male in this school was thinking on your first day" (Meyer 2005, 184) sort of instills some kind of belief among the female teen readers, regarding their own assessment of beauty.

Right at this juncture, Bella stands as a contrast to one of the most popular supernatural heroine, sketched by L.J. Smith. Elena, in "The Vampire Diaries", has been portrayed as a confident, smart and outspoken kind of a girl, even before she turns to a vampire; "In that instant, Elena was aware that she was beautiful. It wasn't just the dress, or the way her hair was done. She was beautiful in herself; slender, imperial, a thing made of silk and inner fire…She had never been so sure of her power (Smith 1991, 70). She does not need a validation of how she looks from the brooding vampire boyfriend of her. Elena, where on one hand we see, is completely smitten by Stefan Salvatore just like Bella has been smitten by Edward but, she seems to be reasonable enough to be reluctant when it comes to step inside the circle of danger. Upon knowing the real identity of Stefan, she takes her own time to let the fact sink in and then decides to act upon her chosen course.

Isabella Swan – Almost a Traditional Prototype of 19th Century Heroine

Bella is beautiful, and is considered to be a prize for many; but her lack of self-confidence and seeking approval for her beauty from Edward's perceptions, makes her a little bit a character of Bronte's Jane Eyre – "…I felt it a misfortune that I was so little, so pale, and had features so irregular and so marked." (Bronte 1847, 100). Bella is almost a prototype of some of the characters sketched by Austen. She strongly believes in the concept of "true love" and when she finds it, she is ready to

go to any extent; even if it means to embrace the dark life of a vampire. Choice plays a very important factor in a woman's life; but it is always not easy to make, especially if she is living in a patriarchal society. The choices seem to be very minimum when we look at the lives of Austen's heroines and also considering the kind of society they were living in. But, in case of Bella, there was a choice; there was a choice to choose between a dangerous life with Edward and a peaceful life with Jacob or even better, just to choose someone who is human and live a happy and fruitful life. Nonetheless, this automatic urge to tread on the path of danger and submitting herself to her "true love" can be looked at from two different ways. One, she wants to be that kind of a traditional woman, whose entire life depends on the validation of her lover regarding everything and she loves the idea of a romance that can be achieved by removing various obstacles. Second, and which is more likely to be an option, is that, she is fascinated by the life of an immortal and like any other normal girl, she would love to have that kind of superhuman strength and power to rule the world. Of course, this does not at all negate her love for Edward; but that add on advantage is definitely there in Bella's mind.

Elena – A Ruling High School Diva or a Subdued Girlfriend?

Elena, of "The Vampire Diaries", is one of the better portrayals than Isabella Swan in terms of being confident about herself and taking control when it comes to make the boys swoon over her in school. She is fun-loving, cheerful and is always up for taking risks and later, finding herself in sticky situations. However, she is also not free from the specks of imperfections like Bella. With the arrival of the two brothers Stefan Salvatore and Damon Salvatore, Elena's life completely turns upside down, as her morals as a woman start to bend when she discovers herself being torn between those two gorgeous men. Adaptations in the mass market culture, has become one of the main attractions for the people and it is natural tendency to visualize what we read in our favorite novel. Certain deviations at times are also more acceptable, when it heightens the visual form even more. So, in Season 4 of "The Vampire Diaries" series, we find Elena saying herself while confessing her love to Damon: "Fine then I'm not sorry either. I'm not sorry that I met you. I'm not sorry that knowing you has made me question everything…" ("Graduation" 28:13). Her life has been dictated by the Salvatore brothers and ultimately one can see that it is not even her choice, whether she is to turn into a vampire or accept death. That decision is also made by Stefan and Damon, for her. Both these brothers' characters are shown to be a dominant one, who have the maximum influence on Elena and she, like Bella, too faces the choice between choosing the either of the brothers. Elena is defined by her relationship with Stefan

and Damon and she fails to achieve any individual dominance in the books as well as in the show. She is converted by Damon into a vampire, trained to be the same and made completely emotionally dependent. But all is not gloomy for her too; as she takes control a lot of times and fights for her friends and even gets rid of the ruthless vampire Klaus to save her near ones. Still, looking from a feminist perspective, neither she nor Bella can be termed as "ideal women" although, they seem to have the full potential and the required independence to be so.

True female Empowerment in "Buffy the Vampire Slayer"

Nonetheless, Joss Whedon, the maker of the show "Buffy the Vampire Slayer" comes up with a female protagonist in the form of Buffy, who will change the notion of the modern age, not-so-perfect supernatural female lot. As far as dependency on someone is concerned, Buffy does not rely or bank on to any of her suitors, and is truly an independent character. Angel and Spike, the two vampires loves Buffy but, in the words of Lottie Ashton, "unlike the myriad of Bella Swans that came before and after her, Buffy doesn't throw everything else in her life under the bus to be with Angel." (Mikros). She does not even flinch back from killing Angel when she notices that he has turned into a devil. Buffy is a character who has every attribute of being a feminine character, but she is not an emotional fool, or swayed away by blind love. Whereas in the case of Bella and Elena, we see that both of them pine for their lovers; on the very same level we see Spike languishing for Buffy. Joss Whedon, gives Buffy the authority to take the front seat of the dominant female character and provides secondary importance to Spike. She is the example of true female empowerment and this is a kind of character a female reader should want themselves to relate to, instead of pining for a knight in shining armor to come and rescue her from the dangers. In an interview, when Joss was asked about why he is always sketching strong female characters, the outright reply was, "Because you're still asking me that question".

Conclusion

Mary Wollstonecraft had mainly started talking about the rights of the women at a time, when the women, living in the patriarchal society had absolutely none (JSTOR). Her excessive manner of putting emphasis on the education of women, established the fact that she feels the need and constant urge to educate women, so that they don't remain reduced to mere objects to be toyed by men. Carrying forward her views, Simone de Beauvoir, during the second wave of feminism, talks extensively about "male primacy" and "female otherness" (JSTOR, "Seeing the Second Sex through the Second Wave") which places the women's position in our minds in a miserable state. "The Second Sex" not only shows us how the male

power construct constraints women; but also, how can the realization of the power of women, get their life moving in the right direction.

In my analysis of this paper, the question of who can be called an "ideal woman" is still found hanging in our society, right from the time Austen had started representing her strong-willed and independent women characters. Also, the demands from the particular word "ideal" itself has no ending. As the views of one culture shifts to another, the wants from a particular gender also shifts accordingly to make them perfect or ideal. Definitely since the time of Austen, there has been a clear change in the attributes of the women, of the modern century; although, Austen's heroines were also not very much different from the modern women. In fact, many similarities can be drawn between the women of these two eras but also some glaring differences are there that has been talked about already. The quest of this paper was to search for the attributes which make a woman fit for the modern society, as well as an example for the young women of this age, even if patriarchal dominance is there. Elena and Bella from "The Vampire Diaries" and "Twilight" respectively, most definitely do not fit into that role quite. However, within the character of Buffy, who holds her emotions in place as well as let not her power get subdued, is someone, who can be termed as an "ideal woman" of the modern era. One of the fascinating things about fantasy literature is that, it brings out some of the highly thought provoking discussions in the forefront under the garb of supernatural or magical beings. Along with the characters of Austen, Meyer, Smith and Whedon, one can surely traverse through ages and find the answer somewhat, of what makes a woman capable to thrive in the male-dominated society.

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THE REPRESENTATION OF THE SELF AS ECHOED IN NARINE ABGARYAN'S *THREE APPLES FELL FROM THE SKY*

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Abstract: *This paper attempts to portray the life of Anatolia in the fictional town of Maran where she has to struggle both mentally and physically to bring in a new beginning to her life and also to her lone rustic village. Through Anatolia the writer beautifully reveals the power of survival amidst retrogression which has been a resultant of deadly man-made and natural calamities and has swiped away many generations in front of her eyes.*

Keywords: *Rustic, people, life, village.*

The process of self-development has been a continuous process and throughout the study of literature the representation of the self has been a major topic of study. If we see different literatures, we can see that the self generally includes the way we present and depict ourselves in the context of our cultures and traditions. The representation of the self can be considered as a definite set of structure which depicts oneself with connection to firstly with their own self, secondly with their kith and kins, thirdly with the people around them and fourthly with relationship to the environment they are in. The environment becomes one of the major factors later in the representation of the self because the environment in which the character grows up in helps in depicting the self of the character. This is also the case with Anatolia the protagonist of *Three Apples Fell from the Sky* which is finely sculpted by Narine Abgaryan.

A Russian writer whose roots belong to Armenia, Narine Abgaryan is born in the town of Berd, Tavoush on January 14, 1971. She completed her formal education in Russian language and literature teaching and has later moved to Moscow in pursuance of her literary career. Narine Abgaryan's paternal grandfather belonged to a Western Armenian refugee and through him she was able to see the tension that prevailed during the times as being a refuge. Through her ancestors she is able to foresee the life of the people of Armenia who has survived or struggled to survive after a handful of manmade and also natural disasters. She is originally a blogger by profession in the Life Journal who later became a nominee for the award of Big Book in 2011. Her renowned work *Manyunya* artistically designates about a juvenile friendship between Narine and her best friend Maria also known as *Manyuna.* This autobiographical novel *Manyunya* has acknowledged a lot of

fame and has also received the intrepid award of *The Manuscript of the Year* which is considered as a Russian national literary award. Her other works appealingly include *People Who Are Always with Me, Three Apples Fell from the Sky, Simon and others.* Narine Abgaryan's only children's book *Chocolate Granddad* which was co-authored with Valentin Postnikov was successfully published in 2014. In August 2015 Narine Abgaryan was awarded the *Alexander Grin Literature Award* for her outstanding involvement towards the development and upliftment of national literature in Russia. In 2020 *The Guardian* named her as one among the perkiest novelists of Europe.

Three Apples Fell from the Sky was translated into English by Lisa C Hayden whose main focus is to translate works of Russian literature into the mainstream language that is English. Her major translations other than *Three Apples Fell from the Sky* include *Klotsvog* by Margarita Khemlin, *Zuleikha* by Guzel Yakhina and many more. The book *Three Apples Fell from the Sky* subsequently faced a severe interruption due to the epidemic of COVID19 but the book was later successfully released in the United Kingdom in the month of August of the year 2020. *Three Apples Fell from the Sky* is considered as Narine Abgaryan's fifth novel which has drawn a multiple set of readers and made Narine possible for winning the Russia's most admired "Yasnaya Polyana Literary Award" in the year of 2016.

Through the novel the writer Narine Abgaryan beautifully portrays how the characters move about with their daily chores of lives like the gathering and garnering of crops, production of baklava, tidying and decorating the houses. She also with the power of her writing is able to depict the twinning of the villagers in times of difficulties and also in times of happiness and prosperity. This tiny village of Maran which was burrowed high in the Armenian mountains of Russia was a resultant of Russian history and civilization where people are forced to belief that their dreams, curses and miracles are to be taken very seriously because there exists a close-knit community where disputes, chinwags and giggles endure to remain unharmed by the passage of time. The image of Armenian history of power-struggles and the image of woman as a strong survivor of destiny to protect their homes and lineages are beautifully described by Abgaryan through the image of Anatolia and her other female and male mates. Anatolia is not only a survivor of man-made, natural, physical, and mental disasters but she is also believed to be a carrier of a new fate of life. Added to this through the depiction of Anatolia Abgaryan pictures what can eventually take place when an extremely comprehensive and pragmatic background is intruded by something unbelievable to believe and accept as her state of life from the bed of death to the bed of

marriage with Vasily which brings in the real twist and makes the novel magical with its realistic elements making it readable for the readers. Anatolia's stream of consciousness technique beautifully portrays the vivacities of domestic life that is from the narrow-mindedness of the people to the understanding and mingling towards a new journey of life in a ball full of hopes, beliefs and a desire for a new beginning of life.

The fictional town of Maran as created by Abgaryan depicts a few families which have survived after a multitude of disasters and there are only a handful of people of different age groups. This is where Anatolia is also one of them who have lost most of her kith and kin through the unpredicted screws and cracks of life yet she is able to survive through the little sparks of magic in her life. Abgaryan through Anatolia portrays a life full of frustrations and disasters in the beginning of the novel who is preparing her finest deathbed herself due to her physical female trauma. From the day she is born she has been faced with and heard with a multitude of natural disasters like earthquakes and famines which has not allowed her even to enjoy her childhood. She has only met with devastations, fear and hunger and during her whole lifetime was not even allowed to see happiness, fulfilment and enjoyment. Added to this again when Abgaryan makes us travel into Anatolia's life as a librarian with full of magical elements to make the reader belief as Anatolia as one of the world's readers and also librarians. Here again Anatolia is faced with a great war which has lasted for eight years and it has shattered the lives of many families alike. Therefore, she tends to capture the attention and draw a sense of love and longing from the readers. Through Anatolia the writer beautifully portrays the condition of the fictional town of Maran which has been devastated by war and was cut off from all types of communications making it standstill not only for the people living there but also for the people outside the village.

Trials and tribulations which were a part of Anatolia's life made her conclude that the concept of heaven and hell does not exist anywhere and wherever there is happiness there is heaven and there exist solace. Anatolia, who is fifty-eight years old when the novel begins meticulously does all her domestic chores as an expert traditional woman does and tries to keep ready a silver cross and some money for her funeral ceremony because she believes that she is going to die very soon because of her female illness. Through the character of Anatolia Abgaryan portrays an orthodox traditional woman who is brought up in the patriarchal traditions. As she remains very much rooted to her customs and traditions, she becomes a perfect example of female femininity and a sole protector of her own literary culture and tradition. In order to protect her values and customs she decides to marry Vasily

Kudamants after her painful separation with her anonymous husband who brutally abused and mistreated her. Anatolia who is very much preparing for her deathbed and is in a negative vibe towards the concept of life and marriage thoughtfully accepts the marriage proposal of Vasily Kudamants to console him and to becomes his better half after the death of his wife. This marriage makes her forget about her dying illness and she finds heaven in the present itself and starts believing that God exists everywhere because she finds God to be her solacing power. On the other hand, Abgaryan brings in spice with the touch of magical elements to the life of Anatolia through the death of Vasily Kudamant's wife. Through the death of Vasily's wife the writer tries not to personalize death but it takes on a physical appearance through this inconsequential character in the enchanting fable. The moment Anatolia gives a positive reply to Vasily she herself reverberates positive vibes in her body trying to start for a new beginning of life and this becomes the centre of attraction in the novel.

In the third part of the novel, we come to notice the fruitful concoction of Anatolia and Vasily which has resulted in the birth of a baby girl, Voske. Added to this we also come to notice that the other characters in the novel like Tigran and Nastasya also knot themselves resulting in their baby son, Kirill. Narine Abgaryan who begins the novel with the preparation of the deathbed of Anatolia tries to conclude the novel in a happy note with an assumption of union of Voske and Kirill. The union of Voske and Kirill brings in a positive note not only to the characters in the novel but also to the readers by portraying a ray of hope of the survival and existence of the miniature fictional village of Maran after facing a series of man-made trials and tribulations and also certain natural disasters.

Through the image of Anatolia, the writer beautifully portrays the deep-rooted belief system that is prevalent in the Armenian nationalistic culture. If we look at the nationalistic cultural history of the town of Maran Abgaryan through Anatolia is able to portray the cultural and orthodox rustics of the people of the fictional town of Maran and also understand the state of their mind who has become the survivor of various tragic horrors and also their basic deep-rooted traditional way of life.

Though in the beginning of the novel the writer begins with the phobia about the death of the protagonist but as the novel progresses with the stream of consciousness technique of Anatolia we come to observe the transformation of Anatolia from being a phobic of death to a person of completeness. The conclusion of the novel makes the novel more sensitive through the self-retrospection of Anatolia. The vicious circle of life as portrayed by Abgaryan through Anatolia

represents a complete circle from childhood to marriage and this also tends to become one of the recurrent themes of the novel. Through Anatolia the writer portrays a gentle tale of crisis and suffering of having lived and survived through heaven and hell. Anatolia and her husband who are considered the impulsive characters in the novel very well portray the difficulties of endurance and existence.

The struggle of women for the realization of their self which has been universally not acknowledged at any state of personal and public level is also portrayed by Narine Abgaryan through the development of Anatolia. Anatolia as a woman is very much adventurous because she was forced to overcome multiple disasters throughout her life. It is an undeniable fact that Anatolia has overcome so much of trials and tribulations in her life that she is unable to accept the fact that nothing might happen to her so she even goes to an extent of preparing her deathbed. Anatolia was surrounded by nature that is with her domiciliary floras and faunas, religious and cultural mythology which were the sole reasons of her existence and Hayden beautifully expresses this through the following lines:

> Before departing for the next world, she thoroughly watered the kitchen garden and scattered food for the chickens, leaving a little extra since the birds couldn't go around unfed – how could she know when the neighbors would discover her lifeless body? (4)

The female perspective in the novel through Anatolia and the other female characters portrays the self-definition of women through the concept of traditionally culturing a woman to a particular set of society. In this concept of traditionally culturing a woman the self of the woman is lost in the web of fantasy and imaginations. This can be also seen in European Literature as Betty Friedan expresses: "As the Victorian culture did not permit women to accept or gratify their basic needs, our culture does not permit women to grow and fulfil their potentialities as human beings."(49)

To conclude with, it is seen that the sole responsibilities of a woman is to procreate and to bear the responsibilities of procreation which is the major image of a woman's identity and so is the case with Anatolia and the other female characters in the novel, *Three Apples in the Sky*. Narine Abgaryan's chief concern mainly revolves around the female inhabitants in the novel though there are traces of male inhabitants in the town of Maran. Though the narrative includes the perspectives of the male inhabitants of Maran, it's not particularly concerned with the continuance of male lineage and knowledge. The novel centres on the perspectives of the female characters and the writer beautifully portrays how they struggle with their

state of isolation to clutch to their lines of communication with their ancient histories and in relation with the outside world.

To concentrate on the affluence of Maran's ethos and values this enchanting fable is filled up with sumptuous imagery and humour which makes the fable an image of resilience, bravery, and withholding of relationships. *Three Apples Fell from the Sky* by Narine Abaryan in Russian language is an admirable creation of translation by Lisa C Hayden and an exclusive gift made to the readers of English language. The novel is considered as a scrutiny of the brutality and destruction of the war, tragically very relevant to Armenia and Narine's contemporary unforgettable land Tavush. Hayden's beautiful translation provides the novel a more pictorial and sensory image, and she is able to effortlessly trail the author into the amusing imageries and metaphors of the native domain of Maran and its people. The communication that the writer wants to make through this magnificently translated novel is that acquiescence and submission which does not necessarily pave the path for disparagement and pessimism. The author and translator have together very beautifully written sentences that are readable and understandable by a common mortal being. Her style of writing, though simple, adds a touch of weight, audacity and reflects a ray of light in the minds of the common readers. Using varied language and etymological parlances Abgaryan beautifully throws light in her Tavush dialect and tries to draw a connection between Maran's rustic life and its people.

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MOTIF OF INSANITY IN THE WORKS OF ALEKSEI SLAPOVSKY

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Abstract: *Writers, researchers and scholars have always been fascinated by the insane behaviour and madness of specific characters due to the incomprehensibility of the phenomenon of insanity. Thanks to such fascination of the writers the wider exploitation of insanity became a constant and necessary factor in the literary process all around the world. It further is actualized during the epistemological troubles of such characters and simultaneously it stimulates the development of new literary forms. Aleksei Slapovsky is a contemporary writer, who is considered a neorealist and a postmodernist. His literary works have extensive uses of the motif of madness as a tool to reflect the inner world of the characters including the influence of the surrounding environment and its impression on their soul. Insanity as a literary tool has been one of the significant themes in fiction literature. The object of this article is the motif of madness or insanity in the works of Aleksei Slapovsky. This article is an attempt to understand the transitional nature of society, the breaking up of old systems and replaced new system and concepts. The theme in his fiction literature mostly depicts the period immediately after the breakdown of Soviet and its socio-economic realities.*

Keywords: *Aleksei Slapovsky, madness, insanity, PostSoviet Russia, Psychoanalysis*

The motif of insanity is one of the cross-cutting themes in the literature. It has always attracted the interest of writers and researchers not just because of the incomprehensibility of the phenomenon of insanity, but also due to its actualization during the epistemological troubles of a human being or a character which later turns into a constant and necessary factor in the literary process and stimulating the development of new literary forms.

An art including literature is a kind of mirror which reflects a greater or lesser degree the social reality. The appearance of madness in an individual is associated with identity formation and thus becomes an object of study and research in literature, philosophy and various other disciplines. It has been extensively used in world literature. Writers sometimes use it as a tool to depict the volatile inner self

of the protagonists. The literary works of Aleksei Slapovsky too has the application of this motif as a literary tool to reflect the internal world of the characters on hand and the influence of the surrounding environment on it on the other. The application of this theme of insanity in his literature could also be viewed as a possible effect of socio-economic realities on protagonists due to the aftermath of the breakdown of the Soviet system.

It is imperative to note that many psychoanalysts examine literary characters in the work of art or literature from the psychological point of view, since they consider them a collective image which attests to the abnormal state of both individual citizens and the entire society. Hence the literature of Aleksei Slapovsky in Russian literature at the end of the 20th century can be rightly be explained by the unhealthy atmosphere in the country which witnessed an increased number of mentally ill people in reality.

Ryan Howes, a clinical psychologist, and professor at Fuller Graduate School of Psychology, California defines madness in the Psychology Today as a *"mental illness of such a severe nature that a person cannot distinguish fantasy from reality, cannot conduct her/his affairs due to psychosis, or is subject to uncontrollable impulsive behaviour."* The concept of the state of madness in a human being is developed by Hegel in the third volume of the Encyclopaedia of Philosophical Sciences. Hegel defines madness as «*a state in which the mind is shut up within itself, has sunk into itself, whose peculiarity . . . consists in its being no longer in immediate contact with actuality but in having positively separated itself from it.*» It is a situation where the developed mind takes a regressive withdrawal resulting in the separation from reality. The movement of this regressive withdrawal means retreat to the pre-rational, pre-conscious level of mental life. In his view, Insanity is a response to the developed mind's encounter with an experience of pain that it cannot cope with. It might seem as though madness successfully solves the problem of alienation emerging out of abrupt social changes, since in displacing its connections with the external world, it achieves the desired state of self-reunification through a projective dream life which directly expresses its desire.

Madness, like the dream, entails a form of flight or escape, a withdrawal from the external world. He further writes in his work 'Philosophy of mind' that, "*The soul immersed in its inwardness,", "contemplates its individual world not outside, but within itself.*" There is a fundamental rupture of the relation to reality.

Psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud in another way explains the unconscious (also implies madness) by asserting in his "Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis,

vols. 15, 16" that, when I dream "*I want to know nothing of the external world.*" With this movement of withdrawal and rupture, the language of rationality is replaced by a more primitive, archaic discourse of unconscious wishes, fantasies, and drives, which, in madness as in dreams, are projected onto reality as substitutes.

For both Hegel and Freud, the basic desire of all minds is to achieve reconciliation and unity between the inner and outer worlds, subject and object, self and other, and yet all minds are perpetually confronted with the experience of disunity and contradiction.

Freud has made the most obvious impact in changing the way society thought about and dealt with madness or mental illness. Till the time Freud came up with the theory of psychoanalysis, madness or mental illness was almost universally considered 'organic'. It means that it was thought to come from some kind of deterioration or disease of the brain. Research during that time on madness was primarily concerned with discovering exactly which kinds of changes in the brain led to insanity. It meant that people drew a sharp dividing line between the "insane" and the "sane." Insane people were those with physical diseases of the brain and the sane people were those without diseased brains. The conviction that physical diseases of the brain caused mental illness or madness meant that they totally ignored the psychological causes.

Psychoanalysis has enormous historical significance. Freud has given people a new way of understanding why an individual acted the way s/he did. That rules basically describe the very essence of insanity – thoughts are depicted in the form of images, and our minds jump from one seemingly random thought to another linked by unconscious association; here the time has no such significance thus the events from past and present in the unconscious are presented at the same time (without any difference); every image in the unconscious or dream can have multiple meanings; and feelings and thoughts are often replaced with their opposite.

The theme of insanity is designed to solve the metaphysical problems appearing in many circumstances in characters and demands of narration for the writers as well. Russian writers of the turn of the 20th century have utilised this motif in many aspects to depict such metaphysical question. The popularity of this topic was largely conditioned by the decline of the era of rationalism and the flourishing of irrationalism.

Tracing the history of Post-Soviet Russia, it is important to notice that the transition of the country from communism to capitalism and the new policies of the state have put the mental health of the citizens at risk. People in the country were affected by high inflation, corruption, lack of job opportunities and citizens were in pursuit of profit and power, forgetting cultural and moral values. According to the reports, the Chronic underfunding of psychiatric care, corruption, and poverty have contributed to a "dramatic deterioration" of Russians' mental health in new Russia. During that period the number of people with disabilities caused by mental problems increased by more than 50%. Valery Krasnov, chairman of the Russian Association of Psychiatrists confirmed there had been a definite increase in drug abuse, alcoholism, and less serious mental health problems. He also said that the rise in the number of people registered as disabled is the result of psychiatric illness which further reflects the social upheavals of Russia's turbulent post-Soviet transition.

The motif of madness in the works of Slapovsky is also one of the most prominent one. Psychological madness especially '*Iurodstvo'* in his works is the realization of an existential revolt. He has used the themes of madness in his works such as "I-not I", "First second coming", and "The Phoenix syndrome." He applied such narrative structure to bring a specific mood to the imagination of his readers where the depicted reality is served through the perception of the characters as the authentic being in their own, unique subjective individual world on one hand, and simultaneously from social objective perception on the other. The author although does not disclose the psychology of the hero in detail, yet he shows the irrational inner world of the character and their emotional experiences.

Unlike the old-Russian authors, Slapovsky sneers at the sudden emergence of otherworldly abilities in the holy fool, showing that they are connected with the thirst for worldly gains. Thus, an ordinary person, who has nothing to do with God and holiness, becomes a holy fool and declares to be possessing the supernatuiral power of prediction and healing. The main character of the novel «*Первое второе пришествие»*, Peter Salabonov is an example of Holy foolishness/ madness. The behaviour of Peter in this novel is incomprehensible to people on one hand and he has such traits which make him appear foolish: the look of a Holy person, who keeps neglecting to take care of the flesh by very poorly eating and dressing. In addition to these signs of holy fools, the writer not only deprives his heroes of the halo of holiness, but also condemns him for drunkenness, cruelty and immoral ways of life. So, the Holy fool Peter, despite the divine appearance, turns out to be

a drunkard, rude and dissatisfied person. The author draws attention to the consciousness of heroes, based on gravity toward worldly temptations.

In his work “I-not I”, Aleksei Slapovsky presents the image of Nedelin, who loses his “Self”, his “individuality” and turns into various other people. Game poetics allows the author to utilise such notions as madness and mental health, feelings - mind, man - puppet. The protagonist fails to experience emotions and satisfaction and appears to be not living his life. The real life appears to him as an act in a play, pretending to be a good father, a decent man, and a tragically in love wife. At the end, he completely substitutes all his true feelings with dead categories of reason. While thinking about madness, Negelin was afraid that, playing the role of other people (metamorphosis or daydreaming), he played with himself and deceived himself. It was terrible for him to think that his whole life was a lie and hence he had chosen to play the role of a madman. In fact, the game and the obsession led the hero to madness. Finally the moment after receiving the certificate the hero ceases to play and lives by the soul, and not by reason. He was blinded by the newly found freedom and in this way he chooses to do abnormal activity.

The hero comes to the realization that the game under the guidance of the mind strictly controlled his feelings and eventually completely replaced the true life. Accordingly, Negelin’s madness actually shows his aspiration of such a game to depersonalize himself, to replace his self, driven into the depths of the soul. The craziness of the main character of the story and the appeal to the game is connected with the desire to get answers to metaphysical questions. Soon after receiving the certificate of madness, Negelin ceases to live according to the rationale and instead he chose to live by the irrational soul. He was blinded by the newly found freedom and in this way, he chooses to do the abnormal activity. His consciousness thus is a mirror image of the world view of the generation of the twentieth century, experiencing a crisis that has lost faith in the moral principles of life.

The theme of insanity in the novel «Я – не Я» is one of the main, becoming a plot-forming, since in the centre of the work is the story of a man, wishing to achieve extreme freedom. The author portrays his hero, which reflects the features of a mad world: greed, rudeness, violence, theft, duplicity etc. The portrait, the speech of the hero and the feelings that he experiences in different situations, indicate that we have a "living dead". The voice of the hero all the time heard a longing. Deadliness, inner emptiness, underdevelopment of the spiritual world, loss of the ability to enjoy life leads Negelin to disagreement with himself and with the world around him, which ultimately leads him to insanity.

In his novel “Я- не Я” and “Первое втрое пришествие”, the theme of insanity is realized in several traditions. The realistic embodiment of the theme - the protagonists of the novels, as well as the surrounding society is going crazy under the influence of the socio-political situation in the country. Their nature brings chaos, madness and destruction to the real world.

Metaphysical embodiment - the earthly world is subject to the Universe which can, by its laws, control the world and man. Negelin and Peter, the heroes of the novel are weak-willed creatures, unable to cope with the chaos of the universe. All of their abnormal actions are dictated not only by the sick mind, but also by the insane will of the surreal, otherworldly world. Madness in Slapovsky's work can also be seen from different angles. Madness can often be perceived in Slapovsky’s creation as an existential riot. In many works the theme of insanity is connected with the solution of philosophical problems of being. Insane is the entire imperfectly created world, placing man in an unequal position in relation to eternity and fate. An impracticable idea, offering to find answers to questions about life and death, leads the hero to madness.

In addition to the philosophical questions of being, Slapovsky is also worried about more mundane problems, namely, the heartlessness of the world of power that has subjugated a person. Politico-economic change, and social inequality pushed a person to madness. There is no less significant relationship with the narrative. A person who rejects moral and ethical feelings (either of his own will or by order) becomes dead and is realized to be insane. Realizing the theme of madness in «Я не Я» and «Первое втрое пришествие» , realistic and modernist tendencies are synthesized. The realistic justification of the madness of the world is given through a satirical image.

In particular, Peter at first seems to be an active and intelligent person, but, after some meetings with Ivan, starts to get confused with his own identity, not understanding the purpose of his own life. Freedom leads to the fact that a person turns into a beast, which cannot be restrained by moral principles. On the one hand, the hero gets freedom, and on the other hand, loses all his human qualities and turns into a madman. Thinking about himself and his actions, Nedelin realises his abnormal desire, activities including madness.

The very fate tries to stop the hero, showing him a picture from a real living life, in which there is a place for real feelings and emotions but the inner emptiness, deadness and loneliness bring the hero to madness. Without listening to life itself and continuing to play the role of metamorphosis, the hero decides to lose himself and becomes not only a madman, but also a living corpse.

So, the story "Я-не Я" by Слаповский allows us to consider madness as punishment for rationalism, substituting morality. A hero who worships the dead mind, who creates an idea based on purely momentarily conclusions and neglects moral and moral principles, goes mad. Playing poetics helps to understand whether Negelin is mad or normal. Negelin, the hero at the moment of the metamorphosis is a soulless creature, and a madman, but it can be considered normal in rare moments of expressing sincere feelings and emotions.

In the novel "День денег,' the portrayal of Эдуард Курочкин as a maniac is a satire on the soviet etiquette. The character is the doctrine of that soviet etiquette but the surrounding people and society has changed and adopted the new economic system and there is no place for people like Курочкин. His irrational way of thinking is deep rooted in the childhood when a person develops "Superego" through education. His abnormal behaviour is a part of his personality. His personality shows the failure of the whole system of which he is a member, which taught him to develop such irrational behaviour. The novel mentions the year 1988, when he was made an officer (arbitrator) of a prison. Russia during that time was going through a big change through the policies of perestroika and glasnost. The character is a reflection of the society, which at that time was struggling to change its whole dimension of economy, politics and culture.

The works of Aleksei Slapovsk touch the philosophical unsolvable problems of life such as religion, death, life, lies, truth, reality etc, pondering upon which turns people indifferent. In some of the works of Slapovsky, the madness of this world is associated with the absurdity of life. The comprehension of truth is impossible and his works deal with such questions.

The state of being in metamorphosis for the Negelin and being a Jesus for Peter is a means to forget self, to get away from the thought of loneliness, grief, and suffering. That's why the insane Negelin decides to stay in metamorphosis and Peter decides to be Jesus at the time of the greatest stress of mental anguish. However, the metamorphosis cannot rid them of the sufferings until their end. All the heroes who carelessly burn their lives, feeling themselves free and happy, are just crazy. Being in metamorphosis or being a Jesus, Negelin and Peter feel the joy of life, but at the same time get aware of its illusory and absurd, as repeatedly witnessed the tragic misfortunes.

It is noteworthy that the story ends with the Hero starting a new adventure, which means that the author did not aspire to portray a gloomy, pessimistic picture of his world. In the end of the work the hero is disenchanted with the real life, which symbolizes the suffering of the ordinariness of the mankind, while the

metamorphosis symbolizes hope and speaks of an irresistible desire to fight the injustice. An analysis of many of Slapovsky's works shows that for the writer it is not so much an achievement of truth and victory which is important, but the absence of loneliness and a sense of fulfilment through various attempts to achieve it is important.

According to Foucault, it is the attitude to the insanity that verifies the meaning of human existence, the level of its civilization, the ability of a person to self-knowledge and understand his place in culture. In other words, the relation of man to the "madman" outside and within himself serves as an indicator, a measure of humaneness for humanity and the level of his maturity. And in this regard, the whole history of mankind looks like a story of insanity.

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THE JOURNEY FROM OUTSIDE TO WITHIN – A CONTRAST OF SPANISH AND INDIAN CULTURE

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Abstract: *Cinema facilitates transcultural exchanges, globalization, and exposure to diverse cultures, and vice versa. Like Yoga, Bollywood is also considered India's soft power and has been used to successfully develop India's cultural economy on a global scale, resulting in many young Indians with global perspectives. The plots of the films mentioned here, for example, friendship, marriage, travel, and exposure are frequently seen in contemporary Bollywood films aimed at upwardly mobile Indian audiences. Cinema has a massive impact on people's cultural consumption behavior, especially tourism, in a cinephilic nation like India. (Harjani, 2011; Khanna, 2017). Even though Indian visitors are becoming more and more inspired, by movie locations and therefore conducting tourist visits to replicate their onscreen experiences, this investigation demonstrates how the themes and landscapes highlighted in the film Zindagi Na Milegi Dobara have been instrumental in motivating, teaching, and changing the behavior of protagonists as a result of their journey. An attempt is made to trace these changes via the concept of road movies and its characteristics.*

Keywords: *Zindagi na Milegi Dobara, road movies, life transformation, carpe diem, cultural differnces*

Introduction

The film Zindagi Na Milegi Dobara (2011), directed by Zoya Akhtar and produced in partnership with the Spanish tourism promotion agency (The Local, 2016), is worth mentioning. It uses a mass medium like cinema to promote Spanish cultural characteristics, making foreign culture more accessible and resulting in a 32 percent increase in Indian visitors visiting Spain, particularly to on-screen filming locales. (Harjani, 2011).

The film was the most significant milestone, with a considerable boost supplied by a skilled tourism promotion campaign, resulting in an increase of nearly 80% in the

number of tourists from India who traveled to Spain in 2012 compared to the previous year. In 2013, slightly over 70,000 Indian visitors visited Spain, compared to more than 200,000 who visited France and Italy. Spain has increased its market share in comparison to other nations that are popular with Indian tourists, such as the Commonwealth, Switzerland, Thailand, the United Arab Emirates, and Singapore. (Palarea Rubén 2015)

It was the first time that a major Bollywood film was primarily shot and set in Spain. With over 70 million viewers, it was one of the highest viewed films of the year in India, and it had a major impact on Indians' perceptions of Spain, its tourist attractions, and its customs and culture. The strong connection that viewers have made with Spain through the movie was seen on all the social media platforms.

This film, produced in collaboration with Spain's Ministry of Tourism, introduces Indian audiences to a variety of locales and cultural themes, as well as the possibilities of adventure tourism in the country.

How Spain and its culture are depicted in the movie

The film Zindagi Na Milegi Dobara's success can be attributed to the fact that when individuals learn about a new culture, they look for analogies or similarities with which they can relate. The most noticeable difference between Indian culture and Spanish culture is that both peoples have extroverted and open personalities. It's also about two countries with a shared historical trajectory and a rich cultural and patrimonial heritage, with a strong Muslim influence in both cases. The compassion and interest in flamenco is another more specific but crucial component, as India is regarded as the historical cradle of the gypsy people.

To begin, I examine how contemporary Bollywood film fulfills its job of presenting a catalog of locations through cinematic storytelling. It is believed that the film played a significant effect in promoting the location.

The scenes were shot over the course of nearly three months in four autonomous communities i.e., Catalonia, Valencia, Navarre, and Andalusia with the assistance of local governments who recognized that this film could help boost tourism in their area. They began filming in Catalonia, with locations including Barcelona (gothic quarter and many prominent landmarks), the Costa Brava (crystal-clear beaches and underwater scenes), and Montserrat (rough mountains).

Then in the Valencian Community, which includes places like Cheste, Benidorm, Buñol, and several sites along the Levante coast. Later, in the Chartered Community of Navarre, they recorded a five-day simulation of the Sanfermines in

Pamplona, as well as open shots around Olite and in the Bardenas Reales desert.

Finally, they travelled to Andalusia, where they shot in Carmona, Ronda, Setenil de las Bodegas, Grazalema, Alájar, and Riotinto, as well as shooting on various routes in Seville, Cádiz, and Huelva, as well as capturing aerial photographs in Ronda and Zahara de la Sierra.

Various Spanish characteristics are featured in the film, including FC Barcelona t-shirts, the famed La Sagrada Familia, beautiful beaches, Flamenco dancing with a Bollywood twist, and the delicacy of Paella. The Tomatina festival is shown in an intriguing way, with foreign rites being introduced to the Indian population

1) La Tomatina in Buñol: - It was, without a doubt, the sequence that the Indian viewers recalled most. Over two days, more than 500 people tossed 16 tonnes of tomatoes at each other in the same location where the Levantine festival takes place. The tomatoes were purchased around Buñol and in Portugal. The city reaped immediate benefits as a result of the outcome. It's a great experience, it brings money to the town, to the young people who are in representations, to the tomato producers, to those who put up the tarpaulins, said a spokesman of the municipal council. In general, the town comes out as a winner (Navarro, 2011).

2) Alájar and the song señorita: -The film's most colorful episode is a dance with intricate choreography that takes place during a night out in a typical Andalusian village. It was shot over four nights at Alájar (Huelva). It was the most important event of the decade for a small community of 800 people. It drew 300 people from Alájar and the surrounding area, with Mayor Carmen Osorno at the helm. The shooting made the front pages of various Spanish newspapers as well as Indian publications. As a result, that same summer, the number of tourists to that small Andalusian village began to rise (Moya, 2010).

3) The closing of the Sanfermines: -The race between the three characters during a San Fermin running of the bulls is the film's longest and most intense action. There, all of them, but especially one of the protagonists go through a life-changing shift. The shooting lasted five days and was done with the help of Turespaña.

The journey on the road

The film tells the story of three friends who embark on a bachelor's vacation around Spain to experience Kabir's final days as a bachelor before he marries Natasha. Various dimensions of relationships are examined against the backdrop of this road journey.

When considering the qualities of a road movie, it is unavoidable that there will be

a road and some sort of modern transportation—most commonly automobiles or motorcycles. Automobiles and motorbikes are symbols of the future, human development, and the longing for freedom. The characters or protagonists are transported from one area to another via automobile. The trip, rather than the goal, becomes the most important component of the road movie. It's even possible to claim that the trip itself becomes the destination. The planned destination becomes less important as the characters' escape from society and progress throughout the film become more important.

The vehicle as a mode of mobility is clearly a crucial component of the road movie. While there have been road movies using motorbikes, trains, and buses, cars were by far the most popular mode of transportation. Because of the enormous manufacture of automobiles, nearly every household could afford one and the concept of driving is not exclusive to males. Unlike trains, buses, or motorcycles (all of which have been depicted in road movies), the motor car adds unique elements to the film, such as the ability to personalize and individualize the interior of the vehicle, thereby displaying a person's character and providing additional opportunities for characters to interact.

To this Corrigan adds that the world always happens to the protagonists, implying that the characters are constantly challenged with challenges on their journey. On the road, it appears that anything may happen, and it frequently does. The road movie, according to Corrigan, is a genre that is "traditionally centered," almost solely, on men and the absence of women" (Corrigan, 1991: 143) The urge to be wild and free was commonly regarded as a masculine yearning. Boys and young men were traditionally supposed to explore the globe, and male heroes in road movies reflected this expectation. Outlaws are a term used to describe masculine protagonists who frequently disobey the law and evade the repercussions.

Protagonists frequently express a desire to break free from social standards but also want to engage with cultural notions and ideals. On the one hand, road movies integrate the dialectic of conservative values and rebellious desires. The road movie genre's foundation is built on this tension between tradition and dissent. (Laderman, 1996, pp. 41ff.)

Road movies usually show a departure from small-town and class life, in which the protagonist is mistreated and seemingly trapped in life, with the road acting as the only means of change and liberation.

Road movies are about characters going on an interior journey as much as they are about moving through a location. In comparison to the randomness of actual life,

life lessons and revelations tend to be cleaner and clearer cut on television. Throughout a few scenes and moments, challenges are surmounted, buried concerns are acknowledged, and personal demons are battled.

The fact that this road trip is taken in a vintage car adds to the European atmosphere. This is an attempt, as (Tobias, n.d.) puts it, to satiate the Indian middle class's need for sanitized paradises to avoid the chaos of Indian cities. One of the reasons Zindagi Na Milegi Dobara has been so widely celebrated is for placing Spain as an attractive tourist destination in the imagination of India's emerging middle class and successfully boosting the number of Indian tourists in the Iberian Peninsula. (Tobias, n.d., p. 271)

Transformations in the protagonists

The underlying theme explores the transforming aspect of travel and the influence it has on middle-class ambitions in India. All the primary characters in the film endure transformations because of the physical and emotional travels they take throughout the movie.

The narrative of three friends reinventing themselves on a road journey is told in Zindagi Na Milegi Dobara. Abhay Deol, Hrithik Roshan, and Farhan Akhtar starred as Kabir, Arjun, and Imraan, respectively, on an epic adventure that turned their lives. They discovered what truly matters to them by participating in various adventure sports throughout Spain, as well as laughing and playing jokes.

Fear because of heights, fear because of water, fear because of death, and other weaknesses are all tackled on these adventure trips in ZNMD. These adventure sports pique the interest of viewers and provide a fresh viewpoint on travel. This is similar to Laing and Frost's (2018) work, in which the key characters go through a transition. This is a noteworthy finding that requires additional investigation to explain how these new travel narratives affect Indian middle-class travel habits, as well as their viewpoints and feelings.

Arjun

Arjun can be seen as the epitome of a workaholic, fully enslaved to the corporate world. He takes his laptop on vacation and answers all his official calls. Arjun says that his main aim in life is to make fortune and quit this work at the age of forty, tracing back the reason to his father's early death and the residual obligation he left behind. He is frequently seen adamantly gloating about price tags and comes across as a man utterly preoccupied with his superficial demands, for which he has previously lost his partner.

But in Costa Brava, though, when the three go scuba diving, Arjun tackles his fears of the water. He begins to realize the prospect of a life beyond the rat race with the help of Katrina Kaif playing the role of attractive diving instructor Laila. His eyes filled with tears, a cathartic moment in which he recognizes the joy of nature and the value of pausing to listen to your breath. That is a mesmerizing scene. He is mesmerized by the underwater world and the sea, and he discovers enjoyment in things other than work and money, which is heightened by Laila's perspective on life. We can see how the sea influenced Arjun's thought process; he thinks the sea to be beautiful with its assortment of colors and species, and he refers to it as "magic." He believes he is at the quietest location on the planet, despite the fact that we know there is always the sound of water there, and he can sense his breadth. The sea is an addiction to him. The water is portrayed as a vehicle for breaking free from restraints, and it drives us to realize the vast possibilities that lie inside us but that we are unaware of. By not taking a break, Arjun realized he is missing out on a lot. Similarly, it is necessary for us to rest, unwind, and be at ease from time to time. It's far too short to miss out on the nice things in life.

Over the entire story, I believe Arjun achieves the greatest level of catharsis by entirely releasing himself from the entanglement he had woven. Many of us, whether deliberately or unintentionally, wind up building a similar web for ourselves, missing out on the "pleasure of living." ZNMD also informs us why we're often locked in the past or seek a distant future without thinking. We overlook the enormous possibilities of the present moment in the process.

He might be viewed as a metaphor for the kind of individuals we might become if we don't intervene in the technology world's terrible takeover. He comes to Kabir's rescue in the end discourse of the film when he detects something is awry in his life and, unlike before, refuses to just let the love of his life leave. His character is a shining example for anyone who prefers to put work ahead of themselves or their loved ones.

Imraan

Imran is the one in the gang who makes fun of practically everyone and is a true artist in every meaning of the word. He is careless and fearless, as evidenced by his lack of hesitation in tossing his friend Arjun's cellphone. However, he is concealing something within himself, as evidenced by his clandestine thoughts, poetry in his diary, and dilemma. He is also frightened of heights, but he overcame this phobia by skydiving in Sevilla, and then he is on his path to overcome his greatest fear, confronting his biological father. This is something that we, as progressive human beings, have experienced at some point in our lives: when we overcome one hurdle

in life via mental strength, we have the bravery to face others that are considerably more challenging. This is what unfolded with Farhan; he is the one who purposefully organizes this trip so he can see his father, but he is unable to summon the confidence to confront him, but he psychologically prepares himself after conquering his fear of heights. Due to his own turbulent emotions about this sudden unraveling, he first refrains from admitting the stormy truth about his biological father in front of his friends and is apathetic towards his mother for withholding the same from him for so many years. The first meeting, on the other hand, does not go as planned for Imran. After seeing his biological father, he understands why everything happened and is forced to accept the terrible truth about a father who never wanted him and is now more supportive of his mother. He is confronted with the reality, which he does not want to hear, particularly from his father.

He is unhappy and upset, but he accepts it, just as he has embraced his fear of heights. These events in the film influenced Farhan's thinking, transforming him into a more polite and caring guy who considers his friends and family and accepts his faults. Farhan understands the value of his relationships with his loved ones. Imraan overcame his father's statement that he was not ready to accept care for him when he was born and that he is not ready now, so he abandoned his mother. Imraan finally delivers his friend Arjun the heartfelt apologies he deserves for his involvement with his girlfriend.

He eventually discovers that, while we have no control over the family into which we are born, we may choose to create our own family with those who love us. We all know, eventually, that our mothers are always concerned about us, no matter what. Despite his life's upheavals, he never fails to be vivacious with his friends. Despite the inexhaustible number of times, life pins us down, Imran's character inspires us to not allow our inner demons to overtake us.

Kabir

Kabir is the central character in the film. He is the catalyst for the events of the film to take place in the first place. The film opens with Abhay Deol's character, Kabir, proposing to his girlfriend, Natasha Arora, and the rest of the film revolves around his bachelor trip. The bachelor vacation is also the cause for Imran and Arjun reuniting after a four-year separation. As a result, Kabir is the story's unifying aspect, serving as a link between his two buddies who had drifted apart over time.

He not only arranges for his buddies to meet, but he also plays a key role in their reconciliation. He is the group's pacifier, and he teaches them both as is seen in one

of the film's first sequences, while they are fighting over a girl who was in their lives years before. Kabir is the one who convinces the two that the female they were arguing about was the main offender and that she exploited them both. Despite the fact that Arjun and Imran do not instantly resolve their disagreements, it is at this point that the two realize they must give their bond another try and let the past be the past.

When things go out of hand, Kabir is the friend we all need in our lives. He's the most lucid of all the three. Kabir, on the other hand, knows when it's time to have fun and when it's time to become serious. In the scene where our three Musketeers mock a man in the restroom, his goofiness reaches its pinnacle. His engagement to Natasha, on the other hand, was more of a fluke than a true commitment. He thought he could marry her at the time, but afterward realized that this was not the case. He is dissatisfied. We, like him, may feel as if we want something one day and then feel completely different the next.

His uncertainty about his personal love life adds to the realism of his character. The scene in San Fermin where the three buddies run in front of the bulls was the most interesting section of the film. We can see that the sport was more than just preserving a life for Kabir; he was fleeing the truth; he does not want to marry Natasha since she is no longer the person he met; she has undergone significant changes. For Kabir, the bulls represent his impending marriage, which would harm him, thus he must abandon this road in order to rescue himself.

Kabir taught us that the greatest way out of a bad circumstance is honesty by breaking off his engagement. The truth may be painful at first, but it all works out in the end for the best. He also reminds us that things will never go our way unless we express our true desires to others. It's crucial to say what you're thinking and feeling.

In contrast with the Indian society

Throughout the film, we can witness the distinctions between Spanish and Indian societies. The film opens with a family meal hosted by the wealthy families of Kabir and Natasha, who are celebrating Kabir's marriage proposal to Natasha. Natasha's father claims that instead of losing his daughter, he is getting a son, Kabir. In Indian society, it is assumed that if a girl marries, she will become a member of another family.

We witness the social pressure of getting married in the film, as Kabir felt unsure about marrying Natasha. However, in Indian tradition, marriage is a tie between two families, which Kabir did not want to break. We can also witness images of

middle-class Indian culture whose sole goal is to obtain money in order to improve their lives and futures; Arjun is the clearest example of this. Money is the main driving force in Indian middle-class society, and it focuses on materialistic things.

The film also discusses the Spanish habit of drinking wine or alcohol with a meal, which is also observed in Indian society, but exclusively among the wealthy. Affluence is shown in the films by the instantaneous decision-making power of travel at various points. As a result, it's critical to figure out who really owns, creates, and propagates travel discourse in today's Bollywood films, and to what level this is communicable to Indian middle-class tourists. Although there is a noticeable disparity in class among the three friends, it has no bearing on their friendship and bond. In ZNMD, all of the trip adventures take place in largely upper-class settings. The film begins with Kabir down on his knees in a mansion, begging his lover to marry him. The diamond ring, the ambiance, and the flutes of champagne all scream upper crust. Similarly, the companions' rental of vintage automobiles, isolated cottages, and private diving courses reflect their wealth. A tangible class divide separates Kabir, Arjun, and Imraan. The former two who commute business class but the latter one who journeys in the middle seat of budget planes to their joint destination of Barcelona.

Laila is certainly deserving of the term Zindagi Na Milegi Dobara. She is a self-assured and self-reliant woman who believes in savoring every moment of life. Laila was all about living in the moment and making the most of it, whether she was at the beach or sleeping beneath an open sky and admiring the stars at night. However, this is the polar reverse of what occurred to women in Indian communities.

Conclusion

Zindagi Na Milegi Dobra beautifully depicts the metamorphosis of its Indian protagonists, catalysed by their travels in the scenic landscapes of Spain and their experiences of the socio-cultural practices of the Spanish people. The theoretical base of the movie about living in the moment, Carpe Diem, makes an echo in the characters of the movie and pushes them to come out of their comfort zones and strive to achieve what they truly desire from their lives without being restricted by any fear. The contrast of the two societies- Indian and Spanish- and the corresponding dominant social values prevalent in the two societies takes the audience to a point of reflection where they identify with the characters showed in the movie, and question about their own fears, objectives and purposes in life. However, in order to do so, we must first pause and observe. The break will allow us to reflect on what we have done and are doing, and whether or not it is guiding us to inner peace and tranquillity.

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DEMYSTIFYING THE "OTHER" IN RENÉ PHILOCTÈTE'S *LE PEUPLE DES TERRES MÊLÉES*: A RETELLING OF THE PARSLEY MASSACRE

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Abstract*: The massacre of Haitians living on the Dominican border in 1937, commonly known as the Parsley massacre, ranks among one of the worst ethnic cleansings carried on in the 20th century. The dictator Rafael Trujillo took control of the Dominican Republic in 1930 which marked a major change in the status of the Haitian minority, living in the border region of the country, who were targeted for their African descent and French/Creole language. The massacre also known as "the Parsley Massacre" is called as such because Dominican soldiers would force the habitants of the borderland areas to pronounce "perejil" parsley in Spanish) which would enable them to differentiate Haitians from Dominicans based on their pronunciation. The novel of René Philoctète,* Le peuple des terres mêlée *recounts the tale of the couple Pedro and Adèle and their desperate attempts to escape the massacre. This paper would attempt to explore, through the lens of this novel, the assignment of the status of the "other" given to the Haitians as a politically motivated act. This act stems from ideological hegemony that seeks to create new ethnic and social orders in a society at the peril of the so-called "other".*

Key words: *Dominican, Haitian, the "other", borderland, massacre, parsley*

Introduction

"Tragedy not geography forms the real border", (12) writes Michel Wucker aptly on the real and imagined borders of Hispaniola between the Dominican Republic and Haiti. Yet, these two Nations, over the course of time, seem to have shared a troubled past where political propaganda and distorted history continue to create "rifts" between the people of the two nations when geographically it remains impossible to separate the two. René Philoctète's novel *Le Peuple des terres mêlées* paints a mingled collage just as suggested by the title of the novel; "mêlé" of fiction and history where it attempts to recreate the Parsley massacre of 1937 through the love story of Pedro of Dominican descent and Adèle of Haitian descent. The novel also tries to highlight the unachievable task of separating the two ethnicities which have intermixed over centuries especially in the borderland areas. Hence, the "other" in this case does not exist but is created. The massacre of Haitians living in the borderland areas of Dominican Republic and Haiti in 1937,

commonly known as the Parsley massacre, was orchestrated by the Dominican dictator Rafael Trujillo to "white wash" Dominican Republic which he believed was getting darker by the melanin which the Haitians living in the borderland areas have introduced in the ethnic makeup of the Dominican people. The narrator says : "Trujillo prétendra que le peuple haitien de la frontière a jeté un sort de mélanie du peuple dominicano. Il résoudra d'exterminer les diablos haitianos. (145): Trujillo projected that the Haitian people of the borderlands had added melanin in the Dominican people. He resorted to exterminating the Haitian devils."

A racist and fanatic Trujillo publicly accepted a gift of Hitler's *Mein Kamph* whose radical theories Trujillo clearly embraced. At the dawn of the second world war when most of the small nations were struggling to make ends meet, a brilliant idea dawned upon Trujillo too, who to distract the people from the ongoing economic crisis in the country decided to come up with the racist and nationalist plan of hyper jingoism by branding the Haitian population living in the Dominican Republic as the "other". The "other" in this case the Haitians were being branded as one on the basis of their skin color which in fact was only a few shades darker that their compatriots, the Dominicans, and in most of the cases it was impossible to distinguish between people solely on the basis of their skin color. Least to say, to the naked eyes they appeared one and the same. However, it is noted in the novel that Trujillo had decided that the Dominicans are the "whites" of the land, the novels explains so in the following quote, " [...] nous sommes les blancos límpidos de la tierra […] viva les blancos limpidos de la tierra: [...] we are the pale whites of this land [...] long live the whites of this land."

Trujillo's obsession with being white projected his insecurities where it was reported that he wore makeup to hide his true skin shade and also somehow the fact that his grandmother was of Haitian descent was forgotten and nullified. He successfully hid the fact that he too had Haitian blood in his ethnicity. So, targeting people based on their skin color was not going to work in the grand scheme of nationalistic pride and identity which Trujillo had concocted. Then, how does one segregate the population? This is where the "perejil" comes in handy. The "genius" Trujillo came up with the device to distinguish the Dominicans from the Haitians based on the pronunciation of the word "perejil". In the borderland areas the thugs of Trujillo would harass people by asking them to identify sprigs of parsley and pronounce the word in Spanish. Haitians who mostly spoke Creole used a wide flat "R" and thus could not pronounce the trilled "R" in the Spanish word for parsley "perejil". In the novel this instance is captured in the scenes where the Haitians living in the borderlands attempt all in vain to pronounce the word "perejil" the

right way. Their Dominican compatriots help them desperately to get it right. In one such passage from the novel, it is portrayed with much care and tenderness when Pedro helps a woman in the bus with her pronunciation which after so many attempts, she seems not to get it right:

> Une main se pose sur le bras de Pedro Brito. Une main froide, tremblante [...] Il s'agit de la main d'une jeune femme dont la voix cassé répète encore perejil. Le l'a bu l'i, le e a botté le r. (78)
>
> A hand is placed on the arm of Pedro Brito. A cold trembling hand [...] The hand belonged to a young woman who with her broken voice was still practicing pronouncing *perejil*. The "l" swallowed the "i", the "e" has pushed the "r".

We can see how the victims are desperately trying to escape from the clutches of perpetrators and to what extent linguistic chauvinism can fuel the process of othering.

Othering

When Pedro insisted in one of the flashbacks that Adèle should learn how to pronounce the word right, she would rebuff this persistence of Pedro by a curt reply that why he wanted her to pronounce it right because in her language she knew how to pronounce it right. This act of refusal on Adèle's part is not the rejection of the model citizen which the dictator Trujillo was advertising rather it was on Adèle's part to show how foolish this one dimensional "model citizen" was and it did not exist. By the mere refusal to pronounce the word as desired, Adèle was ascertaining her identity and Haitian heritage and showing how this heritage was as much a part of the land they lived on as Dominicans. This is explained well in the following dialogue of Adèle, "Je suis calme, je dis perejil pour ton people, persil pour le mien […] au fait il n'y a qu'un langage commun : l'amour. (42): I am calm, I say perejil for your people and persil for my people [...] in fact there is a common language between all, the language of love." Through this statement of Adèle, a simple peasant woman, the novel zeroes down on an important realization the people of borderlands have had for a very long time. That realization being that it's the cross-border cooperation and love for each other which binds these two people together rather than the linguistic or otherwise seemingly differences they might have which eventually they have come to accept in order to co-live peacefully with each other.

The concept of "otherness" is quintessential to the formation of social identities in a society. Majority and minority identities are created based on the political power

a group or groups of people wield in a society. George Hebert Mead's classical text, *Mind Self and Society* established that social identities are created in a society through an ongoing process of "agreement, disagreement and negotiation"(44). If this statement is to be applied in the case of the Dominican-Haitian intermingling that has been going on for years so to speak in the borderland areas, it would be safe to say that there is no "other" that exists in the borderland areas and branding of the other in these parts is a politically motivated move which stems from the crazy ideas of the tyrant Trujillo to rebuild the nation of Dominica Republic in his own image; one that fits the bill of "les blancos limpidos de le tierra". Zgymut Bauman notes:"In dichotomies crucial for the practice and vision of the social order the differentiation power hides as a rule behind one of the members of the opposition. The second member is but the other of the first, the opposite (degraded, suppressed, exiled) side of the first and its creation. Thus, abnormality is the other of the normal, woman the other of the man, stranger the other of the native, enemy the other of friend, "them" the other of "us"." (12). In the case of *Le Peuple des terres mêlées*, "nous sommes les blancos" which Trujillo uses for himself and every one of Dominican descent and "los diablos haitianos" for the haitians, thus, branding them as the other. This madness of Trujillo is further coupled with his mission of whitening the Dominican Republic where Trujillo attempts to present himself as a messiah of humanity by allowing refugees running away from war torn Europe into the Dominican Republic. While this saved lives, the plan failed as a social engineering project to whitewash the population of Dominican Republic:

> [...]les femmes dominicaines seront croisées avec les 20111 mâles importés d'Espagne, de l'Allemagne, de la Jordanie et de la Grèce. Des milliers de sujets naîtront de ces accouplements en général, ils auront le teint passablement clair. (145)
>
> [...]Dominican women will breed with the 20111 males imported from Spain, Germany, Jordan and Greece. Thousands of citizens born of this coupling would almost have a clear skin tone.

As it is aptly explained in the novel that in the case of Trujillo his racist tendencies were fueling his fantasies, "le racisme deviendra l'exutoire du fantasme." (57) Unfortunately, racism becomes an outlet of his fantasies.

Union of two lives

The story of Adèle and Pedro progresses amidst the madness and bloodshed which goes simultaneously with the descent of any humanity left in Trujillo. The love story of Pedro and Adèle represents the love story of the two people Dominican

and Haitian who for years have lived together in harmony in the borderland areas. Their story gives the much-needed humane touch and portrays the loss of lives and homes built together over the years. The significance of home for Pedro and Adèle is the nest which they have built with love, the union of two lives as one irrespective of borders and geopolitics. Pedro seeks Adèle everywhere while riding on la guagua a personified bus named Chica Calma which for years now has transited between the borders of Dominican Republic and Haiti taking people to and fro from both sides. The death of Adèle is symbolic in many ways as it translated not only into the loss of a lover/wife but also the loss of a home. Life! That Pedro and Adèle have built together with much care and love over the course of the past two years. The following quote from the novel explains it well, "Il est devenu la racine d'une vie […] le refuge de la douleur de cette femme […] il s'est établi dans la tendresse et dans l'abondance de cette femme. (64): He has become the root of a life […] the refuge of this woman's sadness. He instills himself in the tenderness and completeness of this woman."

On one hand, Adèle for Pedro is home both physically and symbolically and on the other Pedro is Adèle's safe haven from the outside world. The allegory of a tree and bark has been used repeatedly by Pedro for himself and Adèle where he says, "Je suis l'arbre, Adèle en est l'écorce." This translates to: "I am the tree and Adele is its bark", representing the union the two of them have which is unbreakable and inseparable. It is impossible to separate the two unless brutal force and violence is applied. In a way this allegory finds its way to the peace-loving people of the borderland communities who share such close ties that trying to separate them would only cause destruction of lives and homes. This is as such because there are no two separate people as imagined by the political propaganda anymore in the social equation of the borderland people. The is depicted in a very moving and emotionally charged passage of the novel:

> [...] depuis que le ciel d'Elias Pina a dégouliné dans les serres de l'oiseau-cerf-volant-vorace de peuple dominicain des deux terres apprend au peuple haitien des deux terres à dire comment il convient «perejil ». Ce mot n'a jamais connu une si grande notoriété. César Gomez de Jimani l'a niché entre les seins de Rose Antoine de Boucan Bois [...] Deux peuples pour dire un mot avec des baisers et des espérances des ententes, des pas des danses, des regards, des soupirs […] (97)
>
> [...] since the sky of Elias Pina dripped in the talons of the bird-kite-voracious Dominican people of the two lands teaches the Haitian people of the two lands to say how it befits "perejil". This word has never had such a

> great notoriety. César Gomez de Jimani nestled it between the breasts of Rose Antoine de Boucan Bois […] Two peoples to say a word with kisses and hopes of agreements, steps of dances, looks, sighs [...]

This desperate and hopeless attempt of the borderland people to save the lives of their loved ones shows how humanity in times of great danger and peril too flickers like a dim light lightening the path to salvation and survival.

The massacre will ultimately destroy the home which Pedro and Adèle have built together. Home is shelter and protection for both. However, the two will experience the massacre in different spaces. Pedro in the public sphere and Adèle at home would be massacred. Adèle who is clearly the "other" in this case as deemed by the politics of the time cannot leave the confines of her home. Paradoxically she would be able to do so once she would be beheaded. The severed head of Adèle roams freely with a sense of true liberty the spaces outside her house which when her head was attached with the body could never do in the past. Hence, the otherness in the case of Adèle is doubly highlighted as it is not only expressed in her Haitian heritage but also in her gendered existence as a female. bell hooks postulates that the front area of the house is a place from where black women shelter themselves from the violence of the public space and also peeks a view of the exterior without much exposing themselves to the danger and harm of the outside world. Though, by dismembering Adèle, her branding as the other is complete. Since she is targeted and killed for being a "diablo haitiano" in the novel, she doesn't even realize that she has been beheaded and starts to roam the streets looking for Pedro and her head, The following quote from the novel explains, "Hé! Voisine! Mira! Voisine! Dis-moi! Où est ma tête? Ma tête de chiquita haitiana Belladère." (52): Oye! Neighbour! Look! Neighbour! Tell me! Where is my head? My female head from Haiti Belladère!"

The act of decapitation in order to free the Dominican land from any supposed "otherness", which was present in the form of the "Haitians", was ordered by Trujillo to make it look like a peasant uprising and hide the fact that it was a state sponsored ethnic cleansing. The machetes used to deliver the final blow which left mutilated bodies behind solidified their status of "el diabolo", the devil. The act equates with demon slaying myths of the world where to kill the demon in this case "diablo" one has to behead it. Beheading is the body's catachresis: a violation of the rules of the body's grammar. A person isn't a person without the head at least in the most physical sense of the word.

Despite the attempts of the political leaders to brand the Haitians as the "others" in the social hierarchy of the Dominican Republic in the text, *Le Peuple des terres*

mêlées establishes a solid conviction in the strength of the people living in the borderlands to successfully fashion a hybrid lifestyle that represents the Dominican-Haitian collage of cross cultural and cross border cooperation. The "utopia" if there can be one at all is manifested by the simple and poor folks of the borderlands who work and live side by side in the borderlands. The politicians and powerful class of both Dominican Republic and Haiti have no say in it. In the novel this utopia is found in the passage, " [...] deux enfants noirs, une fillette de cinq ans, un garçonnet de quatre ans […] lui d'une famille haïtienne, les Français, elle d'une famille dominicaine, les Cortez. (99): [...] two black children, a little girl of 5 years, a little boy of 4 years [...] him being from a Haitian family the Français her being from a Dominican family, the Cortez." The two innocent kids fell asleep together hand in hand still trying to learn how to pronounce "prejil".

The main storyline of *Le Peuple* stems and blooms in a very limited timeline that is in the backdrop of the massacre itself. The plot of the novel is riddled with recollections from the past that narrates the story of Adèle and Pedro's romance, beginning with their rendezvous across the border. The novel ends on a tragic note as Adèle is beheaded and Pedro's status is unknown. The Haitians were portrayed as the other or undesired outsiders as soon as Trujillo came into power where the final blow came in the form of the massacre ordered by Trujillo himself as a 'final solution' to the Haitians cohabiting with the Dominicans.

Conclusion

To conclude, the bond and unity exhibited by the cross-border cooperation as discussed in the first part of the paper helps to exemplify and demystify the "other". The fakeness of the status of the "other" assigned to the Haitians is further destroyed by the willingness of the residents of Elias Pina to not abandon their loved ones and to stay together at all costs. The artificial creation has been concocted by the politicians and power-hungry people of both countries but the same is not projected in the reality of the borderland people as discussed in the first part of the novel. Trujillo sets into effect a "syndrome du miroir". The novel illustrates the quasi-schizophrenia of an average Dominican person who upon studying his/her reflection in the mirror, "[...]se decouvrir noir tout entier, à demi, au tiers, au quart. (77): [...] discovers oneself to be either completely black, semi black, two-third or two-fourth." Trujillo's definition of a true Dominican or dominicanismo injects a "syndrome du miroir" in the mindsets of the common people who hope to see a whiter reflection of themselves in the mirror when they look into it. It is insisted upon in the novel that Trujillo's narrative of 'whiteness' in fact opposes the people of both the nations, "[...]le racisme de Trujillo rendit pendant longtemps de joyeux peuple des terres mêlées." (77): The racism of Trujillo since a longtime has diminished the happy people of the borderlands."

The 1937 massacre is not a conflict of "us" vs "them", "les blancos" v/s "les diablos haitianos" but it is a conflict between common people and a political propaganda propagated by the despotic rulers explained in the second part of the paper. The denouement of the novel is a testament to the resilience and power of the people of the borderlands to coexist in harmony. It also projects the lasting prospective of Haitian-Dominican unity discussed in the second part of the paper "Union of two lives". Towards the end, the novel emphasizes yet again the unachievable task of distinguishing the people of borderland areas as Dominican and Haitians. Thus, it has been attempted in the paper to bring into perspective the creation of the "other" through the analysis of the fictional retelling of the *Parsley Massacre (Le peuple des terres mêlées)*. However, the paper doesn't attempt to bring into focus the social rapport of the mainland people of both Dominican Republic and Haiti with the borderland people of the two countries. This leaves room for an analysis of the status of the borderland people vis à vis mainland people to see how the borderland people fit socially in the social strata of the Dominican Republic. The paper focuses only on the political status of the borderland people.

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Notes: All translations from French to English are self-translated.

EXAMINING THE STEREOTYPES OF RELIGION AND FAITH: A READING OF WILLIAM DALRYMPLE'S *NINE LIVES: IN SEARCH OF THE SACRED IN MODERN INDIA*

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Abstract: *Each gtime when history is re-written, a new representation arises because of the constant connection and sometimes conflict between the past and the present which is also called historiography. This new interpretation reflects re-analysis of past records in the light of some newly emerged social, political, religious and economic factors. fragmentary recollections of the past and responses to the present. William Dalrymple's travel writing Nine Lives: In Search of the Sacred in Modern India (2009), which has been acclaimed as ranking "with the very finest travel writing" (Nicoll) exemplifies this by attempting to narrate several Indian tales of religious and cultural nature complemented by modern responses to them. This book addresses some principal issues like class, ethnic origin and gender in the situations found in contemporary and historical India through experiences of nine characters. This paper aims to throw light on these aspects of the book and, by extension, examines Dalrymple's understanding of multi-dimensional nature of faith and religion in India. It aims to explore as to whether Dalrymple somehow maintains the stereotypes held by the foreigners on the concept of religion and faith in India or by curious and conscious examination renders an unbiased, objective and unprejudiced account of the same, through his travelogue.*

Keywords*: Travel, culture, religion, stereotypes*

William Dalrymple's *Nine Lives: In Search of the Sacred in Modern India* is a travel book that traces the trajectory of the lives of nine men and women across the Indian subcontinent. Over the years, Travel Writing has emerged as an important genre of Literature, playing a significant role in the socio-political life of the world community. As a literary form, it expresses the self-definition of the author who tries to place his cultural experience parallel to the experiences of other cultures to create the world through openness and helps in the process of socialization. In doing this, the author's sensibility, his keen observation, his eye for detail and capacity to knit together a story in an engrossing style all come into the play. In

such writing the distinctive stamp of the author's individuality and his particular style of expression have a major role to play in drawing readers 's attention to his work. *Nine Lives* comprises of some very remarkable recollections or life stories of different people. Their voyage is fascinating not because of the fact as to how travel transforms ordinary people into unforgettable characters but also because of the way it addresses certain cultural issues. All the nine stories in the work has its own peculiarity that set them apart from one another. Despite this, they all have a similar faith and belief in their religion and culture, which gives them relief, peace and fulfillment in their lives. Despite Dalrymple's clearly stated goal of simply retelling the stories of nine entirely different people without bias and prejudice, there is an unintentional involvement of the narrator/author with various socio-economic/religious issues such as class, gender, caste, religion, and political systems.

Representation is a process of representing "an artistic likeness or image," "a statement or account made to influence opinion or action" ("Representation"). Representations are not neutral; they reflect individual and social judgments about folks, tribes, classes and situations etc. There is no denying the fact that Dalrymple's book is an example of representation through which he attempts to give recognition to the under-privileged people of Indian society by forging a meaningful dialogue with them. This is aimed at providing them a platform to record their individual stories, which paves way for examining various prejudices, conceptions and assumptions about India and its various socio-cultural values.

Going by English Oxford Dictionary and Merriam Webster, the definition of stereotype is a "widely held but fixed and oversimplified image or idea of a particular type of person or thing" ("Stereotype"), "is most frequently now employed to refer to an often unfair and untrue belief that many people have about all people or things with a particular characteristic" ("Stereotype").Unintentional racism, prejudices, stereotyping and sexism are some of those common ways which are used in one way or the other to describe people's views toward others. Prejudice emphasizes these biases, which are the outcome of judgment in social perception.

In Dalrymple's work, all but two out of nine men and women are residents of India. However, these two non-residents of India have some connection with India, as one was born in India but resides in Sindh area of Pakistan and the other was born and bought up in Tibet but resided in India for years. These nine persons include a Sufi Fakir (who literally has disowned the world), a Jain nun (who abandoned her family and sacrificed joys of material life to become one), a devadasi (God's

servant), a theyyam dancer (sometimes a deity of God, sometimes a poor, untouchable Dalit), a bhopa (a singer and healer), a Buddhist monk, an idol craftsman, a tantric and a Baul-singer; all of them narrating their life stories in detailed manner. Dalrymple's eagerness and quest to seek the sacred amidst multiplicity and diversity of rapidly changing Indian society, inclines him to weave these personal life stories in one thread, his main focus remaining on people who are spiritually oriented. "Yet to my surprise, for all the changes and development that have taken place, an older India endures, and many of the issues that I found my holy men discussing and agonizing about remained the same eternal quandaries that absorbed the holy men of classical India or the Sufis of the middle ages, hundreds of years ago: the quest for material success and comfort against the claims of the life of the spirit; the call of the life of action against the life of contemplation; the way of stability against the lure of the open road; personal devotion against conventional or public religion; textual orthodoxy against emotional appeal of mysticism; the age-old war of duty and desire….The water moves on, a little faster than before, yet still the great river flows." (Dalrymple xvii). Interestingly, in India, such struggles and life stories can be easily found in the societies of underprivileged people. The caste system of Hinduism, a system of class division, divides Hindus into many subcategories, even these subcategories also have their own further sub-divisions. Having originated as a well-meaning system of structuring society according to segregation of various occupations, this system has unfortunately degenerated into a repressive, racist and discriminatory one in the postmodern times.

Despite his best efforts to avoid any subconscious biases while recounting these personal stories, the writer fails to keep aside his prejudices as his narration is largely an outcome of his perceptions. While reproducing background of each case, his viewpoint is that of one who is interested in interweaving the common threads of the tales. He portrays India as a beautifully diverse country in terms of culture and traditions, but at the same time portrays her "conservative, socially oppressive and rigidly hierarchical" (Dalrymple 92).

Dalrymple is not an exception as in most of such tales of a multi-cultural country narrated by a foreigner, there is an irresistible tendency to be swayed by one's prejudices and perceptions. He also seems to be validating a pattern of stereotyping when he highlights some aspects of India's culture that look not only self-contradictory but also nonsensical and intriguing to them. Building his opinion on the basis of his response to the tales of nine characters, he finds India's religious and cultural values and beliefs fascinating as well as conservative. One feels like

agreeing to Melanie K. Smith observations that even tourism contributes, directly and indirectly, to strengthening of neo-colonialism. She conveys that tourism is "dominated by Western developed nations, rendering host nations dependent and subservient to its needs" (Smith 62). And such travel writings, of course, tend to reinforce such prejudices about the host nations, amongst the potential tourists from foreign soils. In majority of these life stories, social and class stereotypes play a pivotal part. For example, the life stories of Prasannamati Mataji, the Digambara clad and Lal Peri depend on firm religious beliefs and their search for the divine. Some like Bhopa singers, Idol makers of Chola and the Devadasis, live stringently, thriving on basic food and abstaining themselves from normal pleasures of life because of their self-inflicted obligation to the austerity of spiritual world of divine. Some like Hari Das just want to be respected and accepted in their lives, so for them, belief and holy devotion is seen as a means to that goal of acceptance in the society that they might not otherwise acquire in their ordinary activities.

Hari Das, being a Dalit, is maltreated by upper caste, he digs wells and serves as a weekend guard in a jail for sustaining his family. However, ironically, during the golden months of the year from December till February, he is nothing less than a God himself as a Theyyam Dancer. "For those months we become Gods. Everything changes. We don't eat meat or fish and are forbidden to sleep with our wives. We bring blessings to the village and the villagers, and exorcise evil spirits. We are the vehicles through which people can thank the gods for fulfilling their prayers and granting their wishes. Though we are all Dalits even the most bigoted and casteist Namboodiri Brahmins worship us, and queue up to touch our feet." (Dalrymple 33). Theyyam is a religious traditional dance style from Kerala's Malabar region that blends dance, mime, music and embodies the foundations of old tribal civilizations that valued the worship of gods and ancestors. The traditional dance is not only shockingly fascinating to witness but also intriguing because the age old conventional roles of the social structures are flipped during this three-month period wherein Hari Das is worshipped, revered and also feared as the lord he embodies as a theyyam dancer. This event is organised in front of minor shrines, from twilight to dawn. Dalrymple points to the perception of caste system and the practices of caste discrimination through Hari Das's life story. He fails to see any logic in people unquestioningly following an incomprehensible caste system in which the same person is sometimes treated as untouchable and other times as God as per convenience of the upper caste people. An extract from Hari Das's narration encapsulates this intriguing aspect of our culture: "Though we are all Dalits even the most bigoted and casteist Namboodiri Brahmins worship us, and queue up to touch our feet." (Dalrymple 89). Even in present situations, Dalits are

still asked to drop their eyes before any upper caste, specially in front of Brahmins. The current situations are however not same as they had been in the past but still the Indian society did not very well progressed in this manner. Honor killings still takes place in various areas as it is still considered a sin for any upper caste to fall in love with a Dalit or a lower caste. Intercaste marriages are still considered taboo.

Rani Bai's story is replete with stereotypes of sexism, patriarchal beliefs, curse of poverty and class inequalities. She is a devadasi, which means she is vowed to serve the deity or temple throughout her life. Unfortunately in reality she and many other devadasis like her are unjustly subjected to maltreatment and exploitation by the patriarchal society even in 21st century. For acquiring the status of a devadasi, girls have to go through a religious ceremony in which parents sacrifice their young daughters by marrying them off to a temple or God (mostly to a female deity of that temple). The age-old practice still continues in some Southern parts of India in spite of having been officially prohibited since 1988. Having originals in some sincerely followed religious ideas and values in ancient times, in present it has become a subtle tool of sexual exploitation of female children and women. Devadasis were once regarded as figures of piousness, spiritual strength and moral integrity on account of their unflinching love for God and immense knowledge of various art forms. They were glorified and patronized by aristocrats and kings. But once British colonial rule stripped away they became nothing more than sex slaves/prostitutes. It is really shocking and painful to know that many of them die because of unwanted pregnancies and communicable diseases. Now this structure centred around the devadasis has been reduced to a social evil feeding on the maltreatment and sexual abuse of young girls and women. From Rani Bai's story in the book, the readers get to know that her parents sacrificed and devoted her to Goddess Yellama of one of the temples as they could not afford to raise and marry her. After having been sold in an open market, she is offered a job in Mumbai, but once again sold to a brothel there. Because of its deep link with gender, money, caste, religion and illness, her tragedy continues. And yet she has no option but to sell both of her daughters as devadasis to the temple who are now both dead because of AIDS and she is left all alone unwillingly perpetuating this vicious cycle. "Though the story is full of sadness and injustice, Devadasis—as those who have been dedicated, or 'married', to a god or goddess are known- like Rani Bai, tell the tale as they believe that it shows how their goddess is uniquely sympathetic to their fate. After all, their lives are little better than hers: cursed for crimes of love outside the bonds of marriage, rejected by their children, condemned like Yellamma to live on roads, begging for favours, disfigured by sadness and without the protection of a husband." (Dalrymple 60). As a traveller-cum-writer Dalrymple

is shocked after listening to the tale of Rani Bai and gets perplexed at the pseudo-religious practices prevailing in India.

Mohan Bhopa is a nomad from the Nayak caste, and is at the bottom of the hierarchy of the caste system. He and his wife recite the 4000-line epic of Pabuji, the local mythological hero in different places from time to time. Just like Hari Das, the Theyyam Dancer, Mohan Bhopa's work also allows him a fair salary and also recognition and respect which otherwise he would not have had if he has pursued any other line of work. "We Nayaks are from a very low caste. At some point in our history we became nomads, and so fell from the high position we once had: people never trust nomads. Still to this day we cannot eat or drink in the house of many of the people in this village. But when we recite or perform as bhopas, this brings us respect. I may not sit at the same level as Rajputs or the Brahmins, but they come to see me here, they commission me to read the phad for them and they are happy and proud about my success and my fame in the villages nearby."(Dalrymple 103). The focus in the story is entirely on his caste and social rank. It is demonstrated unflatteringly that even the members of Nayak clad die because of different reasons like curse of poverty, lack of awareness and inaccessibility to relieving factors, if any available to them. Manisha Ma and the Tantra also suggest that their self-contradictory practices create noticeable chasm between the pious and the devilish, "at the shifting threshold between the divine and demonic, violating approved social values and customs" (Dalrymple 435). Being a victim of harassment and oppression, she decides to abandon her house and three daughters in search of respect and freedom. She feel enclined to search and pray for goddess Tara, in which she succeeds eventually. Now Goddess Tara mysteriously, comes to possess her regularly whenever she is with her violent, abusive husband. "Tara is, after all, one of the most wild and wayward of Hindu goddesses, and cannot be tamed and contained within a venerated temple image. She is not only the goddess of supreme knowledge who grants her devotees the ability to know and realize the Absolute, she is also the Lady Twilight, the Cheater of Death, a figure of horror and terror, a stalker of funeral pyres, who slaughters demons and evil 'yakshis' without hesitation, becoming as terrible as them in order to defeat them: in the tenth-century hymn of a hundred names from 'Mundamala Tantra', Tara is called 'She Who likes Blood, She Who Is Smeared with Blood and She Who Enjoys Blood Sacrifice." (Dalrymple 211). It can be said that it is one of her liberating acts to feel more powerful than her husband or any other male. She feels blessed with affection, admiration and contentment in the midst of the cremation grounds, something she had been deprived all through her life.

Red fairy's life story is an engrossing one, it being about life of a little girl's voyage to Sindh region of Pakistan from a backward rural area of Bihar, India. It is a narrative about the time period when India was burning in the flames of communal violence, in which the worst affected were the people of minorities and Muslim community. Lal Peri's family members were Muslims and they become targets of Hindu rage so much so that they were forced to flee from their home, their village overnight, finally seeking shelter in Pakistan. However, this was not the end of their sufferings and they soon became refugees because of Indo-Pak war, which resulted in partition of Pakistan and subsequent formation of Bangladesh where they started their lives afresh. "The more I heard the details of her story, the more her life seemed to encapsulate the complex relationship of Hinduism with the different forms of South Asian Islam, swerving between hatred and terrible violence, on one hand, and love and extraordinary syncretism on the other." (Dalrymple 121). She later had to leave the house because of increasing humiliation and abuse by her brother's widow. Then she decided to live her own life and started following the steps of Lal Shahbaz Qalander to become a Sufi Fakir in a Sufi Shrine. In the role of fakir, she finally feels not only secure, but always respected. This story not only demonstrates how religious disharmony can affect ordinary people adversely but also makes a strong statement on the influence of the spread of Wahhabism's on Islam and the increasing intolerance towards the same, which eventually led to conflicts amongst the Muslim groups resulting in explosions of Sufi shrines in Pakistan.

'The Song of the Blind Minstrel' is the story of Kanai, a Baul singer. Baul community is a wandering group of musicians who oppose norms, traditions and caste system of the society. It does not believe in idol worshipping and without having any affiliation with any class or caste, it searches for the divine through its musical compositions. Kanai belonged to a poor household, he was also blind since early childhood. His father worked as a labourer in the fields of the local farmer until his death, which left Kanai and his family devastated and financially insecure. Kanai had to take his father's place when he was very young so he seeks for a mentor to train him to be a Baul singer to support his family. After becoming one, he received affection and respect which by then had remained an unimaginable thing for him. The Baul singers focus on acts that would be considered controversial or repulsive in any regular social environment, that is why this group is seen as rebellious and non-conformist but they do it in a peaceful, non-violent and acceptable manner so as to earn approval from the spectators. "They sing of desire and devotion, ecstasy and madness; of life as a river and the body as a boast. They sing of Radha's mad love for the elusive Krishna, of the individual as the

crazed Lover, and the Divine as the unattainable Beloved. They remind their listeners of the transitory nature of this life, and encourage them to renounce the divisions and hatreds of the world, so provoking them into facing themselves. Inner knowledge, they teach, is acquired not through power to others, but over the self. ”(Dalrymple 237). Ironically, people of rural and backward areas show more respect and acceptance towards them as compared to educated urban residents because of the fact that they can relate themselves to the acts in the performances of Baul singers.

The tales which are most interesting because of their uniqueness need special mention here. One of them is that of Prasannamati Mataji who became a Jain nun. She abandoned her family and home when she was very young because of her strangely developed fascination for Jain religion and the teachings of Jainism. She adopted a life of austerity, discipline and devotion, despite the luxuries of life which she enjoyed at her parents' place. In this particular life story, several crucial contrasts and principles of Buddhism and Jainism are also presented. The core element, "Ahimsa," is the main principle of both Jainism and Buddhism. Between them, there are mainly two differences. The Jain monks pull their own hair out from the roots, which is a highly painful practice, as compared to the Buddhist monks who used to and still shave their heads. The second is that, unlike Buddhist monks who frequently request for food and water, Jain monks never do so, instead, they must obtain their meals willingly from others.

Another in this category is the tale of Passang, a Buddhist monk, born and bought up in Tibet. During the conquest of Tibet, he was compelled to lift the guns against the Communists. “We Buddhists believe in Karma, and in cause and effect. An action has consequences; we are the consequences of our acts. Perhaps because there was a time in the seventh century when we Tibetans invaded the Chinese, so we are suffering this torture now. It is our turn to suffer for what we did in our previous lives.”(Dalrymple 168). After years of joining a Tibetan regiment of the Indian Armed forces, he continues to live a life of regret and remorse for killing people (Buddhism believes in Karma and non-violence).

The third tale in this group is that of the life story of Srikanda Stpathy who is an idol sculptor belonging to Chola dynasty's bronze makers of Southern India. This story alludes to unsavoury features of caste-ridden Indian society. As Stpathy is not entitled to learn Sanskrit because of his profession and work, he takes pride in craftsmanship saying, “ The gods created man…….but here we are so blessed that we- simple men as we are- help to create the gods”(Dalrymple 176). Author points out that, ‘Kama’, ‘Moksha’ and ‘dharma’ are the essential part of human existence.

Even other sensual crafts were always associated with spirituality and Hinduism. The idols of all the divinities, especially Shiva and Parvati have always been strongly associated with the physical embodiment of sensuality and attractiveness with mesmerizing features. In addition, even ancient caves, temples, and spiritual literature, all of the images can be found in literary works also that are believed to represent a pivotal role in Hinduism's concept of divine existence. Dalrymple pointed out that "Sexuality in India has always been regarded as the subject of legitimate and sophisticated inquiry. Traditionally it was looked upon as an essential part of the study of aesthetics: 'sringar rasa' – the erotic rasa or flavour- being one of the nine rasa comprising the classical Hindu aesthetic system."(Dalrymple 187). It is also enigmatic to the author-narrator that those who make idols of gods through their excellent craftsmanship are not allowed to learn and study Sanskrit language, on the pretext that it is the ancient language of Vedas and scriptures, to be mastered by people of upper caste groups only. From ancient times, India's culture and traditions have been regarded with utmost respect and valuable for Indian society. There are many religious traditions that survived, thrived and coexist in India's continuum of evolution. Since several decades ago, Indian society and its culture have seen profound transformations that have made an impact on every aspect of life of Indian people, whether it be in the areas of politics, social interaction, economic growth, or business. Even in the introduction of this book, Dalrymple conveys:

"Living in India over last few years, I have seen the country change at a rate that was impossible to imagine. The speed of development is breath taking to any one used to the plodding growth rates of Western Europe: the sort of construction that would take twenty-five years in Britain comes up in five month" (Dalrymple Xii). A range of different of sociological, historical, and cultural attributes of India can be explored through William Dalrymple's travel works. The Dalrymple earnestly recounts his travel experiences in this book as he has been able to penetrate into the remotest and most isolated territories of India and comes to develop his own understanding of Indian culture, history and mythology. "It's a book all about people, belief and faith at a time when change in India is happening at an unprecedented pace. The modern Indian lives right next door to an ancient world where ritual, tradition and religious practice take centre stage. Dalrymple brings this world to life by introducing the reader people to some extraordinary people leading extraordinary lives." (Doniger). He captures in his travel narrative the plight and sufferings of the marginalised people who are subjected to all kinds of discrimination and exploitation in a very subtle manner in the name of religious, cultural and customary practices. Furthermore, it can be observed that precisely

because of its diversity, *Nine Lives* comprises of some very heart retching and remarkable stories of different people. The book embraces unique and different ways of living life with great insight and clarity, some of which the reader may never had heard about or had a barely perceptible understanding of. It is always seen through the perspective of someone who is constantly striving the devotion; as a result, they are able to provide a realistic, everyday insight since their specific faith is perhaps the most logical way for them to live. Through the stories of these nine characters, Dalrymple demonstrates in a convincing manner that these people, though living on the periphery of the society, have an indispensably important role to play for the religious and spiritual wellbeing of the society. But one can discern that despite empowering his characters to communicate for themselves, the reference points provided to them and for them restrict their liberty. The principal objective of the narrator/author is to provide background for each story but the brilliant use of his writing style somehow contributes significantly to maintain and possibly strengthen prejudices and misgivings.

While Dalrymple recounts the abundance of various forms of devotion in different stories, there is an element of evident surprise and a guarded understanding in his narration, which he cautiously avoids labelling blind faith or superstition. Read from native perspective, one finds that it is the devotees' religious sentiments, unflinching faith and deep belief that binds them together but for Dalrymple, it is the outcome of conservative and rigid thinking. It is reflected in his observation on how the idols made of clay metamorphose into omnipotent, “Without faith, of course, it is just a sculpture. It’s the faith of devotees that turns it into a god.” (Dalrymple 370-371). Dalrymple's search for the divine is basically this faith, which he constantly doubts. The frequent comparison of contemporary rural India to Middle Ages on one hand and to England on the other, reinforces Dalrymple's stereotyped portrayal of India in the pages of his travel book. But it certainly remains one of the best travelogues on India, being “ a glorious mixture of journalism, anthropology, history, and history of religious” (Doniger) while precisely talking about India and faith, the two subjects which make foreigners “fly off into cosmic vagueness” (Iyer). The very titles of the chapters instantly arouse our interest in the tales of the nine people, each representing an intriguingly different religious path to give meaning and purpose to his/her life. Told in Dalrymple’s distinctive style, these stories invite not only the Indian readers to join the journeys of these nine people but also readers across the globe to get familiarised with the lives of Baul singers, idol makers, folk singers of Rajasthan, Theyyam dancers of Kerala and so one and so forth.

Although a "compelling and poignant" (Dalrymple), the book refrains from challenging and questioning the mindset which promotes and encourages the tendencies of masses in South Asian territories to be the frogs in the well blinding believing in and unconsciously perpetuating the exploitation, discrimination and abuse in the name of religion and faith. However, it also demonstrates that the same fold of faith and religion can sometimes help in resuscitating those whose lives have been destroyed by certain unknown and unspecified social, religious or political institutions. But in terms of candid recounting of the honestly narrated tales of those nine characters, told with unflattering simplicity and precision the book deserves appreciation not only as a travel book but also as a collection of biographies and a subtle critique of politics behind the events which devastates lives of thousands of people. The postcolonial reading of the book also paves the way for looking at it as the portrayal of and commentary on migration and globalization, affecting lives of million, positively as well negatively.

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DESERTION BY ABDULRAZAK GURNAH: AN AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL EXPLORATION

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Abstract: *As a novelist Gurnah seeks to represent the subtleties of African consciousness. He also endeavors to foreground an African identity which is not limited to the borders of the countries that constitute the continent. His novel, Desertion, is a fine illustration of this enterprise. An African, Rashid, who's experience is unmistakable similar to that of the author's, probes the complexities linked to ethnicity, gender identity, race and displacement which define the lives of people. The vicissitudes in Rashid's life point to the ups and downs in Gurnah's own life. The two are also similar in terms of their respective fervencies and proclivities. The paper examines how the author makes use of the autobiographical mode to investigate the attitudes, preferences and leanings which inform ethno-racial societal structures. It also looks at how the author contrasts the protagonist's memories formed in a racially diverse Zanzibar with his experiences in Britain. Last but not the least the paper analyses the impact that migration had on Rashid's (and by implication on the author's own) understanding of the ideas of home, exile, identity and family history.*

Key Words: *Autobiography, fiction, race, history*

The novel *Desertion* by Abdulrazak Gurnah opens towards the end of the nineteenth century outside a small town along the east African coast. An injured and indisposed Englishman happens to enter the town where a local Shop-keeper, Hassanali, who has just left his house to open the mosque for the first prayer of the day finds him and out of his godliness and goodwill takes him home and has his family help him regain his health. Meanwhile the British authorities learn that one of their men has been seen in a semi-conscious state. Soon a British District Officer reaches Hassanali's home to pick him up. This Whiteman named Martin Pearce is a traveler and historian who had been accompanying some hunters on their hunting expedition but had decided to break away from them owning to the feeling of revulsion he had developed for the unrestrained killing of animals:

> We were in Brava for a few days and set off towards Dif, a small army of animals and men, armed as if for a conquest. It took us four weeks, slaughtering our way across southern Somalia. It was unbearable destruction. We killed every day, sometimes as many as four or five lions in a day, and leopards and rhino and antelope. We all reeked of blood and

> guts. And slaughtered meat and drying hides. Flies settled on us as if we were carrion. We ate so much charred meat that the air was nauseous with our breath and our waste. When we got to Dif I told Weatherill that I could not continue. (52)

He had been sent away with two Somali guides who had robbed him of all his belongings before abandoning him. While gathering his wits at Hassanali's house he falls in love with his sister Rehana. Since she had been deserted by her husband, she finds great solace in Pearce's affection and disregarding all societal and religious codes she elopes with him to the nearby town of Mombasa. Later in the novel the narrator gives an account of another love affair between Rehana's granddaughter Jamila and a young local Muslim. This love story propels the narrative forwards into another temporal setting and we see the intricacies of affection, ethnicity and imperial dominion coalescing in the mind of the narrator. Finally, the narrative transcends the morass of identity and dogma to limn the vicissitudes of colonial history with the help of the two love stories in question.

Most of Gurnah's fiction concerns itself with the apprehension and communication of African thought, emotion and sensibility. The backgrounds which he creates in his narratives present a different Africa which is more about identities engendered by personal communion stretching beyond its borders. This idea is amply illustrated by his novel, *Desertion*. The otherwise dominant themes in the novel assume a different character as they are cast into an autobiographical mould. In her book, *Auto/biographical Discourses,* Laura Marcus remarks that:

> Although autobiography – as concept or as a body of texts – is undoubtedly a crucial site for explorations or constructions of selfhood and identity, the focus on universal subjectivity, or the denial, resulted in a neglect of ethnic and gender diversity and differential subjectivities, and a highly abstract concept of identity. (183)

Gurnah narrative does much better than merely explore and construct selfhood and identify in that the novel, by no means, neglects ethnic and gender concerns. A displaced African who is associable with Gurnah himself scrutinizes how intricacies of identity, race and displacement shape people's lives. The novel spans a historical time which corresponds to the time with precedes Gurnah's birth and to which he possibly has access through the living memory surrounding him. Compared to Gurnah's other novels *Desertion* goes much back in time to trace the intricate journeys of some key characters which offer perceptive insights into the otherwise indiscernible complexities of African identity. The novel is reflective of the author's curiosity vis-à-vis an analysis and examination of the strife between

individuals and inherent attitudes, preferences and inclinations which define ethno-racial societal structures. This is illustrated by the author's juxtaposition of memories formed while living in a Zanzibar made up of people from diverse races and the impressions gathered in Britain.

One finds a wide diversity of perspectives in Gurnah's fiction which accounts for a subtle handling of themes like displacement, loss and identity. Gurnah's consciousness which is directly linked to his lineage and antecedents point to the multiety associable with Africa. In *Desertion* colorism does not come into play as his characters inherit their skin tones form non-African fathers. What differentiates Gurnah fiction from representative African fiction, which largely concerns itself with a single race, is that, in it, one finds intriguing racial hybridity. The author tries to separate ethnicity from appearance and points to the fact that socio-ethical standards of freedom or entitlement must have little or nothing to do with one's ancestry. Folasade Hunsu in his paper entitled "Autobiography and the Fictionalization of Africa in the Twenty-first Century: Abdul Razak Gurnah's Art in *Desertion*" remarks:

> By deliberately presenting characters of mixed races, Gurnah hopes to problematise the easy classification of characters according to their skin colour and represent Africa as not only a confluence of cultures but also of colours where "black" is only a shade among the different shades that are obtainable. (80-81)

In the novel a Zabzibari Youth named Rashid moves to Britain hoping to bring his cherished dream of becoming a scholar to fruition. All of a sudden things go awry in Zanzibar and country slips into a political crisis making things exceeding difficult for his family. This disturbs Rashid and he tries to stay in constant touch with the family; later on, communication with family too becomes an impossibility owing to the restrictions imposed by the Zanzibari government on communication with foreign countries. His family faces a torrid time because of certain unfortunate occurrences and eventually falls apart. As his family continues to struggle Rashid is able to carve a niche for himself as an academic in Britain. Rashid attends a conference where he happens to speak on settler writing in Kenya. During his presentation he touches on the intriguing tale of Rehana and Martin Pearce to illustrate the false impressions in Kenyan Settler writing regarding sensual associations. The story attracts the attention of Barbara Frederick whose mother later reveals some facets of the story to Rashid with which he or his family had not been familiar.

The novel is intriguingly divided into three parts. The first part, which confines itself to the last quarter of the nineteenth century, comprises four chapters each of which takes the name of the character whose story it narrates. In the second part, which is based on two chapters, the action moves to the nineteen fifties while in the third it returns to the present as Rashid casts his mind to the past and responds to some of the propositions brought up for consideration in the preceding sections. Chapters in the first part tell the stories of Hassanali, Frederick, Rehana, and Martin. Hassanali and his sister, Rehana are half Indian and half African. Being the only male heir of the family Hassanali is the householder.

Rehana's story arouses a lot of curiosity and interest. Even though she is ingenious and quick-witted she is deserted by her husband. What makes life worse for her is that she is antagonised by an unforgiving society for having been abandoned at a young age. Her despondency can be gauged by her reaction when the unconscious Martin Pearce is brought to their place.

> Her first thought was that it was him, her husband, that he had struggled back and Hassanali had found him and brought him home. Not because there was any resemblance or anything like that, the thought came too quickly for that. Hassanali had brought an exhausted traveller home and her first thought was that it was him. She had felt terror and anger, and the beginnings of elation, all in an instant. Now that she thought of that moment she remembered that she also thought of him, how he looked, his smile, the feel of the hair on his body, all in a rush. Then she saw that it wasn't him, and drew back in relief and disgust. The disgust was with herself, for being unable to feel only rage and humiliation at the thought of him, for being unable to stifle her body's desire for him, for the relief of having him back. (60)

While she is trying to come to terms with this emotional crisis, the arrival of Martin is a refreshing change for her. However, her association with Martin is unacceptable to her family as well as to her community. She is forced to move to another place where she spends some serenely joyful years with Martin before he too abandons her. Asmil the female child born out of this relationship is taken into his care by Hassanali to shield her and her mother from possible social ostracization. Asmil later bears a daughter, Jamila, who rises to a prominent societal position and marries Rashid's brother Amin.

Desertion can be subjected to a multiple theoretical and thematic readings. However, the most striking feature of the novel is the unmistakable similarity between the lives of Gurnah and the Rashid, the key character in the novel. The

character of Rashid allows Gurnah a great deal of flexibility as regards arriving at the desired conclusions. In an autobiographical analysis of European colonialism in Africa entitled, *Exterminate All the Brutes,* Sven Lindqvist makes an interesting remark:

> Even in the most authentic documentary there is always a fictional person – the person telling the story. I have never created a more fictional character than the researching 'I' in my doctorate, a self that begins in pretended ignorance and then slowly arrives at knowledge, not at all in the fitful, chancy way I myself arrived at it, but step by step, proof by proof, according to the rules. (104)

Likewise, Rashid's life is a subtly organized re-recordation of Gurnah own experiences. The concurrence of the two lives in question is conspicuous. Both have an experience of life in Zanzibar under colonial rule both get displaced to rediscover themselves in a foreign land. Moreover, the two are similar also in terms of their respective ambitions and preferences. Their predilection for art and literature spurs them on to earn doctoral degrees in British Universities and take up teaching as profession.

Through the character of Rashid, Gurnah endeavours to demonstrate how personal memories of past experiences define one's present. While Rashid tells his own story one is able to perceive the influence of the past vis-à-vis the intricacies of the narrative structure. The story is told through a series of wavering segments which finally coalesce into a harmonious compendium of personal experiences. The narration begins steadily but the story which sets it in motion is not carried forwards immediately. Rashid arrives on the scene to make the present plausible. His quest to know more about his family has impelled him to put several disparate accounts together. What Gurnah tries to imply is that apparently divergent personal experiences can influence the present immensely. He portrays Rashid as an idealist whose cerebrations are intriguing. His ability to confront the reality using the creative power of his mind offers him invaluable insights into the baffling enigmas of the past and enables him to realize his full potential. Rashid acts like a pivot which harmonises the imperfections of the past, present and future. As the narrative oscillates between these phases, Gurnah's own life coalesces with that of Rashid to not only foreground the real image of Africa but also offer resolution to some of the most confounding ambiguities about African identity. Rashid and his sister Farida live through all the ordeals to assert their respective identities. Farida valiantly works her way out of a torrid phase where she is seen struggling with studies and is unable to surmount familial trammels to a point where she is able to

shake herself free of all the fetters and become an accomplished poet. Farida's ingeniousness helps her conquer the seemingly insuperable problems which typified life in Zanzibar after it attained independence.

Rashid plays a vital role as an academic in Britain. He is the one who facilitates the resolution of all contradictions and incongruities that surround Jamila's pedigree. Rashid, like Gurnah himself, acts as a bridge between Zanzibaris residing in their country and the ones who have migrated to England; he is like a conduit who keeps them connected to their history and national consciousness. Rashid's displacement is a crucial experience in the context of the narrative as it broadens his vision and allows him to place things in better perspective. He is also able to analyse the normal Zanzibari consciousness and experience from without. Gurnah basically attempts to illustrate the fact that the perception of idea of race changes altogether when examined in a different locale.

Some of the key figures in the story can have access to the past through Rashid who pieces it together for them dispassionately. Later on, his own experience, understanding and feelings impinge on the narrative as his personal perception of things comes into play. In any case Rashid is the central cohesive element as his personal experience drives the narrative and lends credence to the existence of other characters. One realises that a lot of occurrences referred to in the opening chapters have got a lot to do with Rashid. His visualization and presentation of the affair between Martin and Rehana arouses a lot of interest, however, as he himself admits, he is not able to comprehend as to how this relationship came along.

The section, 'An Interruption' which follows the first for chapters that constitute part one of the novel is very significant vis-à-vis the present study. It is this section that casts Rashid into the mould of an autobiographer with his own story symbolising the personal struggles of many others including Gurnah's. The narrator remarks:

> There is, as you can see, an I in this story, but it is not a story about me. It is one about all of us, about Farida and Amin and our parents, and about Jamila. It is about how one story contains many and how they belong not to us but are part of the random currents of our time, and about how stories capture us and entangle us for all time. (120)

Although his story parallels those of many others, his perception of national history as well as his family history is strikingly different from anyone who has anything to do the two things in question. As pointed out before Rashid has had the advantage of standing at a distance from his country and analysing things from

without. Owing to his displacement he gets to meet people related to Frederick who clear up a lot of confusions about Rehana's life. Rashid meticulously probes into all the things which impart an essential and formative characteristic to the structure and progress of the narrative.

The title of the novel is very suggestive. Desertion is a shared feature in the lives of most of the characters that make up the novel. This desertion points to the totality of past and present trials and ordeals related to rejection and betrayal which define the lives of most of the characters in question. The narrative also broaches some important issues bearing on the ideas of race and displacement. Rehana and her bother face a kind of abandonment in their lives as their parents are not around to see them survive amid societal hostility engendered by the marriage of their parents. In her personal life too Rehana faces a dual desertion at the hands of her two husbands. After the demise of the man, she eventually gets involved with, she feels abandoned once again. As Rashid travels to Britain, he is forced to desert his loved ones as well as his home owing to the political uncertainty in his country. While in Britain Rashid himself faces a kind of desertion at the hands of his partner, Grace, who comes to think of him as a selfish and inconsiderate man.

Conclusion

The autobiographical element is too obvious in the novel. However, it is not through and through an autobiographical novel; there is much more to it. It is a faithful picture of the idealised perceptions in colonial Africa. Another striking feature of the narrative is its treatment of the theme of love in idealized form. The novel also represents Islam as a religion which is averse to violence or any kind of hostility. Hasanali's God-consciousness and benevolence typifies the Muslim sensibility as a whole. Like a true Mulism he believes that everything happens by God's will and he sees the fact that he chanced upon Martin as part of the same scheme and also a trial for him. Hassanali's treatment of Martin redefines the colonizer-colonized dynamic pointing to the fact that a Muslim always puts humanity first. *Desertion* adds a positive dimension to the representation of Africa in contemporary fiction. It points to the importance of the phenomenon of displacement in determining essential African Identity and facilitating better perception of the record of events in relation to the experiences of an individual or group. Some characters point to the fact that it is natural for modern Africa to be multi-ethnic and multi-racial.

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THE THEME OF HISTORY AND FREEDOM IN VASILY GROSSMAN'S 'EVERYTHING FLOWS'

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Abstract: *Vasily Grossman, most of whose important works were either unpublished or published with heavily censored versions during his lifetime, tries to deal with socio-cultural and ideological aspects of Soviet life in his works. His works are very important to better understand the Soviet age under Stalin and have been of interest to the scholars around the world. The themes he employed in his writing varied from Russian history, philosophy, war, human liberty, workers' lives, state ideology, to the most serious issues of his time – the totalitarian regimes. His last, though unfinished, novel Everything Flows encompasses almost all the major themes of his writings. In this novel he gives emphasis on the themes of Russian history and freedom and explains the correlation between them. The present research paper deals with the themes of history and freedom in the novel.*

Keyword: *Grossman, Russian history, Soviet State, freedom, Bolsheviks, Lenin, Stalin, Totalitarian State.*

Introduction

Vasily Grossman (1905-1964) was one of the prominent Soviet writers. His last novel '*Everything Flows'* remained unfinished and could never get published during his life time. As Robert Chandler tells us, "Few novelists have incorporated more history into their novels than Grossman" (Grossman vii). Written after the arrest of his magnum opus *Life and Fate* by the KGB, the novel became his most radical and anti-totalitarian work. Because its very content and the tone it was not possible for it to get through the Soviet censorship even during the 'Thaw' period. Grossman's close friends succeeded in publishing the novel in *samizdat* in Germany in 1970 and later during Perestroika times it was published in Russia for the first time in 1989. The first English translation by Thomas P. Whitney came out in 1972. More translations appeared later. The more recent one by Robert and Elizabeth Chandler (2011) is used here for the analysis.

Everything Flows

The subject of *Everything Flows* is post-Stalinist Russia as seen through the eyes of a man from the Gulag camps. The man tries to make out what has happened during his thirty-year absence, to make out the society he witnesses and find for himself a

meaningful existence in the post-Stalinist Soviet society. This is a story of a Soviet citizen, Ivan Grigoryevich. In the early years of Stalin's rule, he is arrested and sent to Siberia for expressing his thoughts about freedom and making a speech against dictatorship. He had declared that "any limitation of freedom mutilates a person as surely as an ax blow to a finger or an ear, and that the annihilation of freedom is the equivalent of murder" (Grossman 3). Here, right from the start we can identify Grossman's own thoughts in Ivan's speech. As a consequence of his act, he is expelled from his university and exiled to Kazakhstan for three years. He spends nearly thirty years in different prisons and labour camps. Grossman based his novel on the life of his brother-in-law- Nikolai Sochevets. In 1930, aged twenty-three, he was deported with his elderly parents and sisters from Sochi beyond the Urals. There are not much of events in the novel as there are musings, reflections, reminiscences, and history-telling.

The novel begins with Ivan's return to Moscow after the death of Stalin, where only his cousin's family still remembers him. Ivan, grey haired with bald patch on his head, is well over fifty by now. Nikolay Andreyevich is his cousin and only surviving relative. He is a well-paid biologist who made advancement in life with a lot of compromises with conscience. Over the period of whole three decades when Ivan was in the camps, he never wrote him a single letter. Through memory of Nikolay Grossman briefly sketches a critical portrait of the Soviet postwar years - the campaign against the 'rootless cosmopolitans', 'the 'doctors' plot,' both directed mainly against the Soviet Jews, sudden and unexpected death of Stalin in 1953, and its impact on Soviet society. After the death of Stalin, the country was plunged into a kind of chaos, where the citizens like Nikolay didn't exactly know how to respond to the changing socio-political events unfolding before them.

When Ivan and Nikolay meet, there is not much they can talk about. Nikolay tries to discuss his career, but Ivan poses a straight and an uncomfortable question: Had *he* sign the letter which condemned the Killer Doctors? Ivan gets to know about the letter in the camp. Nikolay had signed the letter against the Jewish doctors, - which had resulted into the show trial of the Jewish doctors, accusing them anti-Soviet activities. This trial really took place some years before Stalin's death. The accusation was later acknowledged by Soviet officials as a fabrication. Ivan knows that his cousin was party to a sham accusation, but he doesn't judge his cousin: the latter is judged by his own conscience. All that Nikolay offers in justification is his remark that a new life was born, and they had no choice but to participate in it. He is simply not ready to acknowledge any personal responsibility for what had

happened in the past and submits to the higher power. This is one of the first references in Soviet literature to the persecution of Jews under Stalin.

Ivan is invited to stay during night by Nikolay and his wife but he turns down the invitation and goes to Leningrad. Not that Nikolay and his wife wish to keep Ivan at their house for long, as political prisoners returning from the camps were the conscience of the nation, and it was inevitable that the corrupt society would shun them (Popoff 344). In Leningrad lives a woman whom he had been in love with before he was exiled. He hopes to see her once again after these many years. But she had stopped writing him eighteen years earlier. He goes past her house, but could not bring himself to enter and meet her. She is married now. He simply stands by the gate of her house and it seems to him that that while he was in the camps, she was closer to his heart than now. During his three days stay in Leningrad, Ivan accidently meets the very man - Pinegin-who had denounced him to the authorities in his youth. Because his denunciation Ivan's all youth is destroyed behind the barbed wires. The same person now has prospered in life and climbed to elite of Soviet society through his service to the state. During their talk Pinegin keeps wondering if Ivan knows who denounced him. When, to calm his conscience, Pinegin offers some money to Ivan, the latter looks into the former's eyes 'with sad curiosity,' his look suggests that he knows it all well. As the poetess Akhmatova remarks, "Now the arrested are returning, and two Russias stare each other in the eyes: the ones that put them in prison and the ones who were put in prison" (Reeder 314). Akhmatova's words best express the essence of this meeting in the novel. Through Pinegin's story Grossman illustrates the nature of post-Stalinist society. The state rewarded him with promotions, honors, and a position of power for his services as a secret police informer, who had denounced Ivan and thousands of his fellow countrymen like him. Because of informers like him thousands of innocent people were incarcerated in prisons, among them artists, writers, scientists, doctors, diplomats and other intellectuals. Pinegin serves as an example of the mediocre party lackey who climbs up the career ladder during the Stalin period by denouncing fellow citizens.

As for the question who is guilty and be held responsible for the senseless loss of millions of intelligent, creative lives in the labour camps Grossman discusses the four 'Judas' categories of the Stalinist era and the different motivations of these 'informers'. He does it through the thoughts of Ivan. An imaginary trial is led against these 'Judas'. But Grossman doesn't make haste in pronouncing judgement on any of these informers. Every time he asks readers, "All the same, let's wait, let's think. Let's not condemn him without thinking … It is a terrible thing to

condemn even a terrible man" (Grossman 65-68). Grossman is against any kind of condemnation of perpetrators of violence without first giving it a proper thought. It is evident that he doesn't approve of judging the perpetrators retributively. He takes altogether a different stand on this, one that seeks to probe answer in the very human nature, when he says, "The State is the earth. If the earth has no grains lying hidden inside it, neither wheat nor tall weeds will grow from it. Humanity has only itself to blame for human filth" (Grossman 74).

Grossman tries to delve deeper into the working of a totalitarian state and society. He doesn't altogether acquit the state for dehumanizing its society, but at the same time he points at humanity's potential for turning evil and corrupt. He tries to give a human face to the work of historical responsibility of the state's atrocities towards its people, and at the same time he establishes its liability. Grossman asserts the collective responsibility for all people, including himself, of the Stalinist history of terrible, inhuman things done in the name and for the sake of State.

After spending some days in Leningrad, Ivan moves to a suburban town and manages to find abode at a middle-aged widow, Anna Sergeyevna, whose husband had died in the war. She works as a cook in a canteen. Ivan is taken on as a metalworker in a small workshop that employed the disabled. Here, in these chapters Grossman inserts some glimpse of the labour camp life experienced by Ivan. He reflects and compare the life of labour camps with the life outside through flashbacks. Here it is how he puts it,

> There was one profound difference between people living in the camps and people living in freedom. People in the camps stayed loyal to the time that had engendered them. Different epochs of Russian life lived on in the thoughts, in the psychological makeup of each person. (Grossman 97)

Grossman in detail narrates the social and ethnical composition of the inmates of the labour camps. Though the writer himself never was an inmate of such camps, he had interviewed scores of prisoners returning from the labour camps in the first few years of Stalin's death for his in-depth description. This account of the composition of social strata of Gulag life was penned by him a way earlier than Solzhenitsyn's Gulag Archipelago was written. Ivan, having witnessed the 'free' Soviet society thousands of miles away from the camps, describes it

> People living in freedom, on the other hand, were not marked by any such inimitable signs of their past. In them the past had been erased … even their sincerest desires all changed submissively and compliantly, in tune with the course of events and the will of their superiors. (Grossman 97-98)

Grossman asserts that the heterogeneity of Russian life, which, ironically the labour camps still had preserved, was replaced by the homogeneity and spatialization of social life under the ideological control of the Stalinist State.

The one more crucial historical event that Grossman deals with in detail in the novel is the forced collectivization and the 1932-33 Ukraine famine. It is narrated through the story of Ivan's landlady, Anna Sergeeyvna. She was a young Communist activist in 1930, and was sent to Ukraine by the party to carry out the collectivization of farms. This elaborative, vivid account of the forceful collectivization, dekulakization and the horrors and cruelty of that operation ordered by Stalin, and the famine in Ukraine that followed in 1932 which claimed from two to up to five million lives, is one of the first powerful descriptions of these events from Soviet history in Soviet literature and belongs to "the most moving writing on the period" (Conquest 9). Even in the post -Stalin USSR Ukraine famine was one of the Soviet taboos. This famine chapter informed the British historian Robert Conquest in *The Harvest of Sorrow* and provided further evidence for his thesis that the famine was man-made (Popoff 348).

Anna can share her story only with a Gulag survivor. Anna's account of the Terror Famine reads like a requiem; a long monologue which speaks of her own tacit consent in complicity in the brutal dekulakization and subsequent famine in Ukraine. She Tells him how she kept on hearing one and the same thing at the party meetings, on radio broadcasts, in newspapers that the Kulaks were parasites, they purposefully destroyed the grain and murdered little children. The state had convinced them that what it considered as the Kulaks must be annihilated as a class to resolve the problems of the people. Through Anna's confession Grossman portrays how a state propaganda convinced people into believing that some other people were not human being at all. The famine chapter draws parallels between Stalin's campaign to liquidate the kulaks and Hitler's campaign to exterminate the Jews. The author here underlies methods and ideologies of the two totalitarian states (Garrard 141).

> And the truth is that I truly didn't think of them as human beings. They're not human beings, they're kulak trash! … In order to kill them, it was necessary to declare that kulaks are not human beings. Just as the Germans said that Yids are not human beings. That's what Lenin and Stalin said too: The kulaks are not human beings. (Grossman 127)

Anna took active part in the execution of the forceful collectivization and dekulakization of the Ukrainian peasants believing that they were not human beings and did not deserve to live. Such was the influence of the state propaganda

on her. Grossman's argument is that any exclusive belief system of any type segregates the people into 'us' and 'other' and it also dehumanizes that 'other' in order to deprive it of its basic human rights. It presents a rationale to treat that 'other' people with cruelty and disregard of human values (Garrard 141).

Nothing much happens really in the novel after Anna's revelation to Ivan. she is diagnosed with lung cancer and soon dies of it. Her brief company was the only happiness Ivan had known in last thirty years. While she is in hospital Ivan writes down his thoughts as an imaginary conversation with Anna. He reflects upon the 1917 Russian Revolution, the role played by Lenin in it, the tragic fate of the Revolution, the fate of Old Bolsheviks, the construction of Soviet State by Lenin and its further development by Stalin, the character sketches of both the Soviet leaders and their correlation with entire Russian History, the unique development of Russian history and Russian progress, the enigma of Russian Soul and the Stalin era purges. And here we can identify Ivan with the author himself. Grossman makes out a case for the history of Russia and its relation with freedom and compares it with that of the West. He points out a glaring difference between the historical paths of Russia and the West in relation to the concept of freedom. Though from the start of 18th century Russia seemed to move closer toward the West and its culture, thanks to reforms by the Peter the Great, Grossman doesn't consider that Russia actually moved any closer to the West or its culture. Through the reflections of Ivan Grossman asserts that what divides Russia and West is freedom and its adverse relationship with the entire one-thousand-year history of Russian state,

> The evolution of the West was fertilized by the growth of freedom; Russia's evolution was fertilized by the growth of slavery. This is the abyss that divides Russia and the West … Russia has always evolved in a peculiar way; what has evolved has been the degree of non-freedom. Year by year serfdom grew harsher and the peasants' right to their land more tenuous. Meanwhile, Russian science, technology, and learning continued to advance, merging with the growth of slavery. (Grossman 156)

Grossman considers this link between slavery and freedom in Russia as a fundamental principle of Russian life which continued for hundreds of years up till the middle of 19th century, where in 1861 the emancipation of the serfs shook this linkage to some extent. But it failed to break it completely and, Grossman asserts, Lenin's new Soviet State only consolidated it. The awe-inspiring achievements in industrialization and urbanization, the transformation of peasant Russia into a modern state under Stalin's rule could not have been materialized without the

labour camps spread all over Soviet Union, which were a parallel economy of Soviet state (Applebaum Introduction).

After the burial of Anna Ivan goes to Sochi, where he had spent his childhood. Here the novel 'ends'. Ivan looks around and doesn't find his house nor the well which were once there. There was only the dusty grass that was burned by the sun. 'Burned by the Sun' - that's how Ivan and the millions of his fellow countrymen and women must have felt about themselves under Stalin's State. Even at this face of burning of a generation under a Sun, Grossman clearly puts his main message of the novel in the thoughts of Ivan on the subject of human freedom. For Grossman freedom of human beings is above everything, it is the law of life and, "There is no end in the world for the sake of which it is permissible to sacrifice human freedom" (Grossman 176).

Throughout the novel Grossman consistently reasserts the essence and the supremacy of human freedom over the State apparatus, ideology and violence. For him life and freedom are one and the same thing, irrevocable and the urge of which is something that cannot be wiped out completely. In labour camps, Ivan asks a rhetorical question to his cellmate in the prison: What is life itself, if not freedom? For Ivan, i.e., for Grossman "the evolution of life is the evolution of freedom" (Grossman 193). The urge for freedom from a slave life, for a life free from the barbed wires of labour camp, however short that life might be, is instinctive in Ivan. It is his faith in freedom that kept Ivan alive and hopeful of life during his thirty-year stay in the labour camps.

Grossman conceives the concept of human freedom not in mere abstract philosophical terms but he puts it into the framework of concrete social reality of all-pervading gigantic State, which tries to control almost all walks of life of her citizens, leaving no space for individual free will. It is in this individual freewill of a person that Grossman sees the essence human freedom. In the novel it is conceptualized in Ivan's character. Ivan comes to perceive the notion of freedom differently only when he comes into the contact with the State apparatus outside the camps. In his youth he considered that freedom meant only the freedom of expression, freedom of press. But as he witnesses the fundamental changes that took place in Russian society during these thirty years, he comes to a conclusion that freedom must include lives of all people with their choices about professions and about how to live their lives. "It's the same whether you're a locksmith or a steelworker or an artist—freedom is the right to live and work as you wish and not as you're ordered to" (Grossman 89). For Grossman freedom is the freedom from the unnecessary and meaningless intervention of the state in individual's life. His is the cry against the despotic control of society by state.

Conclusion

As Natalia Ruskina puts it "Grossman belonged to a literary tradition that taught writers to seek truth and justice" (Garrard 241). Grossman critically examines the oft-ignored historical atrocities committed by Soviet state under Stalin like persecution of Jews, forced collectivization, dekulakization and man-made famine in Ukraine. He goes deeper into the working of totalitarian regime and draws parallels between Stalinism and Hitlerism. Throughout the novel Grossman repudiates the violence (and its justification) against an induvial by the State in the name of any noble cause, or idea or ideology and reaffirms the essence and supremacy of human freedom over everything. He measures the growth and progress of life in terms of freedom an individual has in society. Material progress without human freedom has no significant value for him. That's why he doesn't have high regard for the gigantic glories achieved by the Soviet state under Stalin, which were achieved at the cost of human freedom of her citizens. Everything that is achieved at the cost of human lives and freedom is inhuman to him, senseless and useless. Progress for him is essentially the progress of human freedom and curtailment of freedom by state is violence in his opinion. Grossman's belief in this evolution and his utter denial to violence of this kind is best encapsulated in the following thought of Ivan, which is so relevant in our times today, "only one true force remains; only one true force continues to evolve and live; and this force is liberty. To a man, to live means to be free" (Grossman 216).

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SITUATING ANIMALIA IN GENDER POLITICS: ANGELA CARTER'S FAIRY TALE NARRATIVES

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Abstract: *The characterization of women in western fairytale narratives discloses systemic modes of oppression. The non-human animal race has been marginalized, like women, as victims of consumption and symbols of inferiority. Through corporeal re-makings and animorphs (blend of human and animal bodies) in The Bloody Chamber and Other Stories (1979), Angela Carter tackles the question of gender hierarchy. She re-reads into the popular scapegoat image (in the Bluebeard and Erl King cluster of stories), the act of inscribing beastliness in the "Beauty and the Beast" narratives and the wolf-human in the "Little Red Riding Hood" tales, through flesh and gender fluidity. In the interlocked lens of animal studies and feminism, reading Carol J. Adams, Josephine Donovan, Susan McHugh, Lisa Kemmerer, etc, this paper observes how far can women and animals be "sister species" (Kemmerer 7) in their fight against the normative outlook of masculine and (hu)man superiority respectively.*

Keywords: *Animalia, Feminism, Animal Studies, Fairytales*

The strict taxonomy of 'animalia' or metazoa is challenged by the postmodern narrative techniques of Angela Carter (1940-1992). Multiple body morphs are constructed in her texts, which transgress the categories of being a complete 'human' and a wholesome animal. The hypothesis is that the conflicting 'animalia' situation (what distinguishes an animal from a human) parallels the dismantling proscriptions of gender. To quote, "the ideological justification for women's alleged inferiority has been made by appropriating them to animals" (Adams and Donovan 10). Over time, critics have encouraged women to reject animality; however, a feminist like Angela Carter overturns this viewpoint and embraces animality to question patriarchy, abuse and utility-oriented objectives which oppress women. This paper argues how a deviation from the traditional fairytale narrative questions gender normativity or demythologizes the male-tale; and how animal symbolisms give agency to women's bodies.

The medieval or classical take of fairytales, like the *Histoires ou contes du temps passé avec des moralites* (1697), was inverted in Angela Carter's 1976 remaking of Charles Perrault, which included alternative morals inside a baroque performance of flesh and blood. Her romances are rather dark, with the aura of bleak comedy,

hedonism, mythological renditions, everything wrapped up with an overt presence of animals. Carter challenges the quest narratives of fairytales with the craft of a feminist writer manipulating the storyline in such a way that she dismantles the boundary of gender. With the technique of zoomorphism (attributing animal qualities to humans), she makes animals out of humans, especially in *The Bloody Chamber and Other Stories* (1979), central to this paper. The hypotheses in the hierarchy of man>woman/animal can be summarized by taking cues from the book *Animals and Women: Feminist Theoretical Explorations*, in the following manner:

> Applying images of denigrated nonhuman species to women labels women inferior and available for abuse; attaching images of the aggrandized human species to men designates them superior and entitled to exploit. Language is a powerful agent in assigning the imagery of animal vs. human. (Adams and Donovan 22)

Carter rewrites this speciesism problem through a language full of animals; where women are not seen as interchangeable with animals because there are common victims of abuse, but entitles women with a language of resilience, the "logos" of sexuality, to revert denied power.

Perrault's traditional fairytales, which Jack Zipes in the *Introduction* to *The Fairy Tales of Charles Perrault* calls adult-oriented and intended to reveal the modern developments in French society regarding the position of women, are altered by the experimental Carter in her book *The Bloody Chamber* in such a manner that they are not "versions", but new stories using the latent content of the traditional fairy tale narratives which are by default sexual (Carter 2). The elements of transition, renewal, death, regeneration, feast, festivity, laughter, suspension of the hierarchy of patriarchy and classical ways of telling a fairytale to create a world turned upside down, a second life, the liminal world of carnival, which Mikhail Bakhtin in *Rabelais and His World* right put it as something "inside out" (Bakhtin 11), humorous. Carter uses chiaroscuro flair, like the baroque painters Rubens, Caravaggio, and Rembrandt, and recreates the traditional European fairytales concentrating on magic realism and the imagery of the unconscious mind where discussions of 'animalia' integrate with gender politics. This paper observes that are three categories of symbolic 'animorphs' in *The Bloody Chamber and Other Stories* (1979); first, the scapegoat animal, second, the human-beast, and third, the wolf-human.

The Caged Scapegoat and Woman-Animal as Sister Species

In social theory, a community identifies and marks scapegoats (animals, weak/othered humans) to avert blame, responsibilities and evil. When it comes to the use of literary animals entrapped as scapegoats, women fall into a similar category, within a storytelling framework. Angela Carter, or contemporary short story writers like Carmen Maria Machado, have re-written precarity of women through scapegoating markers in the stories "The Bloody Chamber" and "The Husband Stitch" (2017) respectively. The titular story of Carter has the underlying narrative of an unnamed child-princess married/kidnapped and taken off to a secluded gothic castle, a chamber with annihilated and embalmed human flesh, an Iron Maiden coffin and a keyhole dripping in the blood of her husband's dead wife, a catafalque where an opera singer was embalmed, a hanging skull, a bedroom with multiple mirrors around the gargoyle surfaced matrimonial bed, reflecting and splitting a person's image into many parts, thereby hyperbolizing the act of impregnation. The woman protagonist in the story inherits an antique ruby choker after her marriage. The choker is compared to the red ribbon worn by women who escaped the guillotine. The moment the wife wears it, she becomes the symbol of an impending beheaded scapegoat. The jewel on her neck symbolizes a slit on the throat. A similar analogy of the green ribbon is present in Machado's story, where the women scapegoats are marked with an accessory. A woman as a scapegoat is recurrent in Margaret Atwood's 1985 dystopia *The Handmaid's Tale (in literary imagination), also evidentiary in historic witchcraft accusations of Salem, or women targets during the India-Pakistan partition.* In Carter's first story, a heart-shaped stain is inscribed on the forehead of the woman by her husband (the Marquis), which stood as a mark of her transgressions and disobedience. It is noteworthy that w*omen's bodies are formulated as sacrificial and edible flesh. Instances of masculine gaze like "*I saw him [her husband] watching me in the gilded mirrors with the assessing eye of a connoisseur inspecting horseflesh, or even of a housewife in the market, inspecting cuts on the slab" (Carter 6), and "[h]e in his London tailoring; she, bare as a lamb chop" (Carter 11), and expression of affect like "a racehorse before a race" (11), uses animal flesh imagery to discuss the linguistic representation of women's power positions. Carter's diversion from the traditional fairy tale narrative is that her damsel in distress is not saved by the hero; rather the Medusa-like mother figure. Carter demythologizes the tradition of men as the saviour. She animalizes the female as a trope and describes the wildness of the mother through the imagery of an eagle (Carter 1), and her virality as that of one who has killed a man-eating tiger on her eighteenth birthday. Animalia

comparison empowers the women characters and shatters the systemic scapegoating of the assumed weakling in the fairytale—the women.

The analogy of caging is also inherent in the story "The Erl King". Against the cage that the Erl-King makes to ensnare a woman like a small animal, the woman plans to synthesize a fiddle out of the king's body. These two symbols manifest the power-play of the two genders and how the latter subverts the masculine normative through symbolic violence and body horror. The masculine wears off the flesh of the woman, by being a predator-lover, by inculcating fears, enticing incentives, with eyes like a vortex, as luminous as that of a lycanthrope, thereby capturing women like birds (Carter 100). Instead of 'humans', women become a subhuman category, caged to cry, not sing. On the other hand, the protagonist in this story plans to reverse the domination by a proportionately destructive plan of strangling the man and chopping his hair to use as strings of a fiddle, which shall self-play a melancholic tune, "Mother, mother, you have murdered me!" (Carter 104). Merja Makinen in her essay "Angela Carter's "The Bloody Chamber" and the Decolonization of Feminine Sexuality" remarks: "Carter's work has consistently dealt with representations of the physical abuse of women in phallocentric cultures, of women alienated from themselves within the male gaze, and conversely of women who grab their sexuality and fight back, of women troubled by and even powered by their own violence" (Makinen 3). It is imperative to note that Carter re-inscribes the traditional tales by decentring masculinities. This is done by shuffling the so-called feminine and masculine attributions given to animals as well. For instance, lions and tigers for men and deers and rabbits for women. Carter not only problematizes this demarcation but also the overall reduction of women into a less and more instinctual species.

It can be noted that the condition of women in fairytales, trapped inside a claustrophobic patriarchal chamber, encourages a scholarship of "sister species" (Kemmerer 7), the perspective of women as zoo animals and consumable flesh. This is because "both women and animals have historically been considered less intelligent, less rational, and therefore more primitive and closer to nature than men" (Kemmerer 16). They have faced the consequences of oppression and have been frequently reduced to their procreative purpose. In Angela Carter's fairytales, the sister species interconnects. From the chamber of corpses, cages, lair and rooms, we enter the gothic house of the countess in the story "The Lady in the House of Love". She is a woman vampire who preys on men and buries the remains in her garden. Her bridal gown is always stained with blood. This story has a resonance with the original tale of "The Sleeping Beauty", but life, death, sleep,

reason and unreason are overturned in this case. Against the lure of the Erl King, we have the countess and her mute governess inviting a British soldier inside her castle, saying "curiouser and curiouser" (Carter 114) resonance of the carnivalesque world of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865). Inside the place of annihilation, the living-dead countess reveals herself, as an age-old cave with echoes, a closed circuit. The line, "In her dreams, she would like to be human" (Carter 109) is an outright suggestion of the fact that she is 'non-human', a ghoulish animal. Her beauty is called an "abnormality, a deformity" (Carter 108), "hectic, unhealthy beauty of a consumptive" (Carter 117). The language creates her mannerism in such a way that we see her like an animal, a cat having fastidious gestures, a fox eating baby rabbits, sniffing and howling, sinking teeth in the prey, as frail as the skeleton of a moth, and her cleaning habit, with fingernails, probed with a silver toothpick to clean skin and bone stuck inside. She loves to eat flesh, and her approach toward man transcends primitive sexual needs and takes a more animistic form. The countess appears as "an automaton, made of white velvet" (Carter 118), one who defies the identity of being a scapegoat of the original "Sleeping Beauty" narrative. Here, there is no needle to prick the countess out of her sleep, but she needs to be euthanized (like J.M.Coetzee's dogs in *Disgrace*), her bestiality "needs" to be controlled; thereby a glass piece bleeds her, spotting like menses, and makes her aware of her own self. After her death, the soldier plans to customize her beauty and fit her into more human-like conditions, thereby curing her hysteria, and photophobia, thereby restoring her teeth and claws into lady-like jaws and nails. The lady is imagined out of the nightmare of a sleeping beast into the beautiful dead woman, human, at last, leaving behind a monstrous rose symbolic of her appetite. It is significant that "[i]n Western patriarchal cultures, nonhuman individuals tend to be associated with human females" (Kemmerer 17) and speciesism has been seen as a systematic and institutionalized mode of oppression. There is an undeniable link in the treatment of animals and women in a larger hierarchy system, where both are subjected to discriminatory modification in terms of flesh appearance and behaviour, to be an attractive hunt for the perpetrator.

Inscribing Beastliness

It is noteworthy that Angela Carter's "fairytale heroines survive both within their narratives and our collective cultural experience, enduring mental abuse, physical violence, and humiliation by refusing to be intimidated by, and even at times prevailing over social stereotypes and sexist ideologies that limit their subjectivity" (Brooke 68). "The Courtship of Mr Lyon" and "The Tiger's Bride" are twin

stories, both narrating the famous "Beauty and the Beast" plot in a postmodern twisted manner, where readers have multiple options to pick, depending on their choice of the degree of proximity and deviation from the original story. Carter also gives a choice of metamorphoses (non-pathological in nature) in these two stories, where Beauty's magical transformation into an animal is more profound than the normative transformation of an animal into a handsome man. We are not swapping two types of flesh (one replacing another, where x becomes y and y become x). But there is a huge internal and physical transformation, a new configuration altogether (where xy or yx creates something like z). There are two kinds of beasts in this cluster of stories, one the lion, and the other, the tiger—two powerful images of the 'animalia' kingdom, eventually used by Carter to "destabilize the artificially restrictive categories of 'Beauty' and 'the Beast', disrupting the binary 'Beauty/Beast' to undermine the lingering presence in contemporary cultural presumptions" (Brooke 69). The lion over-asserts his beastliness, "I am the Beast, and you must call me Beast" (Carter 47), and says "a lion is a lion and a man a man" (Carter 47). This discloses the fissures in his power and the notion that animalhood is inscribed upon him. He is insecure in the presence of a human, who would "remind him too bitterly of his otherness" (Carter 48). Against the original story, where the beast is more masculine, the beast here is comparatively overwhelmed by shame; and depends largely on the woman for his survival and renewed birth. Beauty is aware of his strangeness, which made her shiver; she also felt "he was so different from herself" (Carter 51). However, like a doll, she accepts him and sees him transform into a man with an attractive mane of hair.

In "The Tiger's Bride", the beast's flesh-identity is complex and comic. The tiger here is manlier in his appearance; described by the narrator as "a carnival figure made of papier mache and crepe hair" (Carter 59), who wears a mask with a man's face painted over it. To quote, "repetition of this story emphasizes the mutability of the former characterizations of Beauty and the Beast, pointing to slips and disjunctions that reveal the parodic performances of female/male or good/evil" (Brooke 69). Mister Tiger here is a caricature of a man, with false hair, wig, gloves, also because the mask is too symmetrical in nature, too perfect, and it is dissociated with the imperfection of human nature. Whereas the lion transforms in the former story, with his bones showing through the pelt, the tiger's bride transforms in the latter story, gradually becoming a pale, hollow-eyed girl in her efforts to live with him, and finally into a tiger, peeling her own skin off, skin after skin, until she is left with a "nascent patina of shining hairs" (Carter 75). Carter inscribes beastliness in the bride to shatter the complacency of the traditional fairytale narratives where women's silence never allowed them to be beasts.

In both stories, there is the recurring concept of women as scapegoats or sacrificial lambs situated inside the den of the beast. In the first Beauty-Beast story it was ordained by the fear of the father, and in the second case by the carelessness of the father who gambled off his own daughter. "The Courtship of Mr Lyon" had a palace, with all the sophistication and artificiality in its ways, while "The Tiger's Bride" was more realistic in nature because of the dirt in which the beast lived. It was not a hygienic palace, but one full of bones and blood, a den of the carnivore, a realism too intense for the readers of Villeneuve or Beaumont, and viewers of Disney's "Beauty and the Beast" versions. Alongside 'animorphing' (merging human and animal flesh), gender fluidity is also visible where the male is no longer a homogenous patriarch, but one with effeminacy, a slight purr like the tiger, or hesitation of disclosing his nakedness in front of the feminine counterpart. Beauty strongly remarks about her tiger partner, "how scared he was I might refuse" (Carter 71). The female malady of traditionally performing as a sexually passive individual (in the dynamics of the alpha-masculine and the fragile feminine) is treated by Carter, and her technique coincides with the concept of "animaladies" (Adams 2), where animal, malady and the feminine intersect; and animals are used metaphorically to treat women's socially critical conditions. The Tiger-bride of Carter is more capable of renewing and annihilating the life of the beast.

In these two stories, there is a mention of carnival festive dinner and the suggestion of the feminine body as food. Mikhail Bakhtin in *Rabelais and His World* (1968) draws out the banquet imagery to suggest grotesqueries in the fluidity of human-animal. Food is symbolic and hyperbolic in Carter. In the palace of the lion, there is a grand feast where the silverware had engravings that said "drink me" and "eat me"—which serves as a reminder of the strangeness of the beast as well as hints at the possibility of the beast as a sexual predator. This is further continued in the next story where Beauty thinks that tigers always gobble up beautiful women. The same words: "Eat me, drink me" (Carter 102) repeats in "The Erl King", which is associated with caged females. However, in Carter's fairytales, the appetite of the women balances out the appetite of the beast/man. This variation dismantles the gender binary of the original folktale or fairytale. The feminine and masculine are fluid, and so is the identity of the real beast. The binaries of nature and culture, man and woman, are shaken in this context of the narrative. In the light of Bakhtin, Carter's world of appetite can be compared to the yeast, it "rise, grow, swell" (Bakhtin 278). It intermixes the 'human' with 'animalia' to drive home the hierarchy of race and gender.

Rethinking Wolf Imagery and Body Fluidity

Traditional fairytales have overemphasized the predator nature of wolves; used the animal as a symbol of male perpetrators of rape, and in the process constructed repulsion for the real animal, which now 'can' be hunted because they are evil. Animal studies scholars have pointed out how "portraying nonhuman agents in narratives both derive from and contribute to broader attitudes toward animal life" (McHugh et al. 52). Carter's "postmodern feminism confronts the violence inherent in these narratives that construct and regulate gender and sexuality, exposing misleading totalities inherent in fairy tales, myths, and other such dominant narrative" (Brooke 84). An important cluster that shatters gender binaries through 'animalia' in *The Bloody Chamber and Other Stories* is the multiple re-workings of wolf-animals in the "Little Red Riding Hood" narrative. This includes stories like "The Werewolf", "The Company of Wolves" and "Wolf- Alice", which shatter the Western normative story of treating masculine as the *Canis lupus*. In Carter, the identity of the flesh shifts from the wolf to man, woman, child and the grandmother, intermixing multiple bodies. The beastliness is concrete and loaded with dismemberment and consumption imagery, like the witch digging corpses for food, the devil's picnic in the graveyard, the wrapping of the chopped wolf paw in the oatcake wrap cloth, grilled babies on gridirons, cannibal tables, wrapped bones in a napkin, eating of lice, stuffing corpse with garlic, etc., which stirs the reader with shock and repulsion. The wolf's identity is gender fluid throughout the stories. In "The Werewolf", we have a wolf who would "gulp" and "sob" (Carter 127), expressing supposed feminine qualities. Again in "The Company of Wolves" we find the wolf is effeminate, who "stepped delicately" (Carter 135), "swinging his bundle of game and the girl' basket and humming a little tune to himself" (135). Bodily images of the wolf's genitals, or the wolf's heart as masculine and sadomasochistic, coexist with the effeminate possibilities in the wolf image. This shakes the boundary of the phallus and the yonic, and their consequent systemic behaviours inside a society, smoothly queering fairytales.

The characters in the three wolf stories are liminal, struggling between beastliness and being human in a liminal space of flesh. In the textual scenario, humanity and inhumanity are largely dependent on dressing and undressing. Physicality is manipulated by disguise. One striking retelling is the dressing up of the good child, the "Little Red Riding Hood" figure; who is here associated with the colour red; which symbolizes her passion, her self-discovery of menstruation and the danger of death. Her undressing from the red shawl and dressing in the bridal gown empowers her. She ceases to be scared of the beast and is sexually powerful to

entice him with her own colours, laughing at the perpetrator. Wolf-Alice has her wolf-like attributes, a deconstructed skin, "as if the fur she thought she wore had melted into her skin and become part of it" (Carter 141). Second, the wolf's disguise is that of a trickster. Mimicry is the wolf's immanent idiosyncrasy. He is like the carnival figure who mocks the higher order of society. His beastliness can be controlled by clothes, "as if clothes made the man" (Carter 132) out of the wolf. If we burn his human clothing, he is again reduced from a human or elevated to a higher animal.

There is "something intimate and complex that authors [like Angela Carter] reach for when they include animals in their stories that exists within, but also extends and challenges the boundaries of this spurious relationship between race and animals" (Cater 83). Using 'animalia' imagery works either to sustain the tradition of anthropocentrism or to dismantle the order of high and low animals, or human and animal race categories. Mostly, Carterian animals are inscribed into women's bodies, to provide them with the agency to self-narrate their bodily powers (like menstruation fluid which is otherwise taboo and totally negated in erstwhile western fairytales). The author's trans-species approach liberates the damsels trapped in the fairytale narratives of the past. Even the animals in the text do not conform to human standards, morals and omnipotence.

Conclusion

Angela Carter creates a series of animorphs in her text *The Bloody Chamber and Other Stories* to subvert the representation of women as low and weakling in popular fairytale cycles. In these cycles, women are often perceived as another docile and 'inferior animal' of a non-predatory kind and men assume the power of a predator animal. In her fairytales, women's sexual prowess and their control over life allow them to acquire the image of the bestiality of tiger, wolf, etc. Historically on accounts of silence and lack of representation in human intellectual discourse, women and animals have been equated as sister species. However, instead of totally discarding this gender-discriminatory comparative, by saying women are greater than animals in the hierarchy, what some animal studies scholars do is use the same analogy of sister species to break the marginality of both women and 'animalia'.

To note, the "goal of feminist defenses of animals is that humanity will shed its Euro-American malestream orientation, will shed its urge to demarcate some "ultimate" differences between us and the other animals, will reject a vertical hierarchy of humans above animals" (Adams xxxviii). Only the "destablized human subject opens up the space to acknowledge animal subjects" (Adams

xxxviii). Carter's deconstruction of boundaries (between male/female, marginal/central and animal/human) makes it possible to understand gender dynamics through the vulnerabilities of 'animalia' and womanhood alike. Carter rethinks the problematic ontology of comparing women with 'animalia' by ensuring 'logos' to both, and the power to re-write fairytales by defying the authoritative masculine 'logos' and its scapegoat culture. The politics of representation of 'animalia' within the framework of gender, however complex, opens possibilities of demythologizing the male-tale or challenging cultural dominations by animalizing narratives.

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THE SUBVERTED SPECTACLE: OBJECTIFIED GENDER REPRESENTATIONS FROM PRINT TO FILM VERSION OF *JANE EYRE*

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Abstract*: The perplexing nature of film and gender has always fascinated the audience and critics for decades. The dialectic dynamics of gender politics calls into question the presentation of the same on screen. For decades women have been represented on-screen from a male perspective. The feminist critic Laura Mulvey identifies this projection of women from the point of view of a male audience as the "male gaze." The discursive plurality of feminist thought calls into question each and every representation of women in films and other visual media. Other than the erotic aspect of the "male gaze," after a meticulous analysis, one can find out the underlying gender politics inherent, propagated and fostered through the same. Here, the film version of Charlotte Bronte's Jane Eyre (1847) directed by Cary Joji Fukunaga in 2011 is taken for analysis. The film projects the novel's empowered protagonist Jane Eyre from a patriarchal, male gaze perspective. The character of Jane is shown as emotionally weak, delicate and fragile. The paper intends to analyse the myriad of ways the film represents a subverted image of the novel's empowered protagonist and the underlying politics of patriarchy and gender at work.*

Keywords*: Male gaze, Gender, Representation, Patriarchy, Self, Victorian Literature, Novel and Film, Stereotype, Comparative Literature, Subversion*

The epistemological musings on the myriad of ways the patriarchal world view structured the 'female order' have always been a topic for debate. The social situation of women portrayed in the literature shows the general attitude of animosity the society maintained towards them for centuries. Inherently patriarchal in every aspect, the Victorian era had managed to assign certain 'in born' qualities and 'duties' for women. They were considered incapable of rational thinking and devoid of any qualities that men possessed and were only allowed to perform household chores and menial jobs. Female sexuality was exploited and womanhood

was praised to restrain them from getting ahead of men and the patriarchal order. The situation was the same for each and every woman despite the social class and milieu from which they come from. The idea is clear when the French feminist proponent Simon de Beauvoir in her *The Second Sex* (1949) says, "one is not born, but rather becomes a woman" (283). This perception of women as passive and subservient to men is well portrayed in the literature of the Victorian era. What one needs to understand is the fact that this 'perception' was not natural but a constructed one. This portrayal of women and the female gender as second/ subservient to men conveys the nuances of well crafted 'gaze' that existed and was executed during the age. With the arrival of writers like Jane Austen, Elizabeth Gaskell, Bronte Sisters and so on the focus shifted from an androcentric to a gynocentric one. These writers proclaimed the authority and self of female characters. With modern visual media, the notions of presentation and representation have taken a new turn. The workings of patriarchy inherent in the novels came to be 'presented' in front of an audience. The real question is, whether the new medium is able to represent things from a gynocentric perspective, addressing the previously unaddressed?

The cinematic codes can be used to objectify the female gender and sexuality, and to foster the previously conceived patriarchal worldview. This idea of viewing or objectifying the female characters and their sexuality through the eyes of the male audience is what Laura Mulvey calls the "male gaze" in her seminal essay "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" which was written in 1973 and published in 1975. Mulvey here focuses on the point of view of heterosexual male audiences and their perception of the female protagonists/ characters. John Berger, an English art critic, in his *Ways of Seeing* (1972) also speaks about the ways the women characters are presented and looked upon. The perplexing matrixes of gender and film call into question the ways the female characters should be presented on screen. The dialectical workings of gender politics can be well propagated through the medium of cinema since it is seen rather than read or heard.

> Mind is less actively stimulated by what it takes through ear than by what is presented to it through the trustworthy agency of the eyes- something that the spectator can see for himself. (78)

say Jain and Rai in *Films and Feminisms: Essays in Indian Cinema* (2002) to convey the way how the medium of cinema creates an everlasting effect on the audience. Here, the film version of Bronte's epoch-making novel *Jane Eyre* (1847) is viewed in the ways how it promulgates the politics inherent in the notion of 'male gaze' and gender roles, especially that of the Victorian male audience.

Directed by Cary Joji Fukunaga and performed by famous actors like Mia Wasikowska (Jane Eyre), Michael Fassbender (Edward Rochester), Judi Dench (Mrs. Fairfax), Jaimie Bell (St. John Rivers) and so on the film *Jane Eyre* (2011) speaks about the trials and tribulations of a young lady named Jane Eyre from childhood to adulthood. The film puts forth the myriad of ways the male gaze is presented through the visual medium of cinema. The female characters in the film, unlike in the novel, are mere projections of the well crafted male gaze and gender roles and can be identified as stereotyped images supporting the male roles. The concept of the male gaze here is used differently from its conventional way of analysing the erotic representation of characters, rather the gender roles and socially accepted feminine qualities are identified as stances of the male gaze. The film version fails to portray the 'real women' the novel portrays and thus ends in a stereotypical presentation where the aspects of identification by the audience are no longer possible, unlike the male characters which are admired and unjustifiably glorified. This paper tries to unravel the ways the film version of the novel presents the female protagonist and characters as stereotyped images being viewed through the lens of the male gaze and gender roles by the male spectator.

The film *Jane Eyre* (2011) particularly focuses on Jane's portrayal as a Victorian woman at various stances. Unlike the novel, the film presents Jane as a clumsy, fragile and romantic figure, a miserable young lady of low origin who is bewitched by the charm and manliness of Edward Fairfax Rochester, the owner of Thornfield Manor. The scenes in the Thornfield Manor put before us the aspects of the male gaze and the gender roles it expects out of a woman. For instance, the servants in the manor are all women including Mrs. Fairfax. They are deprived of any authority and in the film one can see how the mere presence of Mr. Rochester makes them feel nervous and unsettled. The projection of women in the Manor as subservient to Mr. Rochester, the epitome of the patriarchal order, makes the spectator adhere to the patriarchal worldview. This depicts the gaze which ordered the gender roles during the nineteenth century. A Woman is seen as someone who acts according to the whims and fancies of man. This makes her a spectacle to be savoured. As John Berger puts in his *Ways of Seeing* (1972):

> Men act and women appear and she watches herself being looked at. The surveyor of women in herself is the male: the surveyed female. Thus she turns herself into an object – and most particularly an object of vision – a sight. (47)

The general condition of women in the Thornfield Manor, which stands as a symbolic representation of the society, is conveyed in the acts of the female

characters in the film. The aspect of the gaze and its promulgation of gender roles can be identified in the character of Jane Eyre, especially during her days at the Manor and in her relationship with Mr. Rochester. Jane acts as the governess of the Manor, a job expected out of a woman of low-born. Her job as a teacher and caretaker of Adele Varens, Mr. Rochester's ward, at Thornfield adds to the aspect of the expected feminine qualities of a woman. In a scene soon after Jane arrives at Thornfield she is shown sleeping with a doll in her hands. When Mr. Rochester proclaims his affections for Jane, she reciprocates and accepts his hand for marriage by being a loyal servant. The fact that he is a married man shatters her dreams and she runs away. Even though she runs away she returns to him eventually to be reunited. The scenes depicting these events in the film do them in such a way that the audience could pity the character of Jane for her misfortunes, unlike in the novel. The film places the character of Jane as an oppressed and delicate one and this is well defined in the very scenes where she cries whenever she is with Mr. Rochester or thinks about him. This again defines women as weak and dependent on men for existence. When Mr. Rochester asks Jane about forgetting him she says:

> How? I have lived a full life here. I have not been trampled on. I have not been petrified. I have not been excluded from every glimpse of what is bright. I have known you, Mr. Rochester, and it strikes me with anguish to be torn from you. (*Jane Eyre* 01:17:48 – 01:18:04)

This defines the stereotyped gender role she supposed to perform as a Victorian woman, accepting and reciprocating the love of a 'gentleman'. Jane here is only defined in relation to Mr. Rochester and the Manor. From a different perspective, the character of Mr. Rochester acts as the supreme gazer which represents the male gaze in general and the gaze of the society in particular. As Judith Butler, in her seminar work *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (1990), argues regarding the cultural and biological bifurcation of gender. She identifies the aspect of the cultural fabrication of gender and argues that:

> The universal conception of the person … is displaced as a point of departure for a social theory of gender by those historical and anthropological positions that understand gender as a relation among socially constituted subjects in specific contexts. This … suggests that what the person "is" and indeed, what gender "is", is always relative to the constructed relations in which it is determined. As a shifting and contextual phenomenon, gender does not denote a substantive being, but a relative

> point of convergence among culturally and historically specific sets of relations. (14)

Apart from the character of Jane Eyre, the characters like Blanche Ingram and Bertha Mason also conform to the idea of the gaze in one way or another. Miss Ingram stands as a romantic rival to Jane in all aspects and is presented as the epitome of Victorian femininity. The film depicts the male-centred politics of gender when Ingram tells Mr. Rochester about the qualities a "man" should possess and says, "a man should pay no heed to his looks. He should possess only strength and valour. Gentleman or highwayman, his beauty lies in his power" (*Jane Eyre* 00:58:37 – 00:58:47). This again shows the way the male spectator wants to depict the woman in his fantasies and the duty of a woman is nothing but to praise her beloved or master. In the character of Bertha Mason, one can see the inherent gender politics at work when she is presented as fierce and dangerous on the screen. Berth, being mentally ill and imprisoned, shows the existed binary of normal and abnormal. For men women represent the "other," the abnormal, unnatural side of things. The hysteric woman is an image well crafted through the nuances of the male gaze and gender politics.

The household of the Rivers' is not much different when it comes to the propagation of gender roles through the male gaze. The characters of St. John Rivers and his sisters named Diana and Mary are well portrayed to suit the gaze. In the novel the Rivers sisters are characterized as strong, independent women of their will. However, the film represents them as mere shadows lurking behind the projected image of their 'male' brother, St. John.

The mise en scene, cinematography and costume arrangements of the film enable it in the flawless propagation of these ideals. The women characters are presented along with the male characters, but only as subordinate to them. The various female characters in the film amount to the various ways the gaze executes its politics in the narrative. Berger insists that women or female characters are portrayed in different ways to men, "because the ideal spectator is always assumed to be male and the image of the woman is designed to flatter him" (*Ways of Seeing* 64). When it comes to costumes the film makes a decisive turn. The Victorian way of dressing using corsets, long petticoats and bonnets are skilfully employed in the film to get the desired effects. This shows the ways how the patriarchal order even supervised the women's way of clothing. In the film, there are certain situations where the character of Jane gets nervous over what to wear. She even complains over not having a fine dress to Mrs. Fairfax when the latter announces the arrival of Mr. Rochester. These all amount to the male gaze at play in the film.

The dialectics of gender and its representation in the films call into question the various ways the inherent patriarchal ideology exerts its influence and subvert the real. The old spectator is now replaced by the camera and it acts as the gazer. As Charlotte Bronte puts it in her novel *Jane Eyre* (1847) the "beauty lies in the eyes of the gazer" (73). The cinematic codes employed in the film subvert the empowered image of the female protagonist Jane Eyre in the actual novel by Charlotte Bronte and unjustifiably promotes the stereotyped images of male/female dichotomy favouring the patriarchal order over the female authority. Unlike the novel, the film puts before us the character of Jane who is not so much authoritative but fragile and subjected to the workings of the male worldview. The characters, when they come on screen, are presented per with the nuances of the male gaze centred on the discursive workings of gender politics and from that perspective, the empowered becomes the enslaved.

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INTOXICATIONS, *BAIJI* DANCE, AND *BABU*-CULTURE OF COLONIAL CALCUTTA: A LITERARY SURVEY

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Abstract: *With the recognition of Calcutta (Kolkata) as one of the major commercial cities in the British regime, new scopes emerged for the opportunists sought to rise to prosperity by serving as mediators for British traders, dewani (accountant come tax collector) and other white collar jobs for Britons. Zamindars (landlords) and beniyas (businessmen) sought to trade with Britons jointly and intended to build strong connection with the colonial officials. Such Bengali bhadraloks (gentlemen), who dealt with the Britons for business and/or official purposes, were addressed as "babu" by Britons and commoners. The Calcutta-based babus often indulged in extravagances, intoxications (like ale, charas, ganja), lasciviousness, other sensory mirths. Visiting baiji bari (residences where baiji and/or courtesans resided), spending times with beshya (prostitutes), and enjoying nautch or baiji dance became the status determining trend for neophyte babus. This paper, through a literary survey, seeks to explore how the fashionable intoxication and baiji dance became integral to the ideology of babu culture in old colonial Calcutta.*

Keywords*: babu, Calcutta, intoxication, baiji, prodigality.*

Introduction

Babu, an honorific title to the name in the eighteenth and nineteenth century colonial Bengal, attributed instant recognizability of his aristocratic status. But, the emergence of the *babu* class in the colonial Calcutta was largely determined by the scopes of '*baniyas*' (a derivative of *banik* meaning merchant in Bengali) to go to joint ventures with Calcutta-based (now Kolkata) British traders, educated wealthy Bengalis to serve as intermediators or brokers, or *dewan* (accountant come tax collector) for the British merchants and officials (Ghose *Town Kalikatar Karcha* 90). The British East India Company reckoned Calcutta as their major commercial city in Eastern India. In the beginning of colonial set up, the English investors without the minimal knowledge of Bengali culture or language had to rely on these wealthy *bhadralok*s (gentlemen) to extend and manage their profitable trading, and, in this regard, calling these colonized subjects as '*babu*' appeared as a means of conveying minimum reverence for them. The families of such *babu*s formed the wealthy Hindu middle class of nineteenth century colonial Bengal (Moudud 282). *Zamindar* (landlords), who were also recognized as *babus*, kept on getting richer

by exploiting the peasants with the support of the British government under the Permanent Settlement (by Governor General Lord Cornwallis in 1793) rule. Often the non-urban *zamindar*s made another abode in Calcutta to indulge in the luxurious life in the city. The business families (*beniya*) of Calcutta also started to invest in lands. These city-dwelling *zamindars*, *beniyas*, and nouveau riche *dewans*, and other middlemen built large mansions at several sections of Calcutta. These neophyte *babu*s of Calcutta indulged in extravagances, intoxications, lasciviousness, and other sensory mirths to ensure their *babu*-like attitude. Visiting *baiji bari* (residences where *baiji* and/or courtesans resided), spending times with beshya (prostitutes), and enjoying *nautch* or *baiji* dance became the trend for those parvenu babus. This paper seeks to explore how the fashionable intoxication and *baiji* dance became integral to the ideology of *babu* culture in old colonial Calcutta.

Dawn of Calcutta as a Colonial City and Formation of Babu Heritages

On 10th November, 1698, the family of Sabarna Roy Chowdhury, handed over three villages of Calcutta, namely, Kalikata, Sutanuti, and Govindapur, on lease to Charles Eyere, an East India Company representative and son-in-law of Job Charnock, an Administrator of East India Company, who was previously thought to be the founder of Calcutta (till a disclosure in 2003) (Banerjee et al. 1). Following the defeat of the Nawab of Bengal, Siraj Ud-Daula, in the Battle of Plassey (1757), and of Mir Qasim in Battle of Buxar (1764), the authority of the East India Company became invincible in Bengal. In 1773, Calcutta was declared by the Company as their presidency city, and the city went under the Company's complete control in 1793 following the abolition of Nawab's control (Arnold-Baker 504). With the arrival of the East India company, the importance of the city Calcutta increased rapidly, and the city came under the purview of the opportunist Bengali aristocrats who sought either to do business with the East India Company or serve as the *dewans* (business manager) of British investors. By mid-eighteenth century, Calcutta became a city of *beniya*, *mudsuddi*, *dalal, dewans*, and other middle-men of business who dealt with Britons, and later the family of these people formed the lineage of the Bengal's wealthy middle class (Moudud 282). Kaliprasanna Sinha's *Hootum Penchar Naksha* (*Sketches by a Barn Owl*) (1861) upholds the braided temporalities of the colonial city, Kolkata. A 1839 report listed the 84 names of the wealthy native families of Calcutta and among them, some of the significant names of nouveau riche persons/families, who rose to prosperity by either serving as *dewan*s of or building business connection with the Europeans, were Babu Srinarayan Singha, whose grandfather was a *dewan* of the East India Company, Ramcharan Roy, dewan of Governor Vancitart and General Smith, Mallik family,

Thakur family, Basak family, Singha family of Jora Sanko, Ganganarayan Sarkar, accountant of Pamar Company, Ghosh family of Pathuriaghata, dewan Kashinath's family, Basu family of Shyambazar, Mukherjee family of Bagbazar (Foreign Department Miscellaneous Records, S. No 131, qtd. in Ghose *Town Kalikatar Karcha* 78-89). Bhabanicharan Bandyopadhyay, in *Kalikata Kamalalaya* (1823), related the rise of Calcutta in the following manner,

> Calcutta is flooding with liquid money and this stream ceaselessly flows everywhere; even to the foreign lands. Knowledge and knowledgeable pundits also form a segment of the wealth of the city. The *manthan* (*Samudra Manthana*, or the churning of the sea, narrated in *Vishnu Purana*, was done to unravel *Amrita*, or the potion for eternal life) occurred during British-Nabab collision uprooted both the bitterness of *Halahal* (the poison) and gaiety of *Amrita* (potion of eternity) in Calcutta, and subsequently, Calcutta earned its fame. The city started to draw the asperser sharks, illiterate crocodiles that loiter everywhere in the city; and Goddess Lakshsmi resides everywhere. (6-7).

In the passage, quite obviously, the metaphor "sharks" refers to the wealthy *beniya*s who did business with or in favour of the British officials and *dewan* (tax collectors), and "crocodiles" to all the opportunists who came to Calcutta seeking to prosper by any means.

The title of *babu* then harboured the oscillating social, economic, educational, and religious (as being a hindu was a criterion for receiving the *babu* tag) connotations. Bhabanicharan Bandyopadhay, in his *Nababababubilas* (*The Amusements of Modern babu* (1825) (published under the pseudonym Pramathanath Sharman), marked the *babu*s of the mid-nineteenth century to be the inheritors of the opportunists who came to Calcutta and rose to prosperity by outwitting wealthy employers, gambling, serving the British officials as the salaried employees, or brokers, or other means. Eventually, their ancestors managed to establish their mansions, obtained lands on lease from the East India company, or any zaminders, and established their *babu* heritage (Bandyopadhyay *Nababababubilas* 172). Bankimchandra Chattopadhyay's "*Babu*", published in the book *Lokarahasya* (1874), is a satire where Vaisampayana, the narrator from *Mahabharata*, prophesied the emergence of *babu* community in the *Kaliyuga*, and their possible characteristics: "...odd-witted, gourmand, lethargic...inclined in speaking foreign language, show aversion in mother tongue...They would believe that they could contribute to India's resurgence through their materialistic gains, bilingualism, and tobacco consumption" (Chattopadhyay 21-23). Another significant term relatable

to *babu*, as mentioned earlier, is *bhadrolok* (literally meaning, "gentleman"). *Bhadrolok*s were the urban elites (including so called *babus*) educated in Western education system and refined in manners and cultural taste. Sumanta Banerjee defined the English educated Bengali *bhadralok* of the nineteenth century as "sons of absentee landlords, East India Company agents and traders who made fortunes in the eighteenth century, various professionals and government servants" (Banerjee "Marginalization of Women's Popular Culture" 128). According to Broomfield, *bhadrolok* referred to the individuals belonging to the higher social class of Bengal and they distinguished themselves in society in terms of cultural values, social propriety, manners and lifestyle– "their deportment, their speech, their dress, their style of housing, their eating habits, their occupations, and their associations" (Broomfield 5-6). The concept of "bhadrolok", also, functioned to differentiate urban *bhadrolok*s from those who were not, specifically, the uneducated non-urban folks with unrefined manners.

Live like *Babu*: Prodigality, Fashionable Intoxications, and *Sahebiana*

The capacious *babu*s' families in Calcutta were very much keen to establish their names as one of the affluent families by drawing attention of the public with their flamboyant lifestyle, lavish expenses on buying fancy things, and occasional charity. Setting an opulent *Jharbati* (chandelier) at the corridor or *jalsaghar* (luxuriant music room) is such an example of such exorbitant trend usually seen in the opulent mansions of *babu*s. Bhabanicharan Bandyopadhyay's *Nabaababubilas* upholds the usual embezzlements of every-naba-babu characters:

> …then they enjoyed varied meats and ales would be served in a single table; then they would take well-mingled tobacco, strong *velsa* ganja, and someone might choose *charas*. Then one of them would dance, some would dance, cry, smile, tremor or fall…some would enjoy *kaloat* songs, some would kiss the face of prostitute…After spending the nights in such sensory enjoyments, they would return to their mansions. Whimsical *babus* arrive at courtesan's house at any time seeking pleasure, go to Mahesh to watch bathing ritual, visit *khothi*, attend auctions, China market, David saheb's house, then come back to house, then buy shawl and cloths at *baithak khana*. They might buy a pair of shawls for five hundred rupees and sell it for two hundred and fifty; or buy a car for a thousand rupees in an auction and sell it for four hundred rupees for no reason. (Bandyopadhyay *Nabababubilas* 184-5)

As a consequence of such unrestrained extravaganza, as per Bandyopadhyay's accounts, the pleasure-seeking *babu* used to get themselves in huge debt, and had

to sell their wife's gold ornaments first, and then segments of their property; yet the *babugiri* (babu-like prodigality) must go on (185). Bandyopadhyay's *Nababababubilas* points out the formula of *babuana* (being the babu)—the four 'p's and four 'kh's:

> He who acquires four 'p's will be a half-babu. The definitions of 'p's are– 'pasha' (dice), 'paira' (pigeon), 'para-dar' (adultery), and 'poshak' (attire). One can be a full-babu if he achieves four 'p's and four 'kh's. 'Kh's are– 'khusi' (pleasure), 'khanki' (prostitutes), 'khana' (feast), and 'khairat' (charity). (Bandyopadhyay 180).

In Kaliprasanna Sinha's *Hootum Penchar Naksha* or *The Observant Owl* (1862), the kaleidoscopic vignettes of the nineteenth century Kolkata's *babu*'s customs are presented through the eyes of the narrator, who take the pseudonym, "*hootum pencha"*, or an "observant owl". Evidently, this "observant owl" was none other than Kalipranna Sinha, who was born into one of the elite families of North Calcutta, Sinha family, and observed the *babu* culture at a close range. In the chapter, "Chance Avatar" upheld the lavishness and prodigality of a parvenu *Babu* named Padmalochan Dutta (Sinha 84-98). In 1820, the grandeur in *babu* Ramratan Mallik's son's wedding dazzled the city dwellers and the rumour spread that *babu* spent more than eight lakhs for the wedding (Bandyopadhyay *Sambadpatre Sekaler Katha* 239).

During the late eighteenth century Bengal, along with Orissa and Bihar, became a major site for production of opium under the East India Company and opium addiction rose among the Bengalis. A large section of opium was transported to China from Calcutta, and Calcutta became a hub for opium smuggling. Intake of opium and opium-made/mixed tobacco through *hookah* became the fashionable addictions among *babu*. *Babu* smoking hookah in *majlis* (a private place where guests and friends spend leisure time and indulge in mirth) is a stock image that recurrently appeared in several Bengali writings capturing this era. In *"Babur Upakhayan*" ("Anecdotes of babu"), which appeared anonymously in *Samachar Darpan*, in two segments on 24th February and 9th June, 1821 *babu* Raj Chakraborty, the *Dewan* of Sultan Ahammad Khalifa who rose to prosperity by secondary means in opium trading, and his over-pampered son Tilakchandra, *choto babu*. Raj *babu* became father when he was considerably old and, hence, his over-showering indulgent affection for Tilakchandra, the flatterers around him, and the latter's increasing prodigality become laughable. Tilakchandra, the spoilt child of the wealthy Bengali *babu*, developed babu-like hedonistic habits--consuming alcohols, spending nights at brothels, *baiji* dance, and so on. Things became

hilarious when this *babu* ventured to fulfill his wish to be like a British *sahib* (Bandopadhyay *Sambadpatre Sekaler Katha* 99-101). A character named Hemchandra, in Pyarichand Mitra's "Mod khawa boro day, jaat thakar ki upay" ("Trouble of drinking, ways of securing religion"), has made a sarcastic comment on how the wealthy babu and some Hindu pundits justify the alcohol addiction, "[N]ow I have realized the greatness of Hinduism, consuming alcohol in secret is not a sin, but drinking in public is a sin and sacrilegious...if one indulge in intoxication and consuming the prohibited food in closed door—this would not be a sin--this would not be blasphemous, but if anyone does this same in keeping the door open, will lose his religion" (Mitra 173). Prodigal *babu*s living lavish lifestyle tended to inculcate *Sahib's* manners (*sahebiana*). Their mingling of Bengali ethnic dress like *dhoti, punjbi*, along with the English hat and blazer made them awkward in appearance. As the narrator of Singha's *Hutom Penchar Naksha* (*Sketches by a Barn Owl*) observes, a babu has made an "Albert-cut" hairstyle resembling Prince Albert of England. Baidyanath Mukhopadhyay's *Babu Gourober Calcutta* (*The Elegant Calcutta of Babu*) relates a babu's appearance—a pineapple-cut shirt, precious chain in his collar, a silk handkerchief in hand and English hat with a tassel (Mukhopadhyay 79). Bandyopadhyay's *Nababababubilas* gives the accounts of the mis/demeanours and extravagances of an unnamed babu in an amusingly unmatched dignified Sanskritized prosaic style. To establish his modern *babu-giri*, apart from maintaining the old *babu*-customs of keeping *rakkhita* (mistresses), tobacco smoking and ebriety, the *babu* started to speak Bengali in English accent like his British teacher, and learned to curse in English.Later it was revealed that this Pramathanath Sharmin was actually the pseudonym of Bhabani Charan Bandyopadhyay, the founder editor of the Bengali weekly journal *Samachar Chandrika*.

Babus and Baiji **Dance**

The word *Baiji*, usually, refers to the female professional singers and dancers who, in old times, were hired by *zamindars* and wealthy people to entertain the audiences in *majlis* or *mehfils*. *Bai* in Hindi, means a female artist and *Ji* is an honorific suffix. Baijis were often affectionately addressed as "bibijaan" by the *babus* (Sur 193). In Bengal, most of the *baiji*s were courtesans, and, with time, the social status of *baiji* in Bengal degraded. In ancient India and, also in the times of Moghuls, courtesans had respectable positions in the society. However, with time, prostitution became a wage labour and prostitutes were pushed to the narrow social space. Sometimes, the prostitutes had other occupations (like flower selling, milk women, and so on) (Banerjee "The 'Beshya' and the 'Babu'" 2462), and participate

in several societal (including religious) activities. In Bengali grand festival, Durga Pujo, it became a custom to build the Durga idol (*pratima*) with the clay taken from the prostitute's residence. During the disastrous famine of 1770 of Bengal, several female children were abducted and sold to the girls' traffickers for minimal price or even for a handful of rice. Those trafficked female children were usually sold to the pimps of the town based pimps (Banerjee "The 'Beshya' and the 'Babu'" 2462). During seventeenth and eighteenth century, some rich individuals of Muslim households of Dhaka, Murshidabad, and Calcutta, kept 'Bandi' or slave women as concubines. These slave women were mostly black women trafficked from Middle-West Asia by the Portuguese pirates (See *Calcutta Gazette*, Aug 15, 1831; qtd. in Das Gupta 655). These trafficked black girls were often called as Kafri or Habshi in local Bengali (Banerjee "The 'Beshya' and the 'Babu'" 2462). Concubinage remained in Bengal during the 18th century. Baijis/nautch girls were often hired by the upstart babus as concubines. In old Bengali society, the women who arranged liaisons between daughters or wives of rich households and their lovers were called *kutni* (2462). Although Kutni used to function as a mediator in exchange for money or gifts, they were not professional. They were usually the maids, hairdresser, flower seller, or other who, somehow, had access to those rich households. The fictional story of a *Napitini* (hair-dresser) misleading a wife of *babu* in Bandyopadhyay's *Naba Bibi Bilas* provides a glimpse of how the sensual deprivation made such wives fall in the trap of the mediators such as this *napitini* who had access to the aristocratic households. In *Naba Bibi Bilas*, napitini wooed the young wife of a rich household by pushing her to get into an illicit affair with some attractive man of her acquaintance (17-8). Whereas *napitini* eventually planned to yield the woman to a lecherous wealthy *babu*, and gain rewards (19). *Napitini* eventually used to arrange their meetings at her own house, and *babu* showered her wealth on *napitini* to appease her and for maintaining the secret (21). And when this liaison got exposed and the matter was taken to court, the lecherous babu got free of charge, *napitini* was imprisoned, and the wife, fearing the social shame, refused to go back to her husband's house and, ironically, took residence at a city brothel under an old lady pimp, and became a (*naba*) *bibi* (22-3). Such Hindu *naba-bibis* took *talim* (lessons) under Muslim Hindustani Ustad (42), and hence their gait became like Hindustani Muslim-like (45).

Baiji dance on several occasions became a trend in wealthy families of Calcutta in the late eighteenth century. Often *babu*s and zamindars invited the British officials and tradesmen to attend the baiji dance to establish a better connection with them and express their obedience. Grand arrangements of *mehfil*/*majlis* were made for *baiji* dance, and Palki was usually arranged to escort *baiji*s. On October 16, 1819,

Samachar Darpan reported that a wealthy *babu* hired Nikki Baiji, a famous baiji of Calcutta, for an allowance of thousand rupees per month (qtd in Bandyopadhyay 121). Fanny Parkes, in her diary, while talking about a grand party in Rammohun Roy's residence, mentioned the name of Nickee Baiji (Parkes 30). Nawab Wazed Ali Shah, the eleventh Nawab of Awadh, who spent 29 years of exile (1856-1887) in Calcutta, was very fond of baiji dance, and baiji performance a regular affair in his residence at Metiyaburuj, Calcutta. As per the report of *The Bengal Harkara*, 15th March, 1823, baiji dance performance was one of the main attractions in the pompous arrangements made for *babu* Rajendra Mallick's ear-piercing ceremony (Mullick 143-44). Fanny Parkes, a British woman, who visited Rammohan Roy's party in May, 1823, narrated the events in her diary in the following way:

> The other evening, we went to a party given by Ramohun Roy, a rich Bengallee babu…In various rooms of the house *nautch* girls were dancing and singing. They wear a petticoat measuring one hundred yards in width, of fine white or coloured muslin, trimmed with deep borders of gold and silver; full satin trousers cover the feet; the *doputta*, or large veil, highly embroidered, is worn over the head, and various ornaments of native jewellery adorn the person.
>
> They dance, or rather move in a circle, attitudinizing and making the small brass bells fastened to their ankles sound in unison with their movements. Several men attended the women, playing on divers curiously-shaped native instruments. The style of singing was curious; at times the tones proceeded finely from their noses. (Parkes 29-30)

On 20th December, 1823, *Samachar Darpan* narrated Prince Dwarakanath Tagore's pompous musical arrangements (including dancing and singing) for the British invitees on the last 11th December at his *baganbari* (gardenhouse), Belgachia (Bandyopadhyay *Sambadpatre Sekaler Katha* 123).

Community pujas were the ways to flaunt the wealth possessed by the nouveau riche *babu* families. Ostentatious *Majlis* were arranged during the mega Bengali festival Durga puja with the intention of exhibiting the grandeur of babuism and, often, to entertain the influential English guests. Several accounts of the 1830s uphold that the British delegates were invited by the *Babu* families to attend the *baiji* dance arranged on occasion of Durga Pujo.On 22nd October, 1831, an anonymous letter titled 'The Late Durga Poojah Nautches' was published in *India Gazette* explaining how the two big houses of Sovabazar related to Maharaj Nabakissen Bahadur bought *nauch* girls to perform on the occasion of Durga Puja to entertain the guests and a British Vice President (Ghose "The Late Durga Poojah

Nautches" 67). Charak festival, which is not very popular in present times in Kolkata and its surroundings, was celebrated pompously till the late nineteenth century. Sinha's *Hootum Penchar Naksha* upholds a cluster of evening scenes of Kolkata's Kalighat during Charak festivals: "… The church clock struck seven. The city grew intolerably noisy. The streets were crawling with people; drums boomed everywhere; fumes of incense and the smell of liquor filled the air! The sanyasis were returning from Kalighat cheerfully having pierced their sides and tongues with shafts, nails and iron rods. The verandas of brothels were swarming with fun-loving babus, amateur panchali singers, singers of half–akhdai troupes, and members of the garden house fraternity" (12). *Baiji* dance had been arranged on the occasion of Ras Leela in the house of *babu* Ruplal Mullick to entertain *sahib* (British) invitees (*Samachar Darpan*, 22 November, 1823; Bandyopadhyay *Sambadpatre Sekaler Katha* 121). "Soukhin babu" ("Delegate babu"), an anonymous story published in *Samachar Darpan* on 23 June, 1821, satirized the newly popular wishes of *babu*s–to go for a fancy boating with wife during *snan yatra* (holy bathing ceremony). In this anecdote, even though the *babu* was there with the intention to attend a holy event with his wife, he could not let go of the chance to attend a *baiji* dance in a *bajra* (a big boat) (Bandyopadhyay *Sambadpatre Sekaler Katha* 102-3).

Conclusion

Extravaganza, fashionable intoxication, *baiji* dance, became the labeler of Bengali Middle Class aristocracy and contributed to create the ideology of Calcutta-based *babu*-culture functioning to show their class difference from the commoners. This *babu* class largely was subservient to the British authority and played the role of intimate enemy for the people. But, by the late nineteenth century, the word '*babu*' and '*bhadralok*' were synonymous and largely referred to the Bengali white collar labourers and the educated Bengali salaried persons like clerks or *kerani* who worked in the British Government's offices. In the chapter "*Bishoyi Bhadroloker Dhara*" ("Lifestyle of Egoistical Bhadralok") in Bandyopadhyay's *Kalikata Kamalalaya*, the narrator (a Calcutta-dweller) describes the types of "Bhadralok" to an outsider. *Mudsuddi*s and *dewan*s meet new people every day and grease the palm of the influential/wealthy individuals (15) for profit and/or to build acquaintance with them. These white collar *bhadralok* workers were quite conscious of their social presentability; they maintained neatness in manners and attires, regularly visited *baithakkhana* (place for gathering of close friends) in the evening in *palki* (palanquin), and so on (16). The activities of the middle class *bhadralok* included gathering at *baithakkhana* in the evening, little charity, and

consistently doing daily basis work or business (17). Poor *bhadralok*s were the low salaried individuals who were employed for the clerical works like maintaining a ledger, observing the market's transaction; and they had to stay the pitifully subservient subject to *dewanji* (who supervise their tasks) to secure their job (16-17). Significantly Bhabanicharan Bandyopadhyay did not include *babu* class in the bhadralok category for the lifestyle of the prior class was far different from the rest and incomparable in terms of luxuriousness, lavishness, and extravaganza. Vaisampayana in Bankimchandra Chattopadhyay's "*Babu*" mentioned that "*babu*" might carry multiple meanings as well. For the British invaders, "*babu*" will be *kerani* or clerks, aristocrats for poor mass, master for servants (21).

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THE PSYCHIC GEOGRAPHY: THE INFLUENCE OF RILKE IN THE TRAVEL-WRITINGS OF WH AUDEN

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Abstract: *The article aims to showcase the nuances of the use of symbolism and imageries of natural landscape in the writings of WH Auden and Rainer Maria Rilke's poetic style. The study also aims to analyse the influence of Rilke's writing in the travel-narratives of WH Auden.* In this paper I have tried to analyse the thematic structure of the *Auden's lyrics and sonnets which has a striking resemblance with the Rilkean style of writing. The aesthetics of natural landscape of the writers are compared through the analysis of symbols, imageries in the socio-political context of their time.*

Keywords: *Landscape, Traveling, Aesthetics*, Paysage Moralisé, sonnet, lyricism,

As the twentieth century was rolling towards its mid-decades, not only volumes of travel increased, types of travel became greatly diversified. In a sense the theme of 'traveling' is replaced by the senses of displacement, space, home and other politically charged discourses. As a result, travel becomes more of a metaphor, a symbol of displacement, an epistemological longing which was completely new from the traditional art of travel narratives. Notions of space, place, home, journey became more relevant to the tumultuous time of inter-war years. Travel was a common motif in the literary history of the thirties and WH Auden was one of the creative geniuses who started to change his travel writings into a socio-political and cultural critique of the time. Although travel writings were never considered seriously into the mainstream literary cannon. Even critics like Valentine Cunningham pointed out travel writings as an opportunistic ragbag but there are also critics like Marsha Bryant who hailed Auden's travel writings as an exceptional work of documentary which follows collage-like style. Auden's travel-writings often use rich imageries of landscape. Natural landscapes play an extremely important device in which is used as a background in his inter-war years. But Auden used poetic forms like lyric, sonnet and elegies to express his theme of travelling. The poetic style, the richness of symbols and imageries are very much akin to the style of German poet Rainer Maria Rilke. Auden's unique expression of

war-torn modern era finds a refuge in his travel writings like "Letters from Iceland", "Sonnets from China" and many other poems where Auden collaborated with his friends like Lois MacNeice and Christopher Isherwood. Interestingly, Auden did not follow the documentary-style narration of MacNeice or Isherwood but he used verse as the medium to portray his journey. Auden's landscape-imageries has a striking similarity with the symbolism of Rilke.

Auden's interest in Rilke is a well-discussed area in literary criticism. In terms of individual consciousness and space Auden is very much akin to the style of Rilke's use of imagery. In Auden's writings we find six clusters of symbols that repeatedly arrives in his early 1930s writings. These are war, the quest, Paysage Moralisé, psychosomatic disease, Eros-Agape_Logos and the city. These patterns of symbols are developed from the natural symbols which is somehow related to the natural landscape. Many critics have pointed out that Auden's childhood memories related to the saga-world, myth and deities of Nordic myths are somehow mingled with the personal, private experience of experiencing natural landscape which is used as a metaphor in his writings. In this phase there is an inclination towards his Marxist ideological understanding. The element of individual conflict is both class war and international war was predominant where as an individual he consciously tries to uplift himself from an existential dilemma. Auden finds an enemy-within which was self-created which derived from a spiritual failure and an ethical crisis. The Marx-Freud praxis was producing a nightmarish visual in the mind of a creative person. These nightmares were real and self-destructive. Auden's use of symbolism shapes into a different dimension where he produces his series of inter-war travel writings. Here he uses one of the most distinctive types of symbolism which is Paysage Moralisé or Psychic Geography. This idea was derived from Rilke's style of symbolism. Auden's liaison with German literature was an eye-opening moment as he was fascinated by the writings of Rilke. Rilke's extensive use of landscape-imagery moved Auden as he was searching for a poetic device which suits his poetic ideology. Auden saw Rilke as the benchmark who converted the abstract ideas into concrete terms. According to him Rilke's method was the opposite of the Elizabethans' anthropomorphic identification. Rilke thought in physical terms rather than the intellectual one. To be more specific Rilke thought about the humans from the perspectives of non-human, of what he calls as The Dinge (Things). As a result, Rilke uses the device of using natural landscape to reciprocate the expressions of human life. But Auden is not at all interested in the natural landscape for the personal pleasure but in this case, Auden follows Rilke's method of using landscape as a common space between inner and outer world. If we analyse the imageries of landscape used by Auden, we will find out the frequent

use of symbols like city, mountains, water, valley, island. If we compare these symbols to the poems written by Rilke, we will find out a strange similarity between them. The city symbolizes civilization, mountains stand for action or decision, water for belief and potentiality, valley for passiveness or innocence, island for isolation or escape route. In his earlier poems we saw the use of rusting machinery and abandoned mines as the representation of decaying capitalism. Auden's sense of landscape is loaded with meanings which always represents his time. He never debunks the ideologies he believed in. But unlike his contemporaries who started to break the conventional forms of poetic style, Auden recycled the traditional forms of poetry like lyric, odes, elegies to create his own tapestry of poetic sensibility. The close parallel between Rilke and Auden is undeniable in terms of the representation in the thematic level. Both of them deals with predominant themes of solitude, exile, childhood in their poetry.

The sonnet sequence "Sonnets from China" is a good example of Auden's experiments with the traditional form of writing poetry. The sequence is a poetic summing-up of Auden's joint-venture with Isherwood. Isherwood used the style of diary-writing in his part but Auden took a different path as he used the form of sonnet in the sequence. Auden used the power of lyric to reproduce the traditional element of individual experience which was common among the Elizabethan poetic tradition. But in European literature the form was different as it walked through Baudelaire, Rimbaud, Mallarme and links with Rilkean masterpiece "Sonette an Orpheus".

Let us have a look into the ninth sonnet of Auden's "Sonnets from China":

> When all our apparatus of report
> Confirms the triumph of our enemies,
> Our frontier crossed, our forces in retreat,
> Violence pandemic like a new disease,
>
> And Wrong a charmer everywhere invited,
> When Generosity gets nothing done,
> Let us remember those who looked deserted:
> To-night in China let me think of one
>
> Who for ten years of drought and silence waited,
> Until in Muzot all his being spoke,
> And everything was given once for all.
>
> Awed, grateful, tired, content to die, completed,
> He went out in the winter night to stroke
> That tower as one pets an animal. (Auden 194-195)

The traditional sonnet which reflects private aesthetic experience is replaced with an expression of public, political and historical consciousness of the world. The tone of lyric and sonnet written by Auden follows Yeats's style in the primary years but later Auden follows the typical style of Rilke. The basic difference between the two is the purpose. Rilke's poems become an aesthetic experience that opens a path to transcend into the realm of escape, sometimes isolates him. But Auden uses his private experience to address a public concern. The approach is completely different from the perspective of ideological level. For Auden history is like a nightmare. His political vignette rejected the idea of the past which can reshape the present. He rather chose the present though it alluded the past. Auden assimilated Rilke and his obsession for objects, animals, myth and mostly the natural landscape but Auden used Rilke's machinery to produce his conscious choice to stay loyal to his understanding of the modern civilization. He started to tell his own historiographical interpretations with Darwin-Marx-Freud praxis and brought the elements of lyricism and symbols of the poet that he adored. In a sense Rilke is the ancestor of Auden's affinity for the traditional poetic styles. Like Rilke Auden's God has no religion but his God is rooted to the childhood memories of Nordic myth. Like Rilke, Auden was drawing parallels between the dichotomies of culture and society, individual and species. But the question of ethics, science and industrial growth that he incorporated through countless imageries is Auden's individualism. Unlike Rilke he could not stay away from his political self as Auden represented an era of socio-political whirlwind. Auden echoed another German philosopher Max Horkheimer who said, "under the pressure exerted by today's pragmatic approach to reality the consciousness that man has of himself has become identical with the role he has to assume in the predominant system." Auden's highly intellectualized lyrics resonated of both mankind and the literary tradition which was resurrected by him. The lyrical utterance was used as a tool for Auden but he never tried to irradicate the romance within himself.

Harold Bloom suggested that the influence of one on the other creates a sense of anxiety similar to the Oedipal conflict. However, in case of the comparison between two poets like Auden and Rilke we cannot see any sense of anxiety. It is a manifestation of an earlier poet's knowledge that can enrich the other's poetic prowess. Auden manifested his admiration for Rilke explicitly but recycled them with his own poetic philosophy. Auden's strong stance to reproduce the traditional poetic forms helped him more to implant his sense of historiography, politics, art, ethics science etc. Rilke's deep intention towards solitude is used by Auden to enchant deeper insight towards a tumultuous time. Rilke learned an aesthetic distance from the real and used his symbolic devotion to upheld the sensibility. In a

sense Auden learnt the art of aesthetic distancing through imagery from Rilke but for Auden it was just a part of his writing. In his many essays Auden wrote about his inner conflict between the aesthetic aspect and the moral view of life. Auden's sense of aesthetics influenced by the model of Rilke often countered the bigger question of ethics which Rilke never addressed. The conflict was not resolved by Auden but it helped him to grow as one of the greatest poets of his generation.

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NARRATIVE STYLES OF VISUALITY IN KALAMEZHUTHU

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***Abstract**: Kalamezhuthu is a ritual usually performed at temples or sacred groves or temples by various communities for purgation, prosperity, devotion and as fertility rite. The narrative styles of visuality in Kalam can be arbitrarily distinguished as two types. Iconic design with apparent figures and the symbolic style which uses series of motifs and shapes. This study tries to examine the dynamics of the visual aesthetics developed by these predominant visual modules used in this ritual. Kalamezhuthu is a process of turning an ordinary space into a sacred space through embodiment, oral engagements and material entities. Colour powder, being an impermanent medium, facilitate to redefine the process of sacralisation of the whole space.*

***Keywords**: Kalamezhuthu, Visuality, Icon, symbol, Sacrality, Narrative style*

Kalamezhuthu , a ritual prevalent among several communities of Kerala, involves the depiction of a series of motifs on the treated floor with colour powder. These series of motifs denote the figures of deities and other symbols related to the narrative of the god. Kalamezhuthu is performed at temples and sacred groves for purgation, prosperity, devotion as a part of fertility rite. This study tries to analyse the different styles of visual narration in Kalamezhuthu tradition.

This analysis makes use of the data collected through fieldwork and ethnographic accounts and other vernacular documents regarding Kalamezhuthu. The early literature mainly contributes study about the folkloric (MV Vishnunamboothiri), the aesthetic (Vijayakumar Menon) dimensions of the genres of Kalamezhuthu. This study tries to develop a thick description of Kalamezhuthu tradition by analyzing different types in their specific context, by focusing mainly on the dynamics of visual aesthetics of the same. For this purpose, two types of performance viz. Vettakkorumakan Kalam by Kallattakuruppu community and Bhagavathi Kalam by Mannan community is considered.

Kalamezhuthu is a vernacular term used to represent the ritual drawing and the performance associated with it. This term is etymologically composed of two words, Kalam and ezhuthu. Kalam denotes the sacred space where the ritual drawing is done and ezhuthu means the writing, which implies drawing. This is also called as kalampattu or Kalamezhuthupattu in vernacular language. In this ritual, the

drawing of series of motifs is followed by songs which are called as Thottam. Thottam denotes the ritual songs to praise and to revive the God. And these songs are supported by musical instruments and few other ritualistic chores are followed thereafter. After the completion of the drawing, the floor painting is erased either through the dance movements of performers in trance or as a part of the decorum of ritual.

Communities like Vannan, Mannan, Malayar, Pulaya, panar, paraya, velar, Theeyattunnikal, Kuruppu, Marar, Brahmins, Pulluva, kaniyan perform this for various purpose. Kalamezhuthu for deities like Bhagavathi, Naga, Ayyappa, and Vettakkorumakan, Vishnumaya, Muthappan, is performed to propitiate the deity. Few communities perform Kalamezhuthu to exorcise evil spirits from human body especially pregnant woman and apart from this clinical utility, it also functions as a fertility rite to enhance the mode of production. Kalamezhuthu is also used in magical practices which is not prevalent now. It is usually performed for the well-being and good health. Unlike this, Brahmins use tantric Kalam while offering pooja but they are devoid of song or possessed performance.

Kalam the term, as an ethnic usage, refers to both the spatial and the pictorial representation of the deity, worshipped at the given space and time. The particular deity symbolised in the drawing is the God worshipped at the given temple or the ancestral deity of the family who are offering the Kalamezhuthu. Those who sponsor this performance, intend to seek blessings from the god through the ritual. The performers (communities mentioned earlier) who are professed in conducting this ritual are entitled to perform the same, on behalf of the devotees.

According to the visual narrative style, Kalam can be arbitrarily classified into two types, viz. iconic and symbolic. According to Charles sanders pierce, signs can be understood as icons and symbols. Iconic sign is a sign which denotes its Object by virtue of quality which is shared by them but which the icon has irrespective of object. A symbolic sign is that which denotes its object solely by virtue of the fact that it will be interpreted to do so. Kalam which uses anthropomorphic figures to represent the deity can be arbitrarily referred as iconic Kalam and those who have symmetric, non-figurative designs made of geometric figures can be denoted as symbolic Kalam. This study tries to examine the dynamics of the visual aesthetic style developed by these predominant visual modes of the ritual.

Iconic Style of Kalam

Iconic style of Kalam can be discussed with reference to Vettakkorumakan Kalam, which is one type of Kalamezhuthu tradition, Kallattakuruppu community have

been performing traditionally. Vettakkorumakan Kalam which is also called as Vettekkaran kalam.

A standing posture of Vettakkorumakan is drawn in this performance. Vettakkorumakan is the hunter deity worshipped in Kerala. He is believed to be the son of Siva - Parvathy couple during their life as hunters in jungle. The glory and majesty of Vettakkorumakan become intolerable for Devas, they raised a complaint against him to Lord shiva. Lord Siva went to Vettakkorumakan with a weapon named Churika in his hand and his son wanted to get the Churika from Siva. Siva conferred him with the Churika but asks for a favour in return that he should not put the Churika down. Vettakkorumakan who carries a bow and arrow in left hand and the Churika in his right hand gets his usage of bow and arrow restricted. Thus, his glorious activities in jungle are reduced and everybody become contented. It is believed that according to the myth, Vettakkorumakan lived in the forest area at Nambumala fort which is a mountainous area in Gudallur in Nilgiris district of Tamil Nadu. He has then arrived at Balussery fort from Nambumala Kotta. It is believed that the king of Kurumbranadu pacified vettakkorumakan at nambumala and requested him to come down to Balussery fort to bless people of Kerala. Many of the tribal people consider him as a protector and began to hero-worship him. Many communities including tribals and Swaroopams whose family heirs were the local rulers also continue to worship Vettakkorumakan.

The thatched shed where the performers assemble and make arrangements to draw Kalam is called as Pattupura. There may be permanent stage like architecture used as pattupura at some places. The stage or the rectangular space used to draw kalam is called pattumandapam or pattarangu which is oriented in east west direction. The size of the Kalam is still mentioned using old measurements like kol and viralu. This dimension of this kalam is 16 kol and 8 viralu in perimeter. 1 kol is approximately 72 cm and viralu which refers to the Malayalam word for finger is approximately 3 cm in length. The space of Kalam is demarcated initially by creating a shed (panthal) with four pillars made of arecanut trunk. The thatch is covered with ritualistically arranged seven or nine coir ropes and the shed is decorated with tender coconut leaves.

Kalamezhuthu is initiated by the Kalam kurikkal ritual or Ganapathikku kurikkal. As a beginning the space is treated with cow dung for purification and oil lamp (Nilavilakku) is put at four corners. Then in the southeast corner a motif named shadkonachakram is drawn. Then, the words Ohm hreem is written with rice powder and after that jaggery and banana is offered in a plantain leaf. Using the rice powder, a rectangle is drawn along the border of the treated floor. Inside the border, the outline for the figure of deity is drawn. Later, the color powder is spread accordingly at each part. Five colors made from natural ingredients are traditionally used for Kalamezhuthu by every community. They use rice powder for white color, burnt paddy husk powder for black color, powdered air-dried leaves of Albizia (Vaka), henna or cassia for green color, turmeric powder for yellow color, and a mixture of turmeric powder and lime water is used for red color. There is a belief that these colors represent the five natural elements (Pancha Bhootha). Eyes, nose and the bosom region of female gods are made to project three dimensionally by leaving a small heap of paddy and rice. The crown of the deities is drawn in the final phase, which evokes the deity.

Fig.I: Kanni M. Vettakkorumakan Kalam, 2022, Pandallur Devi temple, Malappuram.

Kurup (the performer) receives the new piece of silk (Koora) from the devotee who is conducting the ritual, and with their consent it is spread over the ceiling of the canopy. This ceremony is named as Kooradiyal and the new cloth implies the dress for the deity. Marar (another skill-based community who are traditional drummers) blow a conch three times to mark the auspicious event. The process involves moving out the sanctified sword from the sanctum to the stage, meanwhile, the priest makes offerings and the Kurup sings Thottam. Kurup uses a stringed instrument named Nanduni and a small cymbal called as Kuzhithalam. Meanwhile Marar plays the traditional drum, chenda too. The sword is then ritualistically taken back to the sanctum of the temple.

The beginning part of the song sung during the initiation phase of ritual is referred as Uchapattu, which evokes the presence of the deity at the stage. It is believed that Uchapattu got it the name because it is performed right after the Pooja at midday (uchapooja) in temples. It begins with the Pooja done by the priest in the temple. After the offering to Ganapathy, marar will drum the Chenda and afterwards kuruppu will starts singing. They pacify Ganapathy, Saraswathi, Sreekrishnan, Siva through songs which are called as Devatha Vandanam. Two persons from Kuruppu community will sing the song where the main lead will be playing nanduni and the other person will be using kuzhithalam. After this, a praising song/ sthuthi for the specific deity of the kalam will be sing. The part of thottam sung after this is called as vazhinada. Afterwards the set of verses called as anthipattu is sung for deities which is also referred as ammanachaya, an intrinsic local category of raga in which the same is sung by Kallattakkuruppu. Paadivekkal is the set of verses which marks the climax of the song. Afterwards the martial arts-oriented performance by the performer carrying a big oil torch, referred as Thiriyuzhichil is done. This is told to be evolved as a part of the Kalamezhuthu ritual recently. After this, praising songs for different gods are continuously sung during the process of wiping of the Kalam, which is referred as Kalam azhikkal, which marks the erasing of the Kalam. During this the oracle or the possessed devotee will enter the stage and wipes the Kalam. They are supposed to have the power of god under trance and after the wiping of the drawing, other devotees seek blessings from oracle. Under the trance, oracle bless the devotees and offer them Prasadam. During their chanting, oracles give advices to devotees and may predict future also. Finally, they will be allowed to take rest and will be helped to detach them from the possessed state, by retrieving the conscious mental state, which is referred as Parkkuka.

Vettakkorumakan kalam depicts a male figure with beard and moustache. The body area is filled with green colour. As told in the myth, a bow and arrow are seen in his left hand and a sword like weapon named Churika is seen held in an upright position in his right hand. This explicitly denotes that Vettakkorumakan is a hunter. The weapons in each hand are also drawn vice versa too. The body and the posture are typically resembled that of a human and the weapons like bow and arrow brings the memories of the primitive folks who were hunters. The oracle who get possessed by the end of the ritual uses his weapon a small double edged sword (Churika) to cut the tender coconut leaves hanging down from the shed and canopy above the Kalam and they erases the ritual drawing by dancing accordingly. This part of the ritual is believed as the involuntary commemoration of hunting done by Vettakkorumakan.

Symbolic Kalam

Bhagavathi Kalam is one of many types which can be arbitrarily classified under symbolic style of Kalam. The style of Kalam which have nonfigurative designs are ethnically referred as Pathmakalam and it consists of the different combination of motifs and shapes. Bhagavathi Kalam is predominantly performed by Velar community in Ernakulam district and Mannan/Choppan community in the Thrissur district. It is performed at village temples, temples near households and sacred groves. Thottam, the song of the ritual is based on the story of the birth and life of mother goddess and her triumph over evil power. Mainly, Darikavadham Thottam, Kannaki Thottam or Bhagavathi Thottam are sung during the ritual. The reference used in this study is a performance by Mannan community at Thrissur district, in which they sing Thottam about Kodungallur Bhagavathi. This refers to the deity of Bhadrakali or Kannaki at Kodungallur sree kurumba temple which is famous for Kodungallur Bharani festival.

Fig. II Kanni M, Bhagavathi Kalam, 2018, Guruvayur.

Prior to the ritual drawing, the floor is treated well to eradicate the impurities by layering it with cow dung. Nowadays the concrete floor used for ritual drawing is smeared with cow dung diluted with water. It is believed that cow dung removes the impure elements. The dimension of this square shaped Kalam is 2 kol and 10 viralu long. A scaffolding or a canopy is made using arecanut tree trunk as pillars at the four corners of the square sized space of prescribed size. These pillars (Sthanakkal) are set up by Vishwakarma community, who are carpenters by occupation. The intercommunication of various folks is present in all these rituals. These four pillared sheds (Panthal) are thatched with seven or nine small coir ropes and is covered with a piece of sacred cloth (Kodi). Next step involves the beginning of the ritual Koorayidal as same as in the previously discussed type of Kalam. This involves the ritualistic placing of new piece of cloth preferably either red or white colour, on the top of the shed. This piece of new cloth is believed as the drape for God. Afterwards the shed is decorated using tender coconut leaves and mango leaves hanging from the shed. Tender coconut leaves are modified into different shapes are hanged down along the side of the shed forming a

square shaped frame. Leaves are braided to make shapes of peacock, cock and other animals which are representation of nature.

The basic story of the song is about the origin and life of kali/ mother goddess and her conflict with darikan. Darikan is born Todarumathi who is from Asura clan. Darikan offered prayer and penance to impress Brahma to attain more power. Impressed brahma appeared in front of darikan and he asked for a favour that he should only be killed at the hands of a woman. Once he got the special power, he started to pester people. In order to deter him from doing ill things on people Narada asked the help of shiva. On hearing this, the raged shiva opens his third eye and gave birth to bhadrakali, with an aim to kill Darikan. In a war Darikan was beheaded and killed by Kali . Kalam is supposed to be drawn by Bhoothagana to soothe and pacify the ferocious Kali after the fight. They sing about the ferocious state and afterwards it is believed that mother goddess will be calmed. Kalam is drawn with prescribed decorum and it is discussed in the portion of the song, called Kalam poli. Songs describe the origin and life of specifically the deity followed by the folk is Kodungallur Bhagavathi, who has been considered as the main among the several Mahakali temples around Malabar. Kodungallur Bhagavathi is believed to be Goddess Kannaki whose hails from Madurai in the Kannaki-Kovalan myth. In central Kerala, Kannaki thottam is also sung for Devi Kalam and Bhagavathi Kalam. A Stringed musical instrument, Nanduni is the musical instrument used by them.

Before starting the ritual drawing, they offer a Pooja for Ganapathy. Before starting the ritual drawing, they offer a Pooja for Ganapathy. Several offerings like rice (vellari), boiled rice (Puzhungallari), coconut, betel leaf, Arecanut, and money are offered in that tip portion of banana leaf (nakkila) arranged near the oil lamp (Nilavilakku) placed at a point (gurusthanam) near the original Kalam, which is considered as the spatial domain of the power of ancestors and god are supposedly concentrated. The person responsible for the arrangements and the execution of rituals who is also the part of the family offering Kalam is referred as Kalathilkkammal who is a person from the concerned family.

The color powder used in Kalam is the same as that of the general Kalamezhuthu tradition. The natural ingredients used for making green color varies according to the local availability. Nowadays these natural ingredients are replaced with synthetic colour powder which in turn creates changes in the traditional color scheme of Kalamezhuthu. Performers use few small objects for drawing exact shapes with precise measurements. A scale like elongated piece of outer bark of the coconut leaf sheath, called as Panthakkol, is used to measure and create straight lines. The rice powder for drawing is spread over the width of this scale which is

placed at the exact position for line and is wiped with a finger. As it wiped down, a double line on each side of the scale is created. Other colors are filled after finishing the basic drawing. The drawing of Kalam will be begun after spreading black powder (kari) on the neatly arranged floor in the proposed normal size of Kalam. For black color they use burnt rice bran powder.

According to the performers various layers of the Kalam are arbitrarily named as Nadukkalam, Karimozhi, Nellu, Choru, Pulinga, Aalila, Kettalila (if present), Ulkalam, Puramkalam. Nadukkalam is the innermost layer and Karimozhi is the black outline. The next layers are Nellu, choru, vamozhi, pulinga , aalila, and kettaalila respectively. After karimozhi the first two finger (viralu) length is Nellu and the consecutive three finger length is Choru and the next one finer length is the layer Vamozhi. The next layer is named as Pulinga and the other layers Aalila and Kettalila can be seen at the corners of Kalam included within the layer Ulkalam. Various weapons and other properties related to deity are drawn within Ulkalam which is layer encircling the pillar (Sthanakkal). The whole part of Kalam outside the pillar (sthanakkal) is called as Puramkalam. Puramkalam is the area where the performers can experiment on design and it adds to the beauty of Kalam. Literally, Nellu means paddy, choru mean rice, vamozhi is orality, pulinga is tamarind, aalila is banyan leaf, kettaalila refers to tangled banyan leaf. The layer pulinga is an s shaped design. The layer Kettaalila is not seen commonly in all Kalam. It defines the shape of two banyan leaves put across in opposite direction.

The weapons of Bhagavathi and the bhoothagana (the group of sacred companions or disciples who were in charge of Bhagavathi's security and wellbeing) are drawn in Kalam. In the northern side of Kalam Sword (Val) and anklet (Chilambu) are drawn and in the southern part lotus (pathmam) Spear (shoolam), Conch (Shanghu) and auspicious disc (Chakram) are drawn. Swastika is seen in north east corner and tangled banyan leaf (Kettalila) is seen (if present in Kalam) in the south west part (Kannikkodi). Apart from the ritualistic offerings, food is also

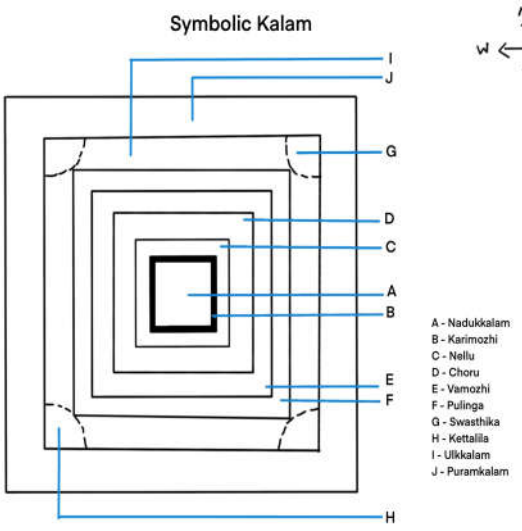

Fig. III Kanni M, A diagrammatic representation of Bhagavathi Kalam by Mannan community

served for Devi and her bhoothagana. Beside the Kalam rice, cucumber, betel leaf, arecanut, coconut, flattened rice (avil), puffed rice, jaggery are served on Nakkila (tip part of banana leaf). There is a ritual in which new dress is offered to goddess. For this, a piece of red cloth is placed over the rice offered in banana leaf. Along with that a Valkkannadi (Tailed mirror) is also offered along.

Visuality and Mode of Narration

Kalamezhuthu tradition tries to carry out the conversion of the abstract concept of God into a tangible construct in the physical world through Kalam, the floor painting. The erasion of Kalam which marks the accomplishment, is a point of satisfaction for performers and devotees. During this heightened point of psychological satisfaction, subsequent reconfiguration of the ritual drawing from a prescribed format to a totally unpredictable and disorganised form is performed by the movements of the oracle. Performers tries to follow the same tradition and style their ancestors have been using. They try to improvise and stylise each Kalam only by confiding to the basic decorum of the Kalamezhuthu tradition. Part of the song/thottam contains several verses which describes basic instructions for drawing Kalam and it also provides information about the directions to which weapons and accessories should align to.

The motifs used in Kalam are traditional and are mandatory to evoke the presence of divinity. Various types of Kalamezhuthu tradition uses different motifs, which can be perceived as visual text, according to the context and deity being worshipped. Kalam uses folk geometry which deals with old system of measurements. The usual size of each style of Kalam is maintained according to the tradition and the extension of design is allowed for aesthetic purpose. Performer still ponders a certain amount of freedom and choice to make their Kalam attractive despite those prefixed forms. Apart from the fixed motifs, they are free to draw and combine various designs according to their spontaneity and aesthetic notion. Recently, many have started using colours other than the traditional colours used, through which they try to enhance the visual scope. The bigger the Kalam, the bigger its spatial canvas is. The form prior to the destruction of Kalam, is the sacred space of worship which is attained after strict penance and anticipation. The erased Kalam denotes the culmination of the major step in the ritual. The wiped off, chaotic design brings satisfaction to the spiritual state of the performers. It alters the idea of aesthetics from a well-presented design to a destroyed chaotic pattern. This implies that aesthetics is not always about the visually pleasing form, rather it depends on the context and temporality of the same. The whole ritual and the spiritual communication are manifested through material powdered colours through

Kalam. Kalam, thus is proposed as the tangible and visible manifestation of the piety.

Except that of non-human Gods, the figure of deity in Kalam is represented as anthropomorphic form which bear humanly characteristics. The weapons used by these deities are depicted along with their figures. Most of the deities are human incarnations and they tend to have a myth about their origin which is a series of events containing humanly affairs intertwined with magical events which confer them the status of god. In the myths, the deity is said to behave as a human being and the figure depicted in Kalam also shows the general human body like figure of respective gender. These figures are usually drawn as half naked which exposes their upper part of their body. The body of Goddess is given emphasize by applying a lump of powdered colours at bosom region, which in-turn creates a three-dimensional visual perspective. These mythical events certainly have implication towards the perception of sexuality and fertility which is predominant in olden societies. According to tradition, women gods are worshipped as a part of fertility rites and it has apparent connection with the sexuality and livelihood of women in the society. Nagakkalam which is performed for the pacification of serpent gods too uses such three-dimensional techniques for visual enhancement. This is particularly performed by Pulluva community. On the contrary, Symbolic Kalam which is referred as Pathma Kalam are still using geometric forms like dots, lines, triangles, circles and other simple shapes. They won't explicitly communicate about the deity, but is considered as the motif. The mythological narratives entangled with phantasmatic metaphors, are being tried to be put into symbolic form, which are difficult to decipher.

Kalamezhuthu, is a typical example of a folk performance which carries both the traces of the tradition and the liveliness of the current period. According to the performing folks, iconic style of Kalam has a recent history and prior to that, symbolic Kalam were in use predominantly. The style of the Kalam is chosen by those devotees who wish to offer and sponsor the Kalamezhuthu. Most of them recently started to choose iconic style as it was more visually enticing to the folks. But according to the performers, the symbolic mode of narration is considered as the method older traditions were using. The evolution of visual aesthetics of the world have brought changes in the ritual too.

Visuality is the aesthetic disposition where the sight is what the society perceives, which itself is their own reflection. Hal Foster differentiates the meanings of vision and visuality in one of his edited collections on contemporary critical practice. He proposes that: "Although vision suggests sight as a physical operation and visuality

defines sight as a social fact". The actualisation of the Kalam apparently contain the societal norms and the strategic expression of conflicts and tradition through art. Certain stages of this ritual engages the livelihood of the folks, which evolves as communitas, discussed by Victor turner, which implies the liberation and temporary sabotage of existing caste hierarchy in the above circumstance.

The affect brought by the symbolic and iconic designs, in the realm of perception is reflected through the accomplishment of the ritual. The experiential expression of the performers and devotees who are engaged in the ritual is pertinent in analysing the psychological effect. The physical, cognitive, sensory and abstract changes occurring in the participants during the exposure to the ritual can be identified as affect. These changes eventually prove the selfless involvement of folks in rituals even in this technology driven era. The society and the tradition are intrinsically interconnected and such folk performances will reflect the worldview and perception of folks. Kalamezhuthu like any other ritual is an embodied performance in which performers and devotees involve at specific occasions of rituals. According to Merleau-Ponty, the embodiment drives as the vital role in how human experience the external world. The exclusive plane of knowledge acquired by the consciousness is considered to be different from that of the experience sought through bodily experience. The corporeal interventions of the performers which starts prior from the actualisation of the Kalam, like the penance and the preparation of colours from natural things, are pertinent to the ritual. A ritual which apparently carries an embodied structure creates better awareness on the worldview among the performers and devotees, which happens involuntarily within the consciousness.

Kalam is a material entity presented and performed through corporeal intervention of the performers and devotees. The most intriguing factor of the embodiment is the creation and erasion of a ritual drawing, which acquires a sacred status during the initiation and the same is removed eventually through various stages of the ritual acts by devotees themselves.

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WRITING OF DISEASE AND RESILIENCE: A STUDY OF DR. DHRUBAJYOTI BORA'S *AAZAR*

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Abstract: *Literature of pandemic exists because pandemics exist. Literary writing by physicians can excavate and illustrate conflicts in the medical encounter – power struggles, science and superstition and other cultural contexts. The value of the narrative (including historiography and all instances of story-telling) exists in its ability to communicate in such a way that various interpretations of reality are available. Keeping this in mind and the postcolonial idea which questions colonial and chiefly orientalist representations of the past, it is necessary to search for alternative sources of historical knowledge questioning dominant narrative in the form of subaltern narratives, historical fictions etc. which also forms the thesis of the present article. The article examines the outbreak of kala-azar epidemic that devastated and depopulated Assam from 1886-1940 through the fictional lens of Dr. Dhrubajyoti Bora, a medical doctor by profession who in his 2017 novel Aazar writes about stories of survival and resilience that colonialist history cannot otherwise narrate. By examining the socio political and cultural context of Bora's fictional world in Aazar explanation may be sought regarding how an outbreak of a disease may be tackled and who gets to survive and the whole politics involved in this process.*

Keywords: *Kala-azar, epidemic, historical fiction, illness narrative*

Literature on pandemic exists because pandemics exist. When we confront history we realize that the human race has faced uncertainties and experienced the pain, horror, and despair of epidemic and pandemic from time immemorial. The literature of pandemic is committed to forge an explanation or search for a meaning or a rationale which in some sense may explain the void of the pandemic. Boccaccio and Chaucer have been among the first storytellers to have captured the raging pandemic in their narratives in *Decameron* and *The Canterbury Tale*s respectively. Creative literature like novels and short stories enriches our understanding of health and illness by exploring contemporary narratives about health and medicine in a global context. Edgar Allan Poe who also endured outbreaks of yellow fever and cholera during his lifetime could not but represent the pandemic of plague and the suffering disease brought along with it in his writings. In the Indian context too, pandemics and their narrower version that is

epidemics have found some representation in fictional narratives like novels and short stories. In *Chaturanga* or *The Quartet*, which was published in the year 1916 through the altruistic character of Jagmohan who reaches out to the victims of plague as Calcutta is scourged by the deadly virus, Tagore underscores the importance of reaching out beyond boundaries of caste and religion during a pandemic. Even in his other writings references to intermittent outbreaks of epidemics and endemics like malaria, cholera, and flu reveals his personal losses as a result of diseases. A fictional representation of the 1918 pandemic is also to be found in Ahmed Ali's novel on love and longing *Twilight in Delhi* which evocative details on the tragic aspect of the disease and its preoccupation with death and dismay. John M Barry's (2004) non-fictional work *The Great Influenza* is about the 1918 pandemic erroneously referred to as the Spanish Flu which devastated India. The story of the 1918 influenza is often regarded as a story of science, of discovery, of how we are lead to change the way we think in adverse times. The pandemic was also regarded as the first great collision between nature and modern science steering towards new therapies, rival ideas of disease, and new knowledge emerging in the field of treatment.

The colonial period in India was a time not just of new encounters, new thinking, and new challenges but also of new exposures, especially to diseases and epidemics. Apart from Indian English, literature in other Indian languages too narrates woeful tales of epidemics and pandemics – Spanish flu, bubonic plague, cholera, and also kala-azar or black fever. In this context, the present chapter seeks to explore *Aazar* a 2017 novel by Dr. Dhrubajyoti Bora as a narrative that documents the history of kala-azar in India, the gap in state initiatives to control the epidemic, the role of local people in fighting the disease by a medical student from Golaghat studying in Kolkata. *Aazar* is an amalgamation of stories of woe, and of suffering as well as stories of survival and resilience that colonialist history cannot narrate. Dr. Dhrubajyoti Bora, a medical doctor by profession and an accomplished writer both in Assamese and English through his fictional lens examines the outbreak of the kala-azar epidemic that devastated and depopulated Assam from 1886-1940. It is a gripping tale of the history of a community grappling with tradition on the one hand and modernity on the other, disease and death on the one hand and desire to live on the other, superstition and ignorance on the one hand, and scientific and medical advancement on the other interspersed with love, longing and an ardent desire to survive. The setting of the novel Golaghat was one of those districts along with Nowgong which were most severely affected by the disease. Aparna Dharwadker's argument in her study on Karnad's *Tughlaq* that in colonial and postcolonial contexts "legitimized histories coexist and often collide

with non-historiographic overtly fictional forms of historical writing" thereby achieving a much-needed change in perspective in the discourse of history and offer "alternative forms of figural representation" (Dharwadker, 1995, p.44). Hayden White too regards historical work as a "narrative prose discourse" containing "deep structural content which is generally poetic" (White ix). It is necessary to search for alternative sources of historical knowledge questioning dominant narrative chiefly orientalist representations of the past in the form of subaltern narratives, historical fiction, etc. which also forms the thesis of the chapter.

There is currently considerable renewed interest in narrative and diseases because of the global pandemic crisis. Mike Bury in his study:

> Not only do language and narrative help sustain and create the fabric of everyday life, but they also feature prominently in the repair and restoring of meanings when they are threatened. Under conditions of adversity, individuals often feel a pressing need to re-examine and re-fashion their personal narratives in an attempt to maintain a sense of identity (Bury, 2001, p.264).

Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan in her analysis of illness narratives writes: "Writing about illness is often an attempt to share it with people who do or will suffer from the same condition and often a testimony or an appeal for empathy" (Rimmon-Kenan, 2006, p.247). By examining the socio-political and cultural context of Bora's fictional world explanation may be sought regarding how an outbreak of a disease may be tackled among other things. Though the book critiques colonial administration in a major way yet the matter of the disease and its outbreak and the immediate concern of the protagonists to find a means of redemption from it allows a study of medical history and human suffering which only a flexible genre like the novel may allow. Literary writing by physicians can excavate and illustrate conflicts in the medical encounter – power struggles, science and superstition, and other cultural contexts (Charon, 2006). The value of the narrative (including historiography and all instances of story-telling) exists in its ability to communicate in such a way that various interpretations of reality are available. Though Bora through his fictional lens offers a detailed history of a complex and fraught encounter of a growing community with a disease while at the same time hopeful that life will go on yet almost certainly the literature of the period especially newspapers and daily gazettes give a very politically manipulated stand taken by colonial administrators about containing the spread of the disease. The negligence of the British Empire regarding medical science was in sharp contrast to larger

investments in various geological, geographical surveys. From these expeditions, the British hoped to gain a substantial economic and military advantage but medical science was not so promising. The government's ungenerous approach towards medical knowledge becomes apparent when we realize that Ronald Ross, the famous medical scientist who discovered the malaria vector, was given a lower salary because of continuing with research and Leonard Rogers decided to pursue his investigations into kala-azar on minimum pay (Arnold, 1993; Kar, 2003). There was a large measure of consensus among medical authors as to fevers being one of the most characteristic or widely "prevalent" diseases of India. By fever, the colonial doctors usually meant only malarial one and its allied forms as kala-azar came to be identified as being separate from malaria only in the nineteenth century (Kar, 2003, p.2). There was a tendency to designate fevers by the particular regions in which they occurred "Gujarat fever," "the putrid fever of Bengal," "Assam fever", etc. with discussions and comparisons made by British physicians in India with fevers and similar conditions that they were already familiar from their own epidemiological experience in Europe or medical encounters in other parts of the globe (British Medical Journal, p.619). For British medical practitioners to deal with the various diseases which the tropical climate of India nurtured was a challenge because of their acclimatization with temperate zones.

Aazar tells the story of four generations of a feudal family – Burhadeuta[1], his predecessor Ghinai, his sons, and finally his grandson Manimay. Burhadeuta is an address of reverence used for grandfathers as well as elderly knowledgeable men in rural Assam – men who are actively involved in the betterment of the community. Bora's Burhadeuta, a timeless figure, is a repository of ancestral knowledge who also coalesces in himself the past and the present and at the same time he seems to have foreknowledge of what is to come. That Manimay's family encourages him to pursue the medical profession has a long history of suffering that not just this family but others in the larger community had faced from the time of Ghinai – the first generation patriarch whom we meet initially in the novel. The novel progresses in three distinctive levels – in the first level, it addresses beliefs and realities surrounding the origins of disease (kala-azar) and its proximate causes as well as the immediate effects of illness on everyday life. Secondly, the narrative of the novel provides accounts of the illness and its impact on specific people who figure in the fictional world of the novel. Thirdly it reveals profound connections between these people's experiences and deeper cultural levels of meaning attached to suffering and illness. The novel begins in politically unstable times when the first generation patriarch of the feudal family whose story unfolds gradually, begins his journey from his home as an innocent young man who leaves his village with

other men to avoid being a victim of the Paik system of the Ahom king. The Paik system was a system of labour on which the Ahom economy depended. Competent adult males called paiks had to render service to the state and join the militia in return for a piece of land that they could cultivate and live off but never own. These paiks belonged mostly to the lower sections of society which comprised of local tribes. The paiks played a crucial role in the economic set-up of the Ahom kingdom.

In the Brahmaputra Valley, there were distinct phases of tribalism and feudalism wherein one blend with the other most of the time. In this context, Dhrubajyoti Bora (1983) in his nonfictional study on Moamaria Rebellion[3] writes:

> The development of feudalism and a broad peasant society here required the active intervention of the state. Hence a complex, bureaucratic, coercive tribal state apparatus guiding and administering the development of the peasant society made its early appearance. The first great peasant revolt that occurred in medieval Assam was the Moamaria revolt which went on to take the form of a popular mass insurrection against the established social authority. (Bora, 1983, p.3)

The Moamaria rebellion (1769-1805) was an eighteenth uprising in Ahom kingdom. It began as a reaction against the oppressive socio-economic regime of the Ahom kings who were the rulers of the vast Brahmaputra Valley for 600 long years from 1228 to 1826. The followers of Moamaria Sattra (comprising chiefly of Mataks, Marans, the Sonowal Kacharis, Chutiyas among others) opposed among other things the Paik system too. The Moamaria Sattra was a Vaishnava sect founded by Saint Aniruddhadev, a close relative of Saint Srimanta Sankardev. In 1788 the rebels ousted King Gaurinath Singha from the throne in Rangpur and Bharat Singha, a moamaria leader proclaimed himself as the king. To suppress the rebels Gaurinath Singha invited the British East India Company to restore his kingdom which they readily did in the year between 1792 to 1794. However, the rebellion came to an end with the signing of a pact between the Marans and the Ahom king headed by the then prime minister Purnananda Buragohain in 1805.

The first part of *Aazar* depicts this very tussle between the tribal and the feudal society with the third person narrator highlighting the various survival strategies adopted by the people in this process. Burhadeuta's ancestor Ghinai who is described as a man strengthened by sucking up the evil energy of ghouls and phantoms (Bora, 2017, p.44) is a runaway who escapes being confronted by the king's soldiers. For groups of villagers like him, an escape to the hills becomes a necessity and the hospitality received from the hill tribes comes as a surprise owing

to the dominant discourse highlighting the divide between the plains people and the hill tribes. Ghinai's time not only was a time of political instability but also a time of droughts and famines which were major deterrents in the overall progress of the land:

> It was a time of utter confusion when the identity of the king, his subject, the officers, the Paiks, were not clear at all. During these days of chaos, Ghinai was rising to power. It was as if those days of the absence of a king, were Ghinai's days. His followers increased to thirty. (Bora, 2017, p.111)

With the army on the one hand (also supported by the Hindustani sepoys) and the Moamaria rebels on the other followed by the constant threat from the Burmese who were known for their incessant tortures, the people of this geographical terrain as Bora depicts in his novel suffered a lot. Ghinai and his band of men not only struggled to sustain themselves from these but also had to survive famines and droughts. Amidst these unsettling and devastating times, the epidemic of kala-azar brought untold despairs to the people.

In the second part of the novel, Manimay as a medical student recollects the spread of kala-azar and the anxiety of his mother and the rest of the family not just for themselves but for the larger community as well. His mother had sent him to Calcutta with very high hopes that he will return to serve the members of his community after obtaining a medical degree. In Calcutta Manimay's reminiscences on kala-azar allows him to trace, in his mind, the course that the disease takes, spreading fast from the Garo hills to regions like Goalpara, then Nowgong district, and beyond. The epidemic hit the Golaghat division in 1898 and the number of infected people increased gradually in the entire Upper Assam region. The stories of death and decay could be found scattered everywhere in Golaghat the place which the narrative of the novel primarily focuses upon. When the disease reached Golaghat and its adjacent villages during the first phase of the spread of the disease, Burhadeuta told his son Nilakanta about a major crisis that the epidemic had brought about in their region. The crisis was regarding the scattered dead bodies of people who were dying of kala-azar without treatment as in the first phase it was a sudden outbreak and there were no known remedies. The corpses were everywhere – on the shores of the pond, under the big trees in open fields – and no one wanted to perform the last rites of the dead. Burhadeuta's concern and the response of his son that the problem needs to be addressed, otherwise the disease will keep spreading also reminds us of the social responsibility that these people as responsible members of a community were fulfilling. Family members and neighbours avoided the ill people and regarded them as outcastes, condemning

them as filthy and unwanted beings. As the epidemic progressed, however, good sense began to prevail and steps were taken to perform the last rites by burning a funeral pyre wherever the bodies were. As we browse through the narrative we realize that the true essence of community life was intact even in the darkest hours. Manimay recalls that just as the disease did not differentiate on religious grounds, the members of the community also did not differentiate between corpses of Hindus or Muslims (for that matter) as they engaged themselves in community services.

The recollection of the trauma associated with kala-azar hastened Manimay's search for more information on the disease. He felt he must do the needful in this regard as it is with this purpose in mind that he had joined the medical college. Manimay and Niladri's visit to the library for information proved fruitful. As they browsed through volumes of British medical journals, a whole new world of information opened up before them. They read about the ongoing debates and discussion of the British medical practitioners and other health officials regarding what exactly was 'kala-azar.' The pages of the journal provide detailed descriptions of the diseases, pandemics, and epidemics, endemics, etc. which leave the two boys spellbound at the whole gamut of information that was available. The library becomes a part of their everyday life as they continue with their inquiry into kala-azar with enthusiasm and vigor. The next few chapters of the novel become a repository of historical information on the disease, its causative agent, diagnosis, and treatment. Surgeon Captain Leonard Rogers becomes a subject of interest for young Manimay as he starts reading Rogers' articles. The narrative gives us a detailed account of Rogers' encounter with the disease in Burdwan and the research conducted in Assam and districts like Nowgong, Mangaldai, and Golaghat (Rogers, 1898).

Achintya Kumar Dutt (2005) in his study on kala-azar examines the efficiency of British medical policy and modern Western medicine in checking the spread of the disease. According to his study kala-azar was a matter of health concern for the people in Assam (Dutt, 2005). It had a great impact on the demographic and economic development of the region which already was in a bad state due to several other reasons mentioned above. The opening of railroad communication connection for British commercial and military penetration was one of the chief reasons for the rapid spread of the disease. However, Bora's novel also mentions that people escaping from other regions to avoid getting infected entered various districts of Upper Assam through the dense jungles of the hilly terrain. And the opening of the large area for tea plantation of Assam and the accelerated movement

of people from infected areas to uninfected ones also facilitated its dissemination. Thus it depopulated and the population decline also led to a decline in loss of revenue. Dutt points out in his study that for the Government it was a matter of concern since the 1880s and they took initiative in establishing dispensaries and medical facilities for the treatment of the disease when it started to spread among the productive laborers (Dutt, 2005). In the fictional world of *Aazar,* Bora through some of his characters draws attention to the support that the local people renders to the doctors working on behalf of the British. Burhadeuta and his daughter-in-law Jashoda voice their concern about how people were forced to leave their homes after being infected with the disease and the necessity to build temporary shelters for such homeless sick people. This, they suggested would also help in curbing the rapid spread of the disease as till then there was no information regarding how exactly the germ spreads. Burhadeuta himself acted as the overseer of the construction of these temporary quarantine facilities which as Bora highlights was done on local initiative alone without any support from authorities. One of the basic prevention measures adopted by the British was segregation which Bora's novel also identifies as a measure which was prevalent among the people even before the British policies were made. The local people segregated themselves and made new settlements as kala-azar spreads rapidly. Burhadeuta remains a witness to such changes and finally leaves his own village home to settle down in the bungalow built by his son in Golaghat to keep himself safe. However, the novel also emphasises on how the Sahibs and British medical practitioners were more engaged with the tea gardens and the coolies and not so bothered about saving the lives of the villagers as villages did not contribute to the growing British economy. Manimay vividly remembers Bangali Babu's words: "British are more worried about coolies." (Bora, 2017, p.245). He cites economic reasons which lead to this kind of disparity, a point which Achintya Kumar Dutt too advances in his study. Even when the disease was controlled with remedies and vaccines, the miseries of the common people did not end. In this regard, Ahini Bai tells Manimay:

> Listen to me! The number of people dying of kala-azar is indeed on the decline. Few people have also availed the facility of the vaccine; the rich have gone to Jorhat Mission Hospital for treatment. But what about the poor villagers? They are still dying in large numbers (Bora, 2017, p.418).

Ahini, the social outcaste in the novel goes on to narrate grim tales of despair and death and urges Manimay to come back very soon as a doctor to put an end to the despair of the people. She adds that she is alive just to see him return with new knowledge, new treatment, and more vaccines (Bora, 2017, p. 418).

The third part of the novel begins with Manimay's memories of dogs in search of food (symbolic of the sufferings of the people due to famine), of the second world war – Hitler becoming the Chancellor of Germany, etc. which also led his grandfather to comment on the futility of war: "In my opinion, it will not help anyone or be fruitful for anyone. It harms others. It harms the entire human race, human civilization and degrading and demeaning humanity in general, eroding its finer sensibility" (Bora, 2017, p.573). At the same time, he was preoccupied with the search for a plausible reason as to how kala-azar spreads from the body of an ill person to a healthy one, which again was a riddle for medical science. British medical officers William Leishman and Charles Donovan had already discovered the parasite responsible for kala-azar or leishmaniasis in the year 1903. However, no conclusion had been drawn regarding how the parasite is transmitted from one living body to another. One fine day, a letter arrived from the librarian of Calcutta Medical College announcing the discovery of the cause of transmission of the Leishmaniasis parasite. The letter stated that the bite of a tiny insect vector, the phlebotomine sand fly was responsible for the transmission of this disease. The same letter also contained a job opportunity for Manimay in the Medical College against vacancies, an opportunity which would transform his life. The novel ends with the celebration of the long-awaited moment of independence, with the unfurling of the national flag. Burhadeuta witnessed everything– the beginnings of the feudal society, political turmoil of the bygone era, the kala-azar epidemic, even India's independence; it was as if he stood in a timeless zone fusing the past, present and the future, in himself. Towards the end we are told that Burhadeuta fell into a trance just after the celebration where he saw a whole new world around him – a world purer and even more beautiful; a world which had newly ushered in 'freedom' for the common people – from 'aazar' not just the tropical disease but chiefly diseased social conditions. He finally died with the Tricolour on his chest satisfied that a new epoch had begun.

Aazar deals more with the 'writing of disease' from a primarily socio-cultural perspective than with intellectual and institutional issues that concern most historians of medicine. A growing nationalist fervour, the second world war, famine, epidemic like kala-azar, the developing discourse of Western medicine, medical research in opposition to indigenous remedies, Partition followed by independence - all criss-cross each other to produce a counter discourse to the orientalist one that native Indians and their unhygienic ways, were themselves to be blamed for all epidemics and endemics like kala-azar, malaria, cholera, dysentery. At the same time Bora's attempt at mingling history and fiction to narrate a tale of 'aazar' which he refers to as having symbolic significance and stands for disease

and decay in general and not just to a specific disease, exposes the limitations of colonialist knowledge (Guha, 1997). His writing challenges the grand narrative of the uniformity of advanced administrative practices and concern with public health displayed by the colonial state. At the same time, it sends across a very strong message for its readers – to overcome adversity with a positive adaptation that is to be resilient. When Burhadeuta sees those blue coloured birds flying in the sky he realises that these are birds of hope and freedom. He is satisfied that his job is done; he is leaving behind a community of resilient individuals and a new 'free' nation where the voices of the common people would matter.

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IMAGINING 'DESH': NATIONALISM AND SOCIAL REFORM IN PRASANNAMAYEE DEVI'S *ARYAVARTA*

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Abstract: *Prasannamayee Devi's Aryavarta (1888) is the first published travelogue of a high-caste Hindu Bengali women's experiences of travel within India. This essay analyses Aryavarta and discusses how nationalism and projects of social reform in Bengal (such as prohibition of Sati, child marriage and polygamy practiced by Brahmins [kulin marriages], implementation of widow remarriage, age of consent) become part of the lived experiences of a high-caste married Hindu woman traveller. Devi's text is an exposition of a woman traveller's mind in the closing decades of the nineteenth century. This period was deeply informed by Hindu revivalism and nascent indigenous nationalism. The essay reads into Devi's ideations of woman and nation, here desh, within the overwhelming structures of the colonial modern.*

Keywords: *Bengal; Nationalism; Social Reform; Travelogue; Women's Writing*

Introduction

When one reads the travel writings from the colonial period in the late nineteenth century, one notices a somewhat multi-connotative use of the word *desh*. *Desh* in its modern sense signifies the concept of nation. In the accounts, *desh* connoted India as well as Bengal, at times together and at other times interchangeably. The term during the mid to late colonial period was multi-connotative, signifying sub-region, region and country (Gupta, 2007). Bhudeb Mukhopadhyay's *Hindu Samaj* and Rabindranath Tagore's *Swadeshi Samaj* ideologically connected *desh* as region to the thinking of *desh* as nation. Familial feelings and social linkages in *Samaj* which connoted sub-region helped to conceptualize India or *bharatbarsha* as *swadesh*. Bengali and *Bharatbarshiya Samaj* were linked through the familial and *swadeshi* aspect of Samaj. This provided the foundation for the interconnections between Bengal and *bharatbarsha*/India and equated *swadesh* with *bharatbarsha*. Nation therefore referred to collectives united by shared cultural features and the belief in the right to cultural self-determination. Nationalism is the notion that combined the political idea of territorial self-determination, the cultural idea of the nation as one's primary identity and the moral idea of the justification of action to protect the rights of the nation against the other (Barrington, 1997). Nationalism

has been associated with modernity and transformation. Foremost among the scholars who have critically intervened in thinking the nation as a particular product of modernity are Benedict Anderson and Earnest Gellner. In a different vein of reading in her persuasive essay, Anne McClintock (1993) discussed the much gendered nature of nationalism and quoted Cynthia Enloe's comment that nationalisms have 'very typically sprung from masculinized memory, masculinised humiliation and masculinized hope.' (1993:63) The truth claim of this is established when Gellner's definition is analyzed since his whole analysis of nation is based on male recognition of identity. McClintock showed how the dominant discourse on nationalism had been pre-dominantly male and how women were 'typically construed as the symbolic bearers of the nation, but are denied any direct relation to any national agency.' (Ibid) Studies by Nira Yuval-Davis and Floya Anthias also mentioned how nationalism is a gendered discourse and it cannot be analyzed without a theory of gender power. In the context of colonial India, Partha Chatterjee (1989) argued for a 'women's question' and 'a nationalist resolution of the women's question' by relegating women to the sphere of the home or the *andar* (interior) which was symbolic of the domain of the spiritual in which the East was superior in comparison to the material domain of the West symbolic of the *bahir* (exterior) an antithesis of the *andar*. Another influential thinker on nationalism, Mrinalini Sinha, mentioned that nationalism during the colonial period was multifarious, 'it differed over time and across space; and it contained several contradictory trends' (Sinha, 2014). Gender in this context did not just include women but was a reconfiguration of nationalism itself through an expanded understanding of the "political". Sinha showed further that colonial social reform for women was a 'highly charged political affair' (Ibid:15). So, her study suggested an overlap of nationalism and social reform. This essay discusses how issues of nationalism and social reform are overlapped with the lived experiences of Prasannamayee Devi as a woman traveller from Bengal. How it shaped her ideas as a traveller from Bengal, a colony encountering the modern through the formation of a particular colonial-modernity.

Golden Past and Nationalist Thought: Visualizing the Independent Nation

Prasannamayee Devi's *Aryavarta* (1888) described her visit to colonial Etawah, Agra, Mathura, Vrindavan, Indraprastha and Delhi. She asserted the Hindu-Aryan selfhood through the construction of a new historiography for Bengal. The book was dedicated to her seventeen year old daughter, Priyamvada. The dedication began with an extensive effusive tribute to the *Aryavarta* of the past. In the dedication Devi asked Priyamvada to tutor her young and tender heart and train her

adolescent character in the perfect ideals of a Hindu woman following the footsteps of such women as Sita, Savitri, Draupadi, Damayanti, Rani Laxmibai and others. As a mother she warned her daughter that she should not be influenced by foreign culture. Only then she will be able to repay some of the silent and incessantly flowing love of her mother. She ended by saying that as a token of deep affection and as a testimony of her 'nationalist spirit' she dedicated the book containing 'historical tales of the Aryavarta' to her daughter. (Devi, 1999[1888] 53)

Devi's writing shows that along with the Bengali *bhadaralok*, she too was working to establish the need for a collective self-identity that thrived on the idea of a 'glorious Aryan past'. Forced to negotiate her multiple roles as a nationalist, an author, a mother, she took upon herself the task of etching an identity for the nation-in-the-making almost in the same lines as Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay had thought it necessary in the beginning of the 1880s. Chattopadhyay, who had a major intellectual influence on Devi, wrote that Bengalis must have a history of their own which must be built from indegenous sources other than those used by colonial historiography. He aimed at instilling the Bengalis with a 'pride as a nation'. Chattopadhyay wrote in his essay, *Banglar Itihas Sambandhe Koyekti Kotha*:

> Bengal must have her own history…Otherwise there is no hope for Bengal…You have to write it, I shall write it…It has to be done by all of us together. (Chattopadhyay, 2005:312-13)

The disunity and segmentation in building a collective identity as a nation were factors such as difference in language, lineage, ethnicity and religion. This was kept at bay by imagining a homogenous nation and imaging a historical narrative of unity (Kaviraj, 1995: 116-117; 128-132). The Hindu identity was projected as the real and true Indian identity and since the history of the Bengalis could not provide the substratum for a collective organic Hindu nation, historicization of myths and mythologization of history were parallel processes that constructed the past. (Ibid)

Colonial discourses on social reform had constantly indicated the lack of a competent and self-sufficient cultural identity for the Bengali male mainly because traditionally his culture granted neither freedom nor equality of the sexes. Simultaneously, official and missionary discourses often alleged that Hindu women did not possess the ethical qualities which held together the larger structure of the society. (Chowdhury, 2001) It was against this allegation that Hindu women were remoulded as the embodiments of chastity. The colonial denigration of Hindu women was countered symbolically within the discourse of history by focusing on

the enduring heroism of virtuous women. Chronicles, myths and legends had many such stories and from such myths and legends the legendary figures were suggested to represent the Bengali women. Devi too mentioned the names of *Sita*, *Draupadi, Savitri*, *Damayanti* and Rani Laxmibai as symbols of courage, chastity, love and courage. Devi mentioned these names to her daughter as she wanted her to follow these women who were symbols of love, courage, patriotism, and morality. They were the desired models of femininity for Bengali women. Upholding these women as symbols of cultural purity helped to establish the promiscuity, immorality and wantonness of the European/ 'their' women in contrast to the Bengali/Indian/'our' women and at the same time it acted as a warning against the misconceptions that Europeans constructed about Indian life, family and women in general.

In the dedication addressed to her daughter, one finds an assertion of a mother's identity. Motherhood had become an integral part of the nationalist discourse during the late nineteenth century. Devi too played the role of a responsible mother by narrating to her daughter in the form of this travel account, a history of 'our' tradition. In the nationalist discourse, even in the sphere of education, mothers were valued as natural agents of education who did not allow a degeneration or reversal of the indegenous values. In the image of the mother, order and progress intermingled to form one of the most gripping myths of colonial Bengal. (Bagchi, 1996:66) Nira Yuval-Davis and Flora Anthias identify five major ways in which women have been implicated in the project of nationalism as: biological reproducers of the members of national collectivities; reproducers of the boundaries of national groups (through restrictions on sexual or marital relations); active transmitters and producers of the national culture; symbolic signifiers of national difference; active participants in national struggles. (McClintock, 1993:62-63) We find Devi carrying out almost all the duties carefully. As a biological reproducer though she had not given birth to a son yet she took upon herself the duty of making her daughter aware of her cultural heritage and social responsibilities. She warned her daughter against foreign influences thus making her cautious about what is to be done to train her heart and mind to preserve her national culture. Finally, we notice Devi as an active participant in the national struggles through her writings. Even her travel account is not just a simplistic account of visits to places of cultural heritage. It is entrenched with a sense of history mostly associated with a lost glory of an Aryan past and a sense of pity at the present condition of India and finally a clarion call to arise, awake and restore what it was before.

Devi takes recourse to cultural politics of visualizing the nation as feminine, maternal icon of *Bharat Janani*. As Sarkar (2001) stated that Bankimchandra Chattopadhyay's *Anandamath*, first published in 1882, heralded the patriotic theme into the domain of Bengali high literature and from then on the figure of 'women' became a constant preoccupation in literary productions. Mother goddesses as a recent and sacred deity of the Hindu pantheon is also the symbol of the mother and the people then are the sons of the mother. Chattopadhyay in *Anandamath* showed how the nation was transformed into the Hindu Mother goddess. Bagchi (1990) mentioned that the Bengali preoccupation with the mother cult was not new and there were predominant presence of mother cults in village level practices. There were references to worship of mother goddesses even in the sixteenth century. The *Puranas* and the *Mangalkavyas* too mention worship of mother goddesses. The mother image that was projected in the anti-colonialist, nationalist uprising was a combination of the affective warmth of a Bengali mother and the mother goddess *Shakti*. Known under various names such as *Durga*, *Chandi* or *Kali* they occupy an important position in the mainstream Hindu religious practices of the Bengalis.

There are two other ways that Devi imagined Mother India, first, as a barren woman in spite of having hundreds of sons and second, as a widow. Even before Bankimchandra, the image of *Bharat Mata* having mothered heroic sons in the past and giving birth to an ailing generation now was a common theme of nationalist literature. The 'healthy' and 'happy' children of the British playing in the courtyard inside the Agra Fort exude a spirit of 'independence' and 'liveliness' to Devi. This is much in comparison to and as a contrast to the Indians who are lazy, weak and perpetually in a state of inaction. She commented that the sons of colonized mothers, who drink timidity and fecklessness with their mother's milk, can never be different even with age or knowledge. She quoted the *shastras* which said that women are never free. During childhood they are under the guardianship of their father, in their youth, their husbands take their responsibility, and in their old age they are protected by their sons, but she reversed this order for the Bengali men who in their childhood were reared by their grandmothers. They grew under the nurturing care of their mothers and from their youth to old age they remain shielded by their wives. All their assertion of virility was either on their widowed and helpless sister-in-law or old aunts.

Devi was critical of the lack of enterprise in the Bengali men to be actively involved in the public domain. In the Introduction, she cited the names of *Bhima*, *Arjun*, *Yudhistira*, *Krishnadwaipayan*, *RanaPratap Singh* and *Prithviraj Chauhan*, all embodiments of *Kshatriya* masculinity and virility. She lamented that Bengali men lead an appalling life of gross merry-making and senseless gossip. They were

devoid of any new ideas and had no knowledge about science, philosophy, literature and politics of the contemporary world and did not even read newspapers, indulging in extreme idleness. This could be related to the Bengali babu's lack of vigour in work and in their social existence which justified their position as colonial clerks in the English and European administrative and commercial offices. Devi compared their condition to the West-Indian zamindars mentioning that whoever was the owner of the plot was a zamindar in West India. Those men, healthy, able and fair, irrespective of being a Brahmin or a Kshatriya, toiled on their own land without any shame or laziness.

Devi's anxiety about the physical and moral reawakening of the Bengalis as a 'virile' community was present in this travel account. When she visited Mathura, her portrayal of the *pandas* (local temple guides) showed how carefully she noted the difference between them and their Bengali counterpart. While the Bengali *pandas* were not only physically weak, they were constitutionally frail and 'plagued by malaria'. She mentioned how the *pandas* of Mathura maintained a strong physique by frequenting gymnasiums and wrestling clubs. Such was their physical prowess that they were felicitated by the Holkars of Gwalior state. Physical development led to growth of mental strength and spiritual energy. This was in tune with the Hindu nationalists' emphasis on the development of physical culture amongst the Bengalis.

Devi found that not only physical but also cultural identity of the Bengalis needed to be reinvigorated. The official and missionary discourses had denigrated the Bengalis for lack of ethical values and reproached them for unchaste action. Vrindavan was supposed to be the stage where Krishna performed his *rasa-lila* and in Devi's account there is a sneer at Krishna as a figure of erotic excess. In Mathura, she visited *Kansha-khera* and *Ran-bhumi*, mythical theatres of war where Kansha was killed by Krishna but Devi brushed aside the myth and compared it to the confrontation of Lemuel Gulliver and the Liliputians in Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver Travels*. Kansha's wife *Sati* resided in Satimath as the saying goes. Just after hearing the news of the death of her husband, Sati immolated herself in the funeral pyre of her husband. As a sign of her wifely devotion and sacrifice the place was named such. She further wrote that the story was notable and therefore she mentioned it. Many stories of such great women remained forgotten in history. During her visit to Buxar, when Devi visited the Rameswar *Sivalinga* which Rama had worshipped after slaying *Tadaka*, the demon, she with a tone of mockery mentioned that there was a saying that women who poured water on this *linga*, would get a husband as courageous and undaunted as Rama. She hoped that he would not again banish his beloved and chaste wife to the forests. *Satitva* or Hindu woman's wifely devotion to husband even after his death was the ground for the Hindu nationalist for reclaiming the ground of their cultural superiority. Holding on to the societal glorification of uncorrupted women, such as the chaste wives of

Kansha and Rama, Devi was critical about women of Mathura who having acquired high education indulged in amusements and wasted their time in useless frivolity. Devi was also respectful towards the widow of Humayun. Like the wife of Kansha, Hamida Banu Begum was also a chaste woman bearing the Hindu notions of *Pativratya* (devotion to husband) and *Satitva* (chastity). The tomb of Humayun was to Devi an edifice built by a chaste wife in the memory of her husband. She compared Hamida Banu Begum to a chaste Brahmin wife who led the rest of her life in austerity and was buried to the left of her beloved. To Devi's imagination, just as the Taj Mahal bore testimony to the eternal love for a wife, so was the *Makbara,* a magnificent architecture devoted to the memory of a husband. These feminine virtues and qualities of which she was an austere professor, probably reminded her of her own life and loneliness because she had herself never enjoyed conjugal affection. One could detect in Devi a yearning for refuge of her husband's household or *sansar* considered to be the true essence of a Bengali woman. The cultural constructions of gender made the wife the fulcrum in the ideology of domesticity. So, a similar desire in the mind of Devi was not an unlikely interpretation here.

The Other and Othering

Being a Brahmin, Devi took pride in her lineage. In her writing one notices an inclination to construct the Muslim 'other' in a derogatory tone. The possible reason for this could be the decline in the condition of women after the Islamic rule in India. The stereotype of the '*mleccha'* and '*yavana'* Muslims who were repulsive and barbaric were opposed to the Hindus and the fall of the Hindu Aryans after Muslim rule led to their total exclusion from the nationalist project. (Chowdhury 2001) Devi appreciated the fact that the Hindus were tied to the Muslims most intimately and they shared feelings of brotherhood. She drew on history commenting that Mughals were married to Rajput princes and the Hindus were placed in high posts in the Mughal courts. Yet, she admitted that there was an innate mistrust in her for the Muslim retainers in a hotel in which she stayed in Delhi. She said that she could not fully trust them, in spite of them executing all their duties. She also felt that the strict *purdah* system of the women in Western India was even more rigid than that in Bengal. This was probably due to the *violent* Muslim kings who had ruled here but the process did not change with time. She also critiqued the harems of the Muslims, because it accommodated wives and mistresses of the Mughal emperors who were confined by gold chains in these places. The system of polygamy being prevalent during this time Devi hinted at the condition of having more than one wife and the pangs women went through of being and having co-wives.

Devi was disrespectful towards the 'Anglo-Indians' residing in Etawah and Kanpur. Despite their 'mixed-blood', they showed contempt towards the *kala-*

admi. The engineers and the administrative officials in Etawah were quite conscious of being the colonizers and the master race and therefore they maintained physical distance with and segregation from the local populace in public places such as the garden. This was also viewed with great sarcasm by Devi. Another instance of British snobbery was provided by Devi during her visit to the Taj Mahal. The British here in spite of the repeated pleading by the Muslim gatekeepers entered with their shoes on. She also mentioned the Muslim gate-keepers who were afraid of these 'British Lions'. Whether the British were actually traders, guards, petty businessmen or hypocrites, all were to be equally worshipped as kings.

Social Inequities and Reforms in the Eyes of Devi

Very intimately connected to the conceptual and imagined project of nationalism in Bengal was the issue of social reform. Through social reforms from the mid 19th century, the new urban elite in Bengal had tutored themselves in the enlightenment philosophy of individualism and humanism and had perceived the age-old patriarchal practices on women as essentially retrogressive which needed to be rectified. Women, as subjects to be reformed, were in the forefront of all the major matter of social reform. (Sen, 2000) Social evils such as child marriage, sati, polygamy and widely prevailing illiteracy of women made them very vulnerable in the society.

Child marriage which was a constant menace in the colonial community based societies in India has been taken up by Devi. To her child marriage was one of the major factors contributing to the degradation of motherland. An overwhelming presence of child marriage in the North-Western regions of India did not make her happy. She questioned the given notion of marriage and child birth which were taken as automatically associated issues. Child marriage was the worst kind of social evil and a major impediment in the path of development of women. It denied them opportunities for education and a proper development of the mind and the body. Kulinism and child widowhood was another major consequence of this practice which left huge number of young girls in a state of being unwanted guests at the house of either their marital family or the natal family. Behram Malabari who took up the issue in the late nineteenth century mentioned that Hindus were feeble due to the custom of early marriage. (Kumar, 1993:24) Engels noted that well into the twentieth century, a large age gap between the husband and the wife were outstanding features in Bengali marriages. (Engels, 1999:44) Though the gap between the bride and the groom decreased in other parts of India, it remained constant in Bengal due to the *kulin* heritage system which allowed men as old as sixty years to marry pre-puberty girls. It was much later in 1929 that the Child Marriage Restraint Act, popularly known as the Sarda Act was passed. The act fixed the minimum age of marriage at fourteen; pre-puberty marriages became

illegal. It was also seen as a major impediment in the path of women acquiring formal education.

In this context I must mention two very different observations made by Devi. First, when she saw the Taj Mahal, she was awed by the beauty of the sight but she shared the views of an Englishwoman who was writing in *The Statesman* regarding this. Devi mentioned that if Shahjahan had not spent so much money in building such a magnificent mausoleum in the memory of his wife but instead had started a shelter for the downtrodden or a boarding or an educational institution then in her view, the name of his dead wife would remain engraved in memory in the truest sense. The pleasure that the splendid burial chamber provided to the viewer was unparallel but what lay beneath it were carcasses and the pleasure lasts just for a few moments of the day. However much the splendor and the outward shine, it could not conceal the pervading gloom inside. This kind of a reflection on the regal Taj Mahal, that too by a woman of nineteenth century Bengal, was much ahead of her times. It was also a retrospective wishful thinking on her part without much critical introspection of the historical time the Mughal emperor lived and ruled. In a way, her wish reflected the necessity of shelter homes for helpless, destitute women, probably referring here to the child widows who were in a really pitiable condition in need of shelter and protection away from their marital and natal homes where they mostly lived as unwanted addendum.

While visiting Mathura, Devi suggested that Bengalis who were rich but childless could adopt the healthy orphaned children from Mathura. They were to be given in marriage to Bengali women at a mature age to ensure healthy progeny and a new generation of Bengalis would be born, opposite to the frail and weak image of the present generation. She continued that in our society the caste divisions were so rigid that from among the Brahmins the *Raris* and the *Barendra's* do not get married. This heckled a *kanyadayagrasta pita* or a father who is burdened with the marriage woes of his daughter. Added to that was the demand for a groom who had acquired formal degrees. This heightened their anxieties further. Only political movements were not enough to free the society of its evils. She felt that the social reformers who propagated widow remarriage and opposed child marriage would do equal service if they concentrated on arranging such marriages to benefit the society at large. This point raised two interesting observations by Devi, first, she being increasingly open to the creation of a conflated Bengali self included the regional 'other' in the Bengali 'we'. Second, she pointed out the anxieties that a father having daughters of marriageable age had to go through for arranging their marriage. The Bengali custom of marriage placed the groom's family always at a higher pedestal than the bride's who had to submit to the demands of the groom's family. This had led to a lot of social ills such as dowry and fulfilling its consistent demand which would easily upset the poor Bengali people who had daughters of marriageable age.

Conclusion

The *Aryavarta* of Prasannamayee Devi had its glorious past and its piteous present and she ended her travel account with a plea to the nation of twenty crores to rise and strive together to improve the condition of their own nation. The image she portrays here is of a Hindu nation built on the edifice of a glorious Hindu past. Travel for her was as much to comprehend the colonial present as it was to delineate an Aryan past and her writing bore testimony to that fact.

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POSTCOLONIAL POLITICS AND FRACTURED IDENTITIES IN THE SHORT STORIES OF ISMAT CHUGHTAI

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Abstract*: The tragedy of Partition and the violence associated with it find manifestation in the writings of many writers. Ismat Chughtai's writings', her short stories and some of her essays, have provided critical insight into the psychological dimension of partition and the human cost of it. Her writings on Partition provide a critical framework for the interrogation of the idea of the nation and its quest for identity. The adverse effect partition had on human relationships, the rapture of shared histories, religious divide, displacement and marginalization of identity are some of the subjects of her partition narratives. Her writings provide an interesting insight not only into the political exigencies of Partition but also hinges on the ways postcolonial politics engage with the legacy of partition and its history of communal ideology. The revival of age old unease around issues of religion shows how communal ideologies continue to shape and control collective imagination. In penning down stories about interreligious friendship and love relationship, Chughtai's texts offer possibilities for the recovery of a shared past and cultural plurality. While characterizing the Partition as a failed project of divisive politics, her stories represent the scale of this catastrophe event in terms of its humanitarian and social fallout. The present paper will examine how Chughtai critiques the precarious nature of postcolonial identity and politics through a discussion of her select short stories. The stories taken up for discussion are "Roots" and "Sacred Duty".*

Keywords: *partition, identity, displacement, violence, religion and nation.*

The renowned feminist Ismat Chughtai, one of the four wheels of the Progressive Writers' Association realized the need to be part of the awakening of the impact of colonialism and partition violence on the lives of people through her writings and eventually started dealing with the issues of colonialism, independence, partition violence, nationalism and communalism and their consequences. Though academic focus has mostly been laid on the feminist approach to her work,

Chughtai has also provided her valuable insights into the issue of communalism during the Partition. These issues are the backdrops of many of her non-fictional writings such as "Communal Violence and Literature", "From Bombay to Bhopal" and "My Friend, My Enemy" as well. The changing social, political and religious milieu of the society owing to the country being under colonial rule, and the aftermath of partition that plunged large swathes of the country into extreme violence. This is chronicled in many of her writings.

The stories written on the subject of communalism preceding the Partition and after documents her stance on the shared histories of Hindus and Muslims. She is successful in weaving stories around partition which highlights her critical insights into these issues about community dynamics, religion and the politics surrounding the alienation and religious violence created by the rapture of the shared history of the communities. The socio-political scenario of the nation during those times supplied her with the contents of these commanding creations. Chughtai's humanistic perspective concerning the effect of the partition on people provides the readers a powerful and heartfelt insight into this very historical episode. The turbulence created in the relationships among people, the sense of nostalgia, the blurring of personalities and nationhood and the crisis of identity that left the people perplexed and confused constitute the thematic concern of some of her works on partition. Although Chughtai is not considered as a writer who had significantly dealt with partition narratives in her oeuvre like some of her other contemporaries yet both her fictional and non-fictional writings bear true testimony to the fact that she has tried to provide the centre stage to the momentous events of the partition through a discussion of themes related to many of the issues of partition such as the question of identity, nationalism, displacement and the marginalization of communities and the psychological effects of the rapture of shared history.

In her essay "My Friend My Enemy", Chughtai articulates the trauma and violence experienced by women during Partition. Her narrative of partition focuses on the mental, physical and emotional turmoil faced by women. This aspect of partition violence is thrown light to by Chughtai wherein she documents the tragic fate of women, focusing on their suffering miseries and the humiliation they underwent during this whole period. She presents and studies history from below focusing on the marginalized history. The deeper silence about women's suffering is very unfortunate where these issues do not find the centrestage and Chughtai's fiction voices it through a representational art that cuts across class and caste lives. Due to the rigidity of patriarchal norms and societal structures, to talk about these issues

remains a taboo in an Islamic Indian society and therefore such discussions are pushed to the periphery. Chughtai delves deep into them providing the readers thought provoking insights into this sensitive issue of female oppression during the partition which is generally overlooked if historical evidences are taken under consideration.

Partition literature tends to make space for the women issue regarding partition to get documented in their works. Again, the emotional crisis and psychological trauma related to partition is studied under the lens of feminism which questions the selfhood of women during this period along with interpreting the suppressed feelings of the protagonists. It is noteworthy and very obvious that communal tension, migration and partition violence had an adverse effect on the lives of women making their lives terrible. Her essay "Communal Violence and Literature" is also taken under consideration while discussing these issues wherein she delineates her personal take on them as she happens to witness the trauma of partition. This essay serves as documents of her personal experience about partition. Tracing the sufferings and anguish of women as victims of partition, she writes about the lives of women affected by homelessness, identity crises and sexual violence. Chughtai foregrounds in explicit terms the specific horrors of partition in the lives of women where strong undercurrents of trauma related to displacement and the loss of physical security forms a core aspect of their identity and subjectivity.

The stories taken up for discussion are "Roots" and "Sacred Duty". There are other works by Chughtai written on similar themes and issues such as "My Child" and "Green Bangles". "My Child" composed in 1940, a few years before Partition is a story that highlights communal tension with its introduction of gruesome scenes of bloodshed and terror. At the heart of this turmoil is a moving subplot regarding a love story between a Muslim guy and a Hindu girl who previously saved the former from a group of goons. A child serves as the medium in uniting them whose custody they receive. Again, *Green Bangles* celebrates the birth of a new India amidst the turmoil of Partition violence. The drama deals with the destruction of the lives of two families concerned about religious riots. Chughtai has also written screenplays for Hindi cinema. The movie *Garam Hawa* is based on a short story of Chughtai that never got published and takes a closer look at the idea of belonging and non belonging in the context of postcolonial Indian society and the growing influence of religious nationalism.

Nationalism and Religion

Historically even though religion and nationalism have been considered as important markers of individual and communal identity, it was the coming of secular modernity that displaced religion with nationalism as a carrier of genealogical identity of groups and communities (Mentzel 2020). This became a dominant narrative of the modern times where religious affiliation was replaced by the more rational, secular and public entity of the nation state and its citizen subjects. However, what complicates the idea of nationalism as a secular and modern marker of individual and group identification has been the resurgence in ethnic and religious self identification that was seen towards the end of the twentieth century. While it is true that religion and nationalism as two different forms of self identification had always existed in some sort of tension, it is in the latter half of the twentieth century that religion as a marker of identity makes a return in new formations of religious nationalism in different parts of the world. This has complicated the understanding of nationalism as "primarily a modern, secular phenomenon by bringing religion back into the discussion" (Mentzel 1).

One of the ways modernity defined the discourse of nationalism was through the frame of secularization that pushed the narrative of religion to the private space: religion came to be seen as something personal and private as opposed to and separate from the public self. The public self was fashioned after the enlightenment ideas of rationality that viewed itself as a citizen subject and had its allegiance primarily to national identity. Many other critics have also raised questions against this modernist orthodoxy of secular nationalism. Some other critics have expunged the secular idea of the nation while linking it to form of religious nationalism. This is mostly seen in the context of Islamic nations, where religion is the grounding force for the formation of a nation. Therefore, religious nationalism and secular nationalism exist as two distinct yet complementary entities.

While analyzing the concept of nation and nationalism, Benedict Anderson in his book *Imagined Community* defines nation as an imagined political community, a group of people who belong to a particular class and similar cultural trait (Anderson 2006). As has been pointed out by postcolonial scholars like Fanon, in many of the newly decolonized nations from Africa and Asia nationalism soon regressed into a slogan of narrow parochial division of ethnic and religious identification (Fanon 1963). Fanon had pointed out the conflictual nature of the postcolonial bourgeois and its nationalistic attitudes borrowed and fashioned out of European ideas that that slowly shows itself as being out of touch with the realities of postcolonial societies and its people and the dangers it presents to any nation

that blindly tries to copy it without any proper awareness of the often plural and diverse linguistic and ethnic groups that comprise much of the postcolonial societies of Asia and Africa. Others like Tagore has also expressed doubts involving the inherent danger in embracing an ideology of nationalism modeled on European ideas of nation and nationality (Tagore, 1917).

Roots: Nation and community

Set in Marwar, "Roots" in particular portrays the lives of two families of different religions just before the declaration of partition of India and Pakistan. The complex relationship among people belonging to different religions caught in the changing cultural scenario due to the British Raj and ultimately partition is well depicted by Chughtai in the story. "The flood of communal violence came and went with all its evils, but it left a pile of living, dead, and gasping corpses in its wake. It wasn't only that the country was split in two—bodies and minds were also divided" (Chughtai MEFE 3). In the beginning of the story, Chughtai mentions that during that period gradually communal violence reached its height and Muslims of the city had to live under obstruction as the houses were padlocked. "In any case, filth spreads where there is a surfeit of children, poverty and ignorance—preying grounds for religious fanaticism, the seeds of which had already been sown". (Chughtai LTV 199). The narrator's family was in very close associations with the Hindu doctor Roopchand's family. Though both the families shared different religious beliefs yet religious difference could not affect their relationship or sense of familial kinship.

It is to be noted that communal harmony was at its heights between the two families before the formation of Pakistan. At one point of time the formation of Pakistan was not taken seriously. Moreover, Roopchandji and Abba would dream of the formation of United Asia. People in a very light hearted manner would discuss the issues of political affairs of the country. Chughtai has very beautifully interwoven the joys and sorrows of two families with partition taking in charge of the whole scenario and changing it. The idea of formation of nation gradually started creating minor conflicts between the families. It was unimaginable that the silly scribbling of "Pakistan Zindabad" and "Akhand Hindustan" in a trivial way would take such terrible turns that the police would have to intervene into the matter. Gradually with the passage of time things took different turn wherein politics and communal issues started dominating the age-old friendship between the two families. It was understood that things would not remain the same when the Indian flag was hoisted over Roopchand's house and the Muslim League flag on the roof of the narrator's house. Chughtai referred to this situation and focused on it

in her essay and discussed in detail the horrors of communal violence that was the driving force in creating division among people. “What a tragedy that they divided freedom into two parts and handed them to the people, saying “Pakistan is for the Pakistanis and Hindustan is for the Hindustanis”. (Chughai MFME 5-6). The influx of refugees made situations haunting and tantalizing. People arrived in half dead states. The worst form of communal rivalry can be visualized when Bareebhai started calling the Hindus ‘kafir’ and started interrogating Amma if she wanted to get killed by one of them by staying back in India.

Again, it is seen that the Urdu short story writers of this period also focused on the maintenance of communal harmony among the people. “However, the Urdu short story, instead of stressing on these barbaric acts, focused mainly on human friendship and courageous acts of rescuing each other” (Masud 132). Chughtai’s stories however go beyond the superficial niceties of polite society to expose the lurking threats and underlying tensions that strained the best of relationships and friendship. She has woven a narrative encompassing two families bearing religious differences yet sharing mutual love, respect and a sense of fraternity. “But in this entire phase of the nationalist struggle, the crucial need was to protect, preserve and strengthen the inner core of the national culture, its spiritual essence.” (Chatterjee 624). Chughtai unfurls how partition which meant to create differences and division failed to affect the relationship between these two families. On the contrary Roopchand proved instrumental in reuniting the narrator’s family by bringing the other members of the family back to their native place where Amma had stayed back. Roopchand underwent terrible mental trauma to witness the plight of the narrator’s family. “The houses acquired a haunted, ghostly appearance, and their portals sang the elegy of a bygone era” (Masud 133). The empty house of his neighbour threw him into deep convulsion making him feel as if he himself had broken it. When he had a feeling as if that very inanimate object was mocking at him he drove his car and went out to fetch the narrator’s family. Even though the story is written in the backdrop of partition violence, the story shows a humanitarian attitude at the end by reconciling the two warring families.

Partition, Migration and Displacement

The traumatizing effect of partition on the mind of the protagonist, Amma during such a terrible time is also highlighted in the story. The emotional conflict and turmoil that the characters undergo at the onset of partition and India’s battle for independence from the British Raj is depicted in the story. Chughtai has written this story from the perspective of Amma and she unfolds the terrors of partition which impacted the lives of many families basically the womenfolk during those

times The tortures meted out to women do not find place in history and writers fictionally represent the saga of their sad tales. "Women were in most cases the worst sufferers who endured pain and grief, faced enmity, humiliation and suffering and above all, nostalgia for their lost homeland and were left in new surroundings with a heart divided" (Ali 427). Amma's nightmare bears true testimony to the horrors of violence that affected the minds of people adversely during partition wherein she dreamt of her daughter-in-law being strolled unclothed and her grandchildren being slaughtered ruthlessly. Amma was terrified at the thought of any evil that might happen to her children and grandchildren who left their homeland.

Chughtai captures the saga of displacement and victimization of women during partition through the figure of Amma. She captures the excruciating and heart-wrenching condition of a class of people who are forced to leave their native place for an alien one. People had already started migrating to different places when the story began. Chughtai depicts brilliantly the turbulence that accompanied the Partition created with the loss of security of people belonging to different communities in India which resulted in their non- belongingness. Amma's love for her native place gets reflected when the narrator's family left for Pakistan but Amma remained stubborn in her decision of not leaving the place where she was born and spent her whole life during the onset of partition. "A large section of Muslims in India were nationalistic, and therefore opposed to the Partition. They, as well as many other Muslims, had chosen to remain in India. Despite this, they had to, at every step, face the nation that with the formation of Pakistan, they must leave India and that it had no place for them" (Masud 131).

Again, the issue of home and homelessness is a major theme of the story. Amma was apprehensive of whether her family would be able to adjust themselves in the new land or they would have to come back to their native place again. Even if they came back, she was unsure if they would be able to cope up again with their homeland. A sense of non-belongingness to the new land is all pervasive throughout the story. Amma was distressed at the question of 'our land'. According to her the land where she was born and had spent her life was her own land. She was startled to learn that people of her community were of the belief that the newly formed Pakistan is gaining the tag of their own place in her hearts and minds. She could never call a new place her homeland. The question of identity, belongingness and the idea of nation come to the fore when Amma takes such a strong decision. Amma did not let attachment to religion take over her love for the nation and stands by her resolution.

Memory: Making sense of trauma

The thought of the pain of separation from the members of her family that created agonizing impact on Amma's heart and soul is touching to the readers. Her recalling of the past old good days with passionate intensity is touching. "Memory is a bridge between the past and the present. It is an act of putting together of the decentered part to make sense of the trauma of the present" (Deb 24). She elaborates as to how she had been lighting a lamp at the spot throughout all these years where her husband had breathed his last. Due to the memories attached to the roles that she played as a wife and mother in India, she feels the attachment to the nation.

> It was here that the ghunghat was lifted from the moon-like face of the young and timorous bride who had surrendered her life to her husband. In the room on the other side, her eldest daughter had been born, whose memory pierced though the heart like lightening. There, in the corner, her umbilical cord was buried […] In fact, all her children had their umbilical cords buried there. (Chughtai LTV 207-208)

Again, Chughtai in a very skillful manner depicts the dependence of women on their husbands in every affair of their life when she mentions that the women used to take side of the political party that their husbands patronized. "Ironically, while the "liberal "and "civilizing" arm of the colonial state was disabled by indigenous opposition, the enhancement of male control over women happened relatively quietly, often at the initiative of the colonial state and without nationalist opposition" (Sen 13).

Sacred Duty: Interreligious relationship and the interrogation of communal ideologies

"Sacred Duty" demonstrates the existing communal tension in India and how the implementation of some strict religious rites made an inter-religious couple struggle hard against the wishes of their parents and the society to get united. Unlike "Roots", partition violence and riots are not a context of exploration in "Sacred Duty". Instead it highlights the hostile and chaotic situation of the country concerning religious conflicts and communal disharmony that prevailed after the partition of the country. "The resultant displacement of millions, the mayhem that accompanied cross- border migrations, and the impetus it gave to communal ideology have been examined and analyzed by historians, social scientist and more recently by feminists and cultural anthropologists" (Bodh 194)."Sacred Duty" introduces the readers to two families of different religions who otherwise share

good relationships until they come to know that their children are in love and have got married against their wishes. Written in the post-independence era of eighties the story delineates the social and religious rivalry between the Hindus and the Muslims which ultimately leads to ruining of peace and social unrest in the society. Historically speaking, the seeds of communalism which were sprouting before independence of the country instead of declining have only become stronger and have reemerged in the form of majoritarian politics.

The outwardly maintained peaceful scenario by the two families of religious tolerance is lambasted when Samina elopes with Tushar. Receiving the letter of Samina where it is mentioned that she had gone away with Tushar to live with him has left him unnerved and made his blood curdle. Siddique Saheb's wrath is so strong that he contemplates to kill him with a gun and both the parents of Samina envision to grab their daughter's neck with their own hands when the thought of grandchild hit their minds. What the story perhaps presents is an interrogation of facile liberalism in Independent India. To save the family from disgrace Siddique Saheb and his wife had to give out a fib that Samina was down with pneumonia. The difference in theory and practice is revealed when both the families forcibly try to convert the children to their respective religions. Here in this story Chughtai depicts how society's jingoistic feelings towards religion affect people's personal lives making them undergo a lot of trouble and suffer at the hands of the society. "The partition became a metaphor for the post-independence communal divide" (Ravikant and Saint XVIII). Hypocritical nature of the people of the society is reflected when it is viewed that Siddique Sahib who otherwise considers him as a progressive individual and pretends to believe in liberal and secular ideology but is privately intolerant of religious difference. The story reveals and exposes the so-called progressive people's real faces who in a way try hard to meet up with codes of modernity in a very dubious and hypocritical way. "Free from prejudices he lived a life of respectability among liberal minded people. But that didn't mean that his blood wouldn't boil if his daughter went astray" (Chughtai LTV 130). Chughtai's story thus exposes the socio-religious fault lines where what is acceptable in terms of liberal ideology in public is considered a threat to one's one personal and collective identity and is certainly not to be practiced in the private realm of the family. As noted by a critic, "Communal ideologies still exercised their hold on the collective imagination, leading to an unprecedented ghettonization of culture" (Ravikant and Saint XXI).

Conclusion

Thus, her writings on the Partition provide a critical framework for the interrogation of the idea of the nation and its quest for identity. The adverse effect partition had on human relationships, the rapture of shared histories, religious divide, displacement and marginalization of identity find place in her works. It is seen that writings provide an interesting insight not only into the political exigencies of Partition but also hinges on the ways postcolonial politics engage with the legacy of partition and its history of communal ideology. The revival of age old unease around issues of religion shows how communal ideologies continue to shape and control collective imagination. In penning down stories about interreligious friendship and love relationship, Chughtai's texts offer possibilities for the recovery of a shared past and cultural plurality. Chughtai while trying to deconstruct the cultural discordance between communities also focuses on the social constructs that creates prejudices among people regarding culture, ethnicity and religious affiliation.

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EVACUATION AND DIASPORIC CONGRUENCE IN AN UNPRECEDENTED WORLD: A CRITICAL EXPLICATION OF DIASPORA IN RITA CHOUDHURY'S *CHINATOWN DAYS*

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Abstract: *It needs no special reiteration that Diaspora and its ramification have always been staggeringly painful and excruciatingly difficult for human beings to cope with. Whenever there is a scenario of someone getting displaced from their native land, there is inevitably the advent of unseen trauma and traumatic scenarios which render a particular individual helpless. Although migration to a different place or diasporic movement as such is generally considered to be beneficial for the individuals; it is not always the case in every migratory displacement. What really follows after a process of migration is utterly difficult in terms of penning down in words and narrating them in terms of experiences. The simple reason for this is along with a physical displacement of a particular individual there is also the ontological displacement as well. This paper is an attempt in order to pen down the inherent pain and trauma which is associated with the process of diaspora. The methodology which this paper has adopted is qualitative and the design of the research is analytical. The paper will take into account of the idea of identity by Erik Erikson in order to explicate the intricately connected layers of pain and sufferings of the displaced people.*

Keywords: *diaspora, identity, migration, native, trauma*

The process of diaspora has always been one of the significant aspects which is connected to the overall position of individuals in the society. Whenever there is the scenario of a group of individuals moving out of their native land, there is inevitably a picture adorned with chaos and anarchy. The repercussions of the same seem to manifest in ways which are beyond the comprehension of human beings as the core of an individual- the identity seems to get threatened if not demolished at one go. The identity of a particular person comes under serious scrutiny and question during migration because whenever a person moves out from the native place, he or she no longer remains with one identity. There are unseen and umpteen numbers of attempts made by a displaced individual in order to come to terms with the displaced experience. However, as a general scenario it can safely be assumed that the particular individual cannot reconcile with the displaced state of the mind. Although the very idea of the identity of an individual has been tried to define and

explicate by numerous scholars, it becomes very difficult to stick to one specific comprehension of the term. However, the Freudian critic, Erik Erikson stands tall with his following definition of identity. Identity, as Erikson says,

> A subjective sense as well as an observable quality of personal sameness and continuity, paired with some belief in the sameness and continuity of some shared world image. As a quality of unselfconscious living, this can be gloriously obvious in a young person who has found himself as he has found his communality. In him we see emerge a unique unification of what is irreversibly given--that is, body type and temperament, giftedness and vulnerability, infantile models and acquired ideals--with the open choices provided in available roles, occupational possibilities, values offered, mentors met, friendships made, and first sexual encounters. (22-23)

The enticing novel *Chinatown Days* by one of the stalwarts of Assamese literature, Rita Chowdhury can easily be considered to be the sheer explication of the troubles and the painful situations of displaced individuals. Rita Chowdhury, in the novel, depicts a very heart-wrenching scenario of the tea workers, shoe makers, and carpenters who struggled both with their identity and position of the self in the society. In the novel, it can very well be visualized that indentured laborers do not have liberty of their own. Chowdhury also very well showcases the plight of the of the women by portraying that getting married, bearing children without permission were almost intolerable. To critically substantiate the pain and sufferings of the poor tea workers, the author depicts the painful death of Ho Yen in front of other Chinese or indentured workers which leaves everybody traumatized and shattered and "Suhagmoni returned completely destroyed, physically and mentally…. The manager threw her out, for he did not want a pregnant woman without relatives (Chowdhury 97)." This very instance is a sheer manifestation of the pain a person has to go through if he/she ever tries to free himself/herself from the manacles of their masters. For the rulers the slaves were nothing but animals "who could be whipped and kicked at will" (Chowdhury 98).

Chinatown Days is an intergenerational story about how indentured Chinese laborers were brought to a remote corner in Assam to plant tea and were forced to live under disagreeable conditions with irreclaimable identity. Here, they painfully and slowly assimilate through intermarriages, social relations and economic break outs; the very safety and roots of the community is rendered fragile with questions of their loyalty and real identity. It was seen that the Britishers glaringly failed to get hold of the market associated with tea which is controlled and owned by the Chinese people. The different traders who have come from Europe to trade were

seen to be living at the whims and fancies of the Chinese people which relegated their identity to a great extent. Chowdhury depicts that the so called people from the foreign lands were never allowed to a part of the mainstream European market. As she says, "The Europeans were at severe disadvantage, as the Chinese were not willing to exchange tea for anything but silver." (Chowdhury 17). It also has to be understood that the identity of individuals has always been an aspect which is related to the social environment at large. The arguments put forward by Schick are of paramount importance in this regard. He opines

> Identity is the socially constructed, socially sanctioned (or at least recognized) complex of self significations deriving from an individual's membership in such collectivities as class, race, gender, sexuality . . . [i]t plays a decisive role in human behaviour: one acts from a certain positionality and in accordance with a certain worldview or set of values deeply rooted in identity. At the same time, identity is never 'complete'; rather, it is always under construction. To put it more explicitly, identity is not an object but *a process. . . . identity is (a) representation, and the representation of identity, whether to oneself or to others, is in fact its very construction.* (19 original italics)

It was seen that Ah Chin, an indentured worker in the novel was brought to Assam along with Ho Han from China. Chowdhury depicts that he gets married to a lady and bears children, yet he longs for his family in China "who died long before he went there" (Chowdhury 33). It was seen that he constantly weeps for his first wife which disheartens Dukhi (Ah Chin's second wife in Assam). The new life and the new family too were not sufficient to console and comfort Ah Chin. When asked about his health Dukhi replies: "Don't ask me about him. Perhaps it would have been better if he hadn't gone to China after all…He keeps weeping. He talks of his children back in China and weeps. He remembers his parents who died…." (Chowdhury 98). Propelled displacement of the Chinese individuals fetches in the subject of individuality which is pitted against the impulse of analysis of the purest state of identity in the novel. The characters in *Chinatown Days* precisely determine themselves with an establishment, and thereby frequently describe a longing to return to the place of their origin. Thus, it becomes glaringly evident that the identity of an individual gets structured by

> . . . a wide variety of authority figures and institutions . . . led to believe that we have the freedom and ability to create and re-create our "selves" at will, . . . but at the same time are presented with a suspiciously narrow

> range of options that will allow us to fit comfortably into society . . .. (Hall 1)

Chowdhury's novel concentrates on the misplacement of culture and individuality. The adherence and diligent engagement in their vocation too never obtained the indentured slaves into a standing where they could retain the power to interrogate the sovereignty. They had to encounter an identity predicament due to the political, social, and cultural subjugation of Indian and Chinese people. The Indo-China War of 1962 had a pivotal effect in the lives of the Chinese. The novel takes us to history and exemplifies the radical condition of the people where the Chinese members in the families were separated from their Assamese partners, and even mothers with newborns were apprehended and deported along with children of Chinese origin who accomplished nothing about their own culture. It was seen that they were sent on inhuman journeys to the Deoli incarceration camp in Rajasthan, without sufficient food or water, where other Indian stroked them, blurted catchphrases at them, and indicted them of being "Chinese spies;" sometimes, family betrays family, and homes torn apart. Hence, there was the clear instance of cultural fogeyism and loss of self-identity of the people. They were neither accepted as descendants of Indian origin nor Chinese. It was seen that the different migrants from China were first brought to the land of Penang as "Penang was a major distribution centre for the coolie trade" (Chowdhury 55).

The best-seller operates as a backdrop of the undocumented narrative of the Chinese Assamese and expands several issues correlated to mortal privileges, peripheral politics as well as the colonial, political factors concerning hundreds of uncomprehending powerless individuals who simply cannot apprehend why such serendipity should befall them. It is the documentation of the years, an occurrence in past greatly disregarded or supervised by chroniclers of both nations but retained humming in the living memories of people either word-for-word or indirectly stimulated by the experiences. The book displays heartrending emotional stories of alienation and uprooting. Chowdhury depicts that two workers, Ho Han and Ho Yen were working as tin mine workers before finally landing in the land of Calcutta. However, as luck would befall them, they realized that they were to move to Assam from Kolkata so that they could be the part of tea garden workers in the land of Assam. Lum Kwa, one of the many agents from Chinese opined that there were numerous families and people from China who were residing in Calcutta. As he remarked in front of Ho Han

> …a Chinese called Yong Atchew first came here to live. He set up a sugar mill. He brought with him a hundred Chinese men who knew how to make

> sugar. But the mill was a failure and a few years later, Yong Atchew passed away. However, the workers stayed on. Some Chinese sailors who ran away from their ships also stayed on here and in this way a lot of people from China, especially from Kwangtung, came to be residents in this city. (Chowdhury 58)

The 1962 Indo-China conflict ravaged their lives and pursuits; positioned them at the edge with inexplicable individuality. Subjected to innuendoes, trepidations, and derisions, Chinese people were segregated and hurled into faraway penitentiaries. The subject of their individuality is one of the paramount facets that positioned them in tribulation during banishment and deportation, and this concept is negotiated with in detail by the writer concerning their concussion and pain. In this regard, *Chinatown Days* demystifies the concept of Assamese essence as an all-inclusive splendor. They are persecuted because of their Chinese lineage and they evolve as a member of 'no man's land' and neither nation is inclined to acknowledge them as theirs. The novel, if observed carefully, can easily be aligned in line with what Marshall Sahlins has rightly remarked in relation to civilization and the associated rule there.

> In all aforementioned civilizations, basically composed of kith and kin, diverse lineages and clans, the ruler as above society is also considered beyond it. As he is beyond it morally, so he is from the beyond, and his advent is a kind of a terrible epiphany. It is a remarkable common fact that the great chiefs and kings of the political society are not of the people they rule. (Sahlins 111).

As war victims, Chowdhury portrays that they accumulate and recollect traumatic memories frequently inside their bodies and intellects as mortal evidence of political expulsion. War is a federal concussion that saturates individual lives and generates failures, deaths, and endless despair for the people. It was glaringly observed that the different communities of Chinese people in Assam seemed to live in a caught between state with a fluctuating identity. This echoes the arguments put forward by Erikson when he stated that the identity of an individual is the product of numerous factors and the sources form

> a configuration [which] is gradually established by successive ego syntheses and resyntheses. . . It is a configuration gradually integrating constitutional givens, idiosyncratic libinal needs, favored capacities, significant identifications, effective defenses, successful sublimations, and consistent roles. (163)

In *Chinatown Days*, the writer delivers nuanced portrayals of loss of humanity during traumatic junctures along with family reunions in the site of concussion and its aftermath. Chowdhury pens down a captivating narration of the plight of the Chinese workers in Assam as they were devoid of a proper identity and were torn between a fluctuating position of their soul. Chowdhury remarks, "A part of their divided heart and divided identity! This was a foreign state now, an enemy of China. No doors were left open for return! No passage back to their dear ones! No gateway to their own society! (Chowdhury 324)

Chinatown Days is to be read in terms of the dreadful colonial aftermath that affected the lawmakers of the 1960s. It attracts concentration to the marginalization and dehumanization of juvenile individuals who desired frivolity and tranquil assimilation in their adoptive homeland. But the invasive policy of the continent allowed the emotions of both the Assamese and the Sino-Assamese to be crushed secretive. Chowdhury depicts that tea played a very important part in the different turns and twists of the novel by portraying the character of Robert Bruce whose sole aim, as it was seen, was to land in the kingdom of the Singphos and meet up Bisa Gamm, the head of the kingdom to enquire about tea. Chowdhury narrates the presence of Bruce in front of the native people in the following words, "The ghat was teeming with men, women and children. Eyes shining with curiosity, they were looking at the boats and the boatmen, especially at the strange clothes that Robert was wearing" (Chowdhury 17). Also, it became vividly evident in the novel that the local people clearly gave in to the aims of Bruce as they regarded him to be an outsider who would work for the betterment of the people. Chowdhury pens down an instance where the local people have clearly accepted him. She says,

> The two men with pigtails, however, looked well-fed and there was no sign of impoverishment on their attire. One of them was dressed in fine silk. His chubby face, bright countenance and well-made clothes smacked of wealth. The other man, although dressed like an ordinary villager, wore clean cotton clothes and looked healthy. He was a broker, a middleman; he looked after buying and selling of human beings. (Chowdhury 24)

All told, the novel, thus, is a clear portrayal of the perennial crisis of marginalization that the neighboring states of North East India had to mourn, and how petite the individual experience of the individuals here has counted to the policymakers at the center. The novel has a historical disquisition with citations of 'date and place, eyewitness accounts, starting with the author's grandfather being the first person to bring to her notice these events that he had personally witnessed. It delves into a place where the individual freedom of people has been fiddled with

and assumed extraneous. In disclosing the repressive condition of the impoverished in China and their dehumanization in India, the text emphasizes the dogma of the policymakers in any given society. The novel appeals to be read in continuum with the chronology of the Indo-China war and its instantaneous as well as a far-reaching consequence on both India and China.

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THE IMAGE OF ASSAM IN COLONIAL WOMEN'S TRAVEL WRITING: A STUDY OF VICKLAND'S *WOMEN OF ASSAM* AND MOORE'S *STRAY LEAVES FROM ASSAM*

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Abstract: *The nineteenth century travel writings provide deep insights into the discourse of the colonisers. The relationship between culture and power can be critically examined in such writings through their representation of cultures and societies. Over the past few years, women's travel writing, especially those that belonged to the colonial period has achieved greater importance as such writing can offer a profound understanding of the various issues relating to colonialism, gender and power. This paper thus aims to explore the work of women colonial travel writers on Assam during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. The texts chosen for this paper are Ellen Elizabeth Vickland's Women of Assam (1928) and P.H. Moore's Stray leaves from Assam (1916). This paper examines how travel narratives provide information about places, people, culture and politics even though they deal with travel experiences with special emphasis on the everyday Indian life and the presence of 'othering' in their narratives. It also observes the work of missionary women of the American Baptist Missionaries and how these agencies are strongly connected to colonialism, despite their rigorous attempt to meet the native people of Assam through their religious and social work. This paper also highlights the representation of women of Assam in the genre of colonial women's travel writing with specific references to the chosen texts for this paper. As both these women writers represented a part of the colonial project, their chronicles are seen to be in strong support of colonialism mostly in favour of colonization of Assam and its people.*

Keywords*: Colonialism, women, travel writing, Europeans, colonization, othering, religion, missionary, representation, Assam.*

The situations faced by the women writers before the period of female emancipation and after the war in the context of popular feminism influences the way these women writers approach the East, basically India, in terms of their reasons for travel, their sense of identity when travelling, their desire to be a part of the culture of the native people and their attitude towards the native society.

In the 21st century, any kind of discussion that deals with the Westerners historical views of India, it typically begins with the Orientalist discourse of Edward Said, who was deeply aware about the colonial project and the importance of India in it:

> (B)y the late 19th century India had become the greatest, most durable, and most profitable of all British, perhaps even European, colonial possessions. From the time the first British expedition arrived there in 1608 until the last British viceroy departed in 1947, India had a massive influence on British life, in commerce and trade, industry and politics, ideology and war, culture and the life of the imagination. (Said, 1993: 160).

On the other hand, the Christian missionaries played an important role in the upliftment of the colonized people through Christianity and westernization. When the colonial rulers failed to dominate the people through 'guns' they took the help of the Christian missionaries to influence the people through the holy 'Bible'. When the Britishers occupied India and all other provinces one after another, especially in North-eastern part of India, which was mostly inhabited by numerous tribes were very violent and independent and therefore, the Britishers seek the help of the Christian missionaries to tackle with the issues owing to the dominating of people in the area in the name of religion and civilization. Ellen Elizabeth Vickland was also one such woman who belonged to the missionary and stepped into the soil of Assam through such a purpose during the early twentieth century. *Women of Assam* is a book by Ellen Elizabeth Vickland, published in 1928 where she provided her opinions on the women of Assam, their way of living and her experiences with them during her stay in Assam owing to her work in missionaries.

On the other hand, Mrs. P.H. Moore was also another woman who belonged to the missionary and shared her experiences through her book *Stray Leaves from Assam: A Continuation of My Journal "Twenty Years in Assam", "Further Leaves from Assam", and "Autumn Leaves from Assam"* where she jotted down her experiences in Assam along with her husband. She also mentions the various contributions made by the Missionaries in the field of education of women mostly.

This paper also proposes an analysis of selected colonial travel writing texts on Assam with the help of postcolonial travel theories. This study tries to explore various aspects in the narratives written on Assam during the nineteenth and early twentieth century by the American and the European travellers on Assam. It also explores the different kinds of methods used by the colonial travellers while representing the inferior 'other'. While representing the 'other' one can figure out a lot of similarities and differences in the attitudes of the travellers and the

position of their subjects and also through their narratives which includes the political, cultural and economic factors that contributed towards the writings.

Furthermore, this study also addresses the role of gender in the representation of the 'other.' It is an attempt to find whether the discourse provided by women travel writers who basically belonged to the missionaries is different from their male counterparts in holding the position of the colonialist.

Thompson argues that, "a degree of fictionality is thus inherent in all travel accounts" (28). Travel writing is where a traveller narrates his travel experiences to a travel text and these travel writers accomplishes this task by undergoing a process of selection and rejection. Everything they experience while travelling is not necessarily included in the text, on the other hand, some amount of fictional events are added into it as these writers construct certain images of places and people into it which persistently also leads to question the authenticity of the narrative itself. This process of selection and rejection is done with the sole colonialist motive mostly in the colonial texts. Many times, the narrator employs a persuasive method to establish the significance of colonization and in order to justify their actions of colonising the people they include certain anecdotes. Thereby, this proposed study also proposes to explore these aspects in brief to investigate the consistency of the narratives put forward in these texts by these writers.

The representation of the 'other' can be studied in travel writing genre and mostly in postcolonial criticism it is observed in terms of European ethnocentrism. The 'self' of the colonizer is constructed on the basis of the colonized 'other' which puts the colonizer in a superior position.

Aime Cesaire in his essay "Discourse on Colonialism" (1955) mentions that there is an endless distance between colonization and civilization. The relationship between the colonizer and the colonized is only seen on the basis of domination and submission. As the result of colonisation the colonized people are being robbed of their religion, beliefs, culture and their indigenous way of leading life by the colonizers.

In order to legitimize the conduct of agents of imperialism in the colonized region, the 'othering' of the colonized was done as a part of the colonized project. Edward Said, an influential postcolonial critic discusses the 'othering' and also puts forward the construction of both the orient and the occident in his *Orientalism* (1978). The relationship between the west and the east is based on privileging one over the other where the east remains dominant and submissive.

Jyotsna G. Singh, in her *Colonial Narratives/ Cultural Dialogues* (1996) talks about the projection of India in terms of otherness and disparity by the British travellers. They considered their own culture to be the structured norm against the uncivilized attitudes of the natives. After making such representation, the colonialists also put forward their justification by claiming it as the white man's burden.

The Assam Mission which was initially called the Shan Mission, was established in 1836 at Sadiya in Upper Assam. The first Baptist missionaries to come to this region were Reverend Nathan Brown and Oliver Cutter. Their advent introduced new transformation to this native land as they brought the printing press which helped immensely in contributing to Assamese language and literature. The arrival of the American Baptist Missionaries was fully planned by the colonial government as a part of their policies.

The selfless efforts of the missionaries are indicated towards maintaining a cultural and religious hegemony in the native lands in order to achieve colonial hegemony. Many women missionaries who came to Assam shared their experiences about the native land. Their writings portrayed their understanding of the land and therefore, it is important as well to revisit those writings which may be published in the form of books but originally written in the form of journals, letters, diaries, etc. which actually helps in getting an idea about the image of Assam through their gaze. In the words of Vickland in *Women of Assam*, Assam is called the "Land of the Bulbul". Assam is being described as, "A land of mystery and charm, the Vidarbha of India's sacred books, the stage of hero exploits of ancient folk-lore." (Vickland, *Women of Assam* She also discusses about the life and status of women in Assam consisting of women belonging specially to Hindu, Muslim and Christian primarily by deliberately making a comparison between them and also a kind of progression is observed as we move through the book. In *With Christ in Assam*, Vickland's understanding of Assam or India and America or Europe is reflected as she sees it on the basis of 'binaries' along with a comparison between the East and the West such as – dirty-clean, ignorance-wisdom, ugly- beautiful, etc. Vickland describes the Hindu Gods, Lord Krishna as 'blue-skinned' and 'hero- god' and Goddess Saraswati as 'patron of beauty, music and learning'. She compares the images of the Hindu Gods and Goddesses with the Christian God and criticizes the Hindu people for worshipping the 'ugly deformity' based on her selection of Jagannath and Kali. She finds Hindu holy places to be full of disorder and chaos unlike the serenity in the Christian church. She calls the Indian 'an orphaned child –lonely, hungry, full

of fear lifting its hands in prayer to the vast sky' (72) and therefore it needed the benefit of Christianity.

The missionaries were in full dedication to promote Christian education in Assam. Vickland says, "Religion a burden. Life fast in the hands of an unscrutable Fate. Caste paralyzes all of its life with irons." (Vickland, *Women of Assam* 60) They believed that Hinduism stood as a hindrance in developing the minds of the natives as they were only pushed into darkness. They only focussed on the evils of Hinduism such as human sacrifices before the Hindu Gods and Goddesses and how it constrained the lives of the people. For them, the Christian God could only bring them to light with the help of Christian education. Christianity paved a way for a new kind of living by igniting their minds with ideologies and new unfamiliar experiences. The Missionary travel literature justifies these acts of missionaries to contribute in the upliftment of the lives of the natives along with an aim to prove the superiority of Christianity by highlighting the evils of other religions, especially Hinduism.

Moreover, there is a close relationship between the missionaries and the colonial governance as they tried to emphasise the significance of the Mission and Christian education as well as vernacularism in the colonialist project which is an interesting example of 'anti- conquest' othering. This is evident in Vickland's *Women of Assam* as she talks about the constant efforts of the missionary women to build up a close relationship with the women belonging to various religious backgrounds so that they could establish their own colonial conquest through this by gradually observing and entering into their minds, examining their weakness and deliberately reminding them of their backwardness and the need for development by adopting modern ways of living and leaving behind their traditional ways. A close observation of these native minds led them to colonize these people by making them feel inferior to be born into a religion like Hinduism or Islam which restrict their lives within a certain convention thus not letting them to enjoy the freedom given by Christianity.

The colonial government strategically decided to send couples as missionaries so that along with their husbands, these women could also play as a designated role to assist the works of the mission by taking up responsibility in teaching language and reading. The roles of these wives are documented in their writings which are published in the form of memoirs, diaries, travel and ethnographic accounts. Women gradually began to gain recognition as they were able to access certain spaces where their male counterparts failed to connect. Similarly, Mrs. P.H. Moore in her *Stray Leaves from Assam* talks about her work experiences in her 36

years of stay in Assam with her husband Rev. Pitt Holland Moore. Mrs. P.H. Moore dedicates the first two pages of the book to Assam as she mentions about the province of Assam; the Assamese people, their origin and the various other tribes residing in this province. Even if they are different from each other because of their ethnic tribes they are termed as 'Assamese'. She also mentions the several plain and the hill stations along with the headquarters of three tribal missions. She then moves on to jot down the pronunciation of Assamese vowels and definition of several vernacular words that are used in the book. This also provides guidance to the foreign readers who take a keen interest in reading the book and also implies to some extent about her knowledge and proficiency of the Assamese language and its uses that she had learned during her long stay in this province.

The image of Assam is juxtaposed mostly in her letters to her daughter Clara Mr. Moore, she mentions that her work in the missionary limits her life to a certain extent because of their role that they have to fulfil in the Assam Mission, and this according to her has been assigned to them by God and therefore, they have to carry on with their duties in any way possible even if it's not their choice. She said, "I feel for myself that my own life becomes more and more circumscribed within the limits of my own work, and the interests with which I have to deal in our Assam Mission. This is not as I would choose; but it may be necessary to enable me to fulfil the little task God has assigned me here." (Moore, *Stray Leaves from Assam* 2)

Moreover, a 'good hymn' was being written by Mrs. J.M. Carvell to be sung at the Assam Conference. The hymn was written based on the praises for Lord Jesus seeking guidance and blessings of wisdom for the success of the conference. But towards the end of the hymn the lines that said:

> With Him the Great I am
>
> We'll gather for the Harvest Home, Our sheaves from dark Assam. (4)

In these lines, Assam is being portrayed as 'dark'. By this they imply the role of the colonisers in colonising the darker Assam by helping the people to get civilised by adopting Christianity and follow the western ways of living being dominant to the mighty Europeans and observe their work in Assam as a

contribution to uplift Assam by bringing it to the light rather than pushing them to darkness by dominating them and taking away their indigenous existence and identity.

Although *Stray Leaves from Assam* is being printed in the form of a book, it is written in the form of a journal where Mrs. P.H. Moore mentions the date and the year which shows that it is particularly a form of journal entry, where she jotted down her personal experiences mostly and is being piled up together to publish it in the form of a book. This also shows how women's writing was not given due importance. Had she been writing for a book, the readers would have been fed more of it and could also draw various interpretations from her writing. The book is also named Mrs. P.H. Moore instead of her own name Jessie T. Moore. This shows that the identity she possesses is because of her husband and not her own individual identity.

Looking at the traces of World history, women are always found to be in a marginalised position in different spheres of life, especially in religion. The status of women slightly began to improve after the Industrial Revolution and establishment of the colonies by the western countries. Various Christian missions were sent by the Europeans to countries like China, India, etc. who did not bestow their belief in Christianity. Their primary mission was to have a control of the colonized people with the help of religion, i.e. through the teachings of the 'Bible' if it was not possible to dominate them by guns. The wives of the Christian missionaries also accompanied their husbands to look after them and children. These women were never considered to be Christian missionaries. But gradually, the Mission societies started employing single or unmarried woman as lady missionaries to these places as they were seen to possess similar skill like their male counterparts. Moreover, these women were efficient in building a close relationship with the native people who would be highly beneficial to spread religion and education. This act from the colonies marked the beginning of a course of amalgamation and professionalization of the work of women.

Imperialism is a form of power used by the colonizers that comes into effect through sheer domination and suppression of the natives. Similarly, 'Whiteness' is another aspect of colonialism and a way of domination that is manifested in the minds of the natives. The West tries to set an example as them being the best in every aspect, be it religion, culture, education, civilization. They think it's their responsibility as a superior power to discover the weakness of these colonies and civilize them through the employment of various imperial policies.

Elizabeth Vickland in her fictional narrative *Daughter of Brahma: A Tale of the Brahmaputra Country* lays down a true-life story of an Assamese girl, Nirupoma or Horumai who undertakes a meticulous journey to get converted into Christianity after facing many menacing burdens and restrictions in Hinduism. Nirupoma represents the life of a woman led in colonial Assam where there are restrictions on Hindu women in choosing their own path in life, being confined within the four walls. But her life changed after the death of her parents when she started working at the rich priest's family. She was introduced to a strange life, full of rude and strict rules that made her transform from a free-spirited girl to a lifeless soul because of the unruly social system. She then gradually shows her interest in learning more about the works of the Mission.

For Nirupoma, Christianity stood as a window to come out from the marginal space by challenging the old structures and enjoying the thrill of life. By choosing a native girl like Nirupoma, Vickland tries to portray the influence of Christianity on women and how it helped women to embrace their freedom unlike in religion like Hinduism where they remain trapped by the conventions. Although both of them are women, there lie differences between them as Nirupoma represents the native belonging to the Third World and Vickland represents the educated women of the First World.

Vickland's narrative does not only emphasises on conversion to Christianity but her illustrations also portray the ecology of Assam, its customs and various expressions. She gives emphasis on the facts like "travails of widowhood, the suffocating life of women 'under purdah', the unquestioning obedience towards their husbands." Evangelism worked as a tool in humanizing and controlling the colonized natives. The participation of women in missionary activities proved beneficial and successive in these lands.

In *Daughter of Brahma: A Tale of the Brahmaputra Country*, the colonial marginalized woman is given a space and identity in her narrative. Her fictional narratives are true representation of her sympathetic attitudes towards native women. She reflects the hidden realities and tries to uplift the 'degraded Hindu women' with education and liberation. Nirupoma stands as her bold representation in this aspect.

In the nineteenth century western society, the status of the women was not in a considerable position as their writings were not given any importance which also affects the writings of the women colonial travelers. However, this gender issue has not been much explored except a few of the travel theorists talked about it while they were discussing about the colonial discourse in travel writing.

Mary Louise Pratt talks about the gendered division of labour in travel and writing. She observes that "women's access to travel writing seemed even more restricted than their access to travel itself" (Imperial 171). Moreover, it was a great opportunity for the women travelers to discover their own 'self' through travel outside their home because they too were restricted in their homes, unless they were sent to explore these native places either with their husbands or as a single woman to complete their work as a part of the mission. Susan Basnett in her essay "Travel Writing and Gender" says that:

> Travel for some women, it seems, may have offered a means of redefining themselves, assuming a different persona and becoming someone who did not exist at home. ("Travel" 234)

For many, life on the road was very different from life at home as they are fully constrained by household work and taking care of children only, whereas through travel they could gain new experiences and explore themselves in a world different from their world of domesticity. Women could establish their own individual identity through travelling.

The role of the women travelers was examined by Sara Mills in her *Discourse of Difference: An Analysis of Women's Travel Writing* (1991) during the period of high imperialism. She investigates the various misconceptions surrounding women's travel writing during the nineteenth and early twentieth century. Mills comments that:

> Colonialism is certainly portrayed as a male preserve where females have a very secondary supporting role. Most studies which consider women and imperialism consist of descriptions of 'native' and British women as the objects of male gaze or male protection within colonial text. (Discourse 58)

Women's writing was observed to be more personal as their own 'self' was also reflected in their writings while jotting down their experiences. Mills also criticizes Edward Said and many other critics for not addressing women in their discussions on colonialism. As these women travelers were not given due importance, therefore their writings too were not considered to be put forward to discussion.

The narratives of the male colonial travel writers were in stark contrast from the women colonial travel writers. The women travel writers faced severe constraints like societal limitations due to which there were differences between their texts and those of their male counterparts. Women could not speak or write liberally

whatever they wanted unlike the male writers as certain types of information when provided by women are not considered appropriate.

Thompson, too, observes the role of women travel writers as their accounts were supposed mainly for private reading such as diaries and letters rather than public reading. Moreover, their accounts were also labelled to be 'feminine' which intended the very fact that their works would be devoid of intellectual seriousness. This is why there was the belief that women's writings involve a tendency for subjectivism and feelings rather than objectivism and intellect in the eighteenth and nineteenth century. Thomson also notices that the travel accounts of women were also very much complex as compared to their male counterparts. The colonial discourse of these women writers did assist colonialism but from a more humanitarian aspect.

At the very beginning of *Women of Assam*, Vickland describes about an 'exquisite woman' that she encounters and she says she fell in love with her at the very first sight because of her beauty, the way she dressed and the kind of aura she represented is an epitome of a traditional Assamese woman. Vickland, being a European lady, also feels inferior seeing their beauty. She says that the dress of the upper-caste women of India makes us European women feel 'dowdy' and 'ungraceful'.

She also tells about the cultural practices and literature about the Assamese people. While giving the description of an Assamese, she says that they are 'peace-loving', 'quiet' and the men are considered rather 'lazy' and also there are people who 'fear that the more energetic Bengali is gradually stealing his land. They have this constant fear of losing their land and identity in the hands of the immigrants who have migrated to Assam from the bordering countries. The idea of hospitality in Assamese culture is very much different than others as even if one eats more, they would serve you until one gives up. Assamese culture also demands eating with their fingers unlike the Europeans who eat with their fork and knives. Vickland believes that it is the oral recitation and memorizing by rote that has kept the ancient literature of Assamese alive.

Both Vickland and Moore talk about the condition of Hindu or Mohammedan girls in both these texts as they were married off early before becoming fifteen and remain trapped for the rest of their lives carrying out responsibilities of the family and sacrificing their dream. Vickland and Moore also contrast the life of Hindu and Muslim girls to those of Christian girls whose parents are willing to keep their daughters longer and educate them.

Vickland closely observes the 'purdah rules' in both the religion - Hindu and Muslim, where women are not allowed to reveal their face and cover themselves with a veil most of the time. She wants to develop a close relationship with the women of Assam. She says: "I resolved at any cost I would get close to these women, for I felt they had much to give me out of the rich stores of their innate womanliness." Few women do not sense their limitations. They considered 'To be purdah is to aristocratic'. Their seclusion is a mark of proper care on the part of their men. And certainly, protection is needed in a country where men as a whole have not yet learned the real meaning of chivalry. The setting of her life is upon a very small stage with no eagerness to know things about the outside world and explore new paths. Similarly, Moore also observes women belonging to both Hindu and Mohammedans came in curtained bullock carts for the event in school which shows the 'purdah rules' followed in both these religions which involves seclusion of women from the observation of the public by means of concealing clothing (veil) and also through the use of high-walled enclosures, screens, curtains within and outside their home.

Vickland observes Hindu women are firm believers of superstitious beliefs like the presence of evil spirits. Hindu mothers don't feel good when strangers look at their babies for they are afraid that lurking evil spirits will do something to spoil the beauty of the child out of sheer jealousy. They believe barring of doors and windows at night as they consider night air to be 'unhealthful' – full of evil spirits ready to jump down people's throats. Hindus also consider that they would be contaminated if they shake hands with beef-eaters, i.e. the Europeans.

The status of both Hindu and Muslim women is somewhat similar. She has no identity apart from the family of which she is a part. Her existence in this life as well as the life to come is one of utter dependence upon her men folks. Vickland also brings out the issue of polygamy in both Hindu and Muslim religion. Woman's work is to preserve the family line through the bearing of sons, and if they fail to do so their husbands are allowed to marry the number of wives he wants in order to satisfy his need of having sons. She mentions that repression is the rule of behaviour toward women according to Hindu law. From childhood to old age they look up to someone for authority and guidance. They are meant to keep quiet. Moreover, in Muslim men also has easy access to divorce. He only has to repeat the word 'Talak' three times to cast a wife utterly out of the house if she fails to satisfy their desires and wants. But the Christian women do not face this inequality.

Mrs. P.H. Moore in her *Stray Leaves from Assam* also keeps on mentioning the number of girls joining the Christian schools and living in the dormitory which has been seen increasing throughout the book. They focussed mainly on the education of girls. Only women and girls were invited to the 'Closing Exercises' of their Girls' School. Mrs. Moore mentions about the number of girls living in the dormitory to pursue education, get some vocational training like sewing and weaving done by Assamese women which is part of their culture. Most of the clothes they wear are hand woven like hand woven towels, trousseau, etc. Vickland says, "Coarse homespun cotton clothing is much worn since the Swadeshi propaganda." They also learn about Christianity who later would play a significant role in representing their missionaries. The primary motive of the women missionaries was mostly focussed on female education. A recommendation was made in Conference 1911 to establish a Training school for teachers in cooperation with the government for the work of female education at Nowgong.

Many women missionaries like – Miss Holmes, Messres Tilden, Kampfer as mentioned by Mrs. Moore studied Assamese language and even appeared several exams in order to learn the language and this would be very helpful to communicate with the natives because knowing a language of the native people would certainly make this Europeans become close to these native people by using their language as a tool. Moreover, many committees and conferences were held at various places from time to time as we come to know from the visits of Rev. Moore and in one of his visits he also mentioned two beauty spots of Assam, i.e. Guwahati and Sibsagar. Both these places have a significant role to play in representing Assam.

As mentioned by Mrs. Moore, Rev. Pitt also emphasises on the importance of Manipuri language as a way of spreading Christianity. He says: "The Manipuri language appears to be the lingua franca of the state; and it should be taught in all our schools after the pupils have mastered a few elementary primary books, and our aim should be to provide the New Testament, and some simple hymns and catechisms, etc., in the Manipuri language, and make them serve for the whole mission throughout the state." (Moore, *Stray Leaves from Assam* 62).

The various conferences that were held also announced their progress in their work in Assam at establishing Missionaries, number of people converting to Christianity, number of Churches built, etc. She mentions: "I have just received from Assam a report Mr. Kampfer wrote to a Calcutta paper- Forty Missionaries Met in Conference. The reports show there are now 15,000 adult Christians

connected with this mission. These Christians represent 20 tribes and races. During the past year 2,000 adults were baptized.

Moreover, along with female education, the education of boys also gained importance with the establishment of 'The Jorhat Industrial School' developed into a high school. The primary purpose for building this school is to give Bible training to Christian workers.

With the death of Rev. Pitt, a significant loss was faced by the American Baptist Missionaries as he played a major role in contributing and serving the Mission by accomplishing his work in Assam. Mrs. Moore says: "In Assam he has been like an affectionate father to all the rest of us. He had mastered the Assamese language to such an extent that no native of the country was his equal. He translated from the original parts of the New Testament into Assamese. He and his wife together gave the people of the land many books in Assamese which are used in all schools and in evangelizing among the unsaved."(122)

When we look into the writings of both these women colonial travel writers, it can be observed that a detailed description of the land of Assam along with the condition, life and the status of Assam is more vividly portrayed in Vickland than Mrs. Moore. Moreover, Mrs. Moore mentions more about the missionary works in Assam, their contribution and various conferences that were held in Assam. She is more of an accompanist to her husband who also reports about her husband Rev. Pitt's works and his views. Vickland's minute description and observation of each and everything ranging from the life of native people, their culture and especially women shows how she was closely associated with the natives. Vickland, being a woman, was keener into observing the lives of the women and drawing comparison between the women of east and west and also between the women of various religious backgrounds. Through her observations, one can deduct how she was highly critical of the religious system of the country that stood as a barrier in the lives of Indian women in leading a life of their own.

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SELF REFLECTIVITY OF DALITS IN OM PRAKASH VALMIKI'S *JOOTHAN*

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Abstract: *In India, the caste of Omprakash Valmiki is one of the reasons for social exclusion. Caste is not mere socio-cultural milieus but a social practice that can potentially impact the identity and everyday social life of an individual. In the mainstream discourses and literature, Dalits are considered as the other. Such identification is contested through Dalit narratives, giving distinct and dominant voices to their specific agency. Omprakash Valmiki's Joothan exposes and critiques the caste system and expresses the self-reflectivity of the subaltern Dalits in an adverse social condition in India. Autobiographies of Dalits function as evidence of how caste internally transforms people into unrepresented.This article analyses how exclusion affects the Dalits in their specific socio-political and cultural context.It examines the unique physical imprints on the vocation, economic status, social status, and power over resources of the marginalised Dalits, which display an unparalleled self-reflectivity.*

Key Words: *Social exclusion, subaltern, Dalits, self-reflectivity, Autobiography.*

The history of Dalits in India is the history of the majority who have been excluded from the existing epistemological spheres.As a social practice, caste can be explained by understanding the context in which it has historically evolved and by its past functions, exchange relations, and evolutionary dimensions.The words of Arjun Dangle depict the subtle political sense of how the spheres of Dalit experiences should be.Dangle defines:

> Dalit is not a caste but a realization and is related to the experiences, joys and sorrows, and struggles of those in the lowest stratum of society. It matures with a sociological point of view and is related to the principles of negativity, rebellion and loyalty to science, thus finally ending as revolutionary. (234)

In the traditional discourses, caste is considered a natural defect that cannot socially be resolved.In many ways, Omprakash Valmiki's *Joothan* is the testimony that socially defends and overcomes the contentions of the absence of social subjectivity.Dalit autobiographies have assimilated a new sensibility and history by resisting these exclusions.While talking for the excluded, Kancha Ilaiah opines that:

> Personal experience brings out reality in a striking way. This method of examining socio-cultural and economic history is central to the social sciences; significantly, the method of narrating and deconstructing experiences has been used by feminists. Further, Indian Dalitbahujan thinkers like Mahatma Phule, Ambedkar and Periyar Ramasamy Naicker have also used this method. Instead of depending on Western methods, Phule, Ambedkar and Periyar spoke and wrote on the day-day experiences of the Dalitbahujan castes. (xii)

The caste system in India is complex with its bifurcated hierarchical communities. They keep different social boundaries and disapprove of marital relations, interconnectedness, and any means of exchange among themselves. Omprakash Valmiki begins his *Joothan* by discoursing these alienated boundaries. It means that Valmiki looks at life from the margins. Further elucidation is needed on how those who maintain mainstream society through labour and who stand as the backbone of the productive systems and integrities are relegated to the margins instead of to the centre. It is a relevant question, and the answer to this question leads to upturning the existing social structure and its stratification. To maintain society through labour is a matter of pure ethical and political significance. There is a solemn issue in arguing that the basic class is/on the margins. It is a hypothesis that is used as the basis of the subaltern studies. They advocate the subaltern groups as communities living on the margins. Subalterns are analysed continuously assuming they lack power, financial capital, and cultural capital.

The nature of representation and reflection within an autobiography is relevant only in the structure of a medium. Dalit community in India attains reflectivity in the unique evolutionary stages of social conditions. In that historical context, the absence of a medium was quite an essential factor. Moreover, the medium is not a neutral thing. It gets evolved through different political circumstances and priorities within the special structure of privileges. It is impossible to reach a social consensus by discussing the presence or absence in the medium. The nature of representation and reflection within an autobiography is relevant only in the structure of a medium. Along with this, it is relevant to quote a few lyrics that would problematise the written history of Poykayil Appachan, the redeemer of slave castes in Kerala. Appachan states:

> No, not a single letter is seen
>
> On my race
>
> So many histories are seen
>
> On so many races
>
> Scrutinize each one of them

The whole histories of the world

Not a single letter is seen

On my race (17)

These lines reveal, why the marginalised Dalits are often absent in earlier autobiographical literature. Appachan's lines reveal such questions, too, while searching for the presence and absence of society. Hence, writing about Dalits should start with the question "Who writes for whom?" (Mukherjee xv). While addressing the marginalised autobiographies, even if it problematises the question of 'who' and 'for whom', it may not be possible to unravel the power relations within it. Whether written for Dalits or other marginalised communities by a Dalit or the representatives from other communities, the content, vocabulary, emphasis, and ideologies of narratives are subject to forces of the persistent power structure. Omprakash Valmiki shares some questions which are part of the self-reflectiveness underlying the Dalits' life experiences. Valmiki records an instance from his school days when the teacher details the poverty-stricken life of Dronacharya and Ashwathama. Valmiki writes:

> Once in school, Master Saheb was teaching the lesson on Dronacharya. He told us, almost with tears in his eyes, that Dronacharya had fed flour dissolved in water to his famished son, Ashwatthama, in lieu of milk. The whole class had responded with great emotion to this story of Dronacharya's dire poverty. This episode was penned by Vyasa, the author of the *Mahabharata* to highlight Drona's poverty. I had the temerity to stand up and ask Master Saheb question afterwards. So Ashwatthama was given flour mixed in water instead of milk, but what about us who had to drink mar? How come we were never mentioned in any epics? Why didn't an epic poet ever write a word on our lives? (23)

When one Dalit student asks such a question, it becomes an event because no one else was asking such questions. There are many social reasons behind not trying to ask such questions. It is within such power structures writers like Omprakash Valmiki make self-reflective declarations through their autobiographies. The caste communities in India acquire reflectivity in the unique evolutionary stages of social conditions.

In Dalit's lives, spaces are vital because the process of Dalit exclusion begins primarily in spaces. Inquiries like 'Where do Dalits and downtrodden live in India?' and 'What are the socio-economic resources they have?' especially the resources with market value within the conventional casteist and patriarchal society, and so on, are connected to spaces Dalits occupy. About their habitat, Valmiki writes:

> On the edges of the pond were the homes of Chuhras. All the women of the

> village, young girls, older women, even the newly married brides would sit in the open space behind those homes at the edges of the ponds to take a shit…All the quarrels of the village would be discussed in the shape of a Round Table Conference at this same spot. (1)

Valmiki, here openly affirms the spaces he shares and self-reflectively represents the position he holds in the social spaces for being a Dalit man in a caste-ridden Indian society. One of the most significant ideas pointed out by people like J.M Waghmare is that a special sense of harmonious self is reflected among the marginalised autobiographies. He writes:

> Why is our situation so marginal? Where are our roots to be found?... They too are in search of their identities. They are however forging their identities in the crucibles of their plays, poems, short stories, and novels. Their writings are autobiographies of their communities. A strong feeling of "we-ness" is writ large in their books. (22)

This "we-ness" is formed in the cultural atmosphere of self-reflectivity. Such identification owes to the entry of Dalits into the new realms of printing, book publishing, literacy, and education. In the context of a sizably voluminous rupture in the traditional values of the society and structure and micro-histories, particularly, the subaltern studies become relevant. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak states:

> The subaltern studies group seems to me to be revising the general definition and its theorizations by proposing at least two things: first, that the moment (s) of change to be pluralized and plotted as confrontations rather than transition (they would thus be seen in relation to histories of domination and exploitation rather than within the great modes-of production narrative) and, secondly, that such changes are signalled or marked by a functional change in sign-systems. (330)

For society, especially those who have a sense of conventional value system and aptitudes, special attention towards the social spheres of the subaltern groups is a move against the priorities and interests that have existed so far. It connotes that the center of the subject itself is changing. When Dalits enter the field of narrative spheres, their interests and approaches also change. Moreover, there is a large displacement in the structure and content of all traditional discourse. Foregrounding the subaltern historians, Spivak pronounces that this happens with the ingress of the subaltern (331). Such autobiographies make way to put forward new subjects, emphases, and approaches regarding social situations, people, and social justice.

Valmiki points out, how social hierarchisations of labour happen in a casteist society. Constant contact with animals and their excrement are considered

depleting of humanity. The problems of communities that undertake this specific labour are problematised in *Joothan*. Valmiki explains his repeated encounters with animals, including cattle, pigs, and buffaloes, and is conscious of, how daily chores hierarchise Dalits' caste status. Valmiki writes:

> Janesar was my elder brother. Both of us would leave home early in the morning. We would go around the fields, collecting wild grass for our buffalo. A few days before his death, Sukhbir had acquired a buffalo in barter from Suchet Taga. We hoped to make some money when she calved. Both Janesar and I were constantly busy, attending to the buffalo. I also had the responsibility of grazing the pigs in the afternoon. Pigs were a very important part of our lives. In sickness or in health, in life or in death, in wedding ceremonies, pigs played an important role in all of them. Even our religious ceremonies were incomplete without the pigs. The pigs rooting in the compound were not the symbols of dirt to us but of prosperity and so they are today. (13)

Apart from the relations between occupation and social status, human beings and physical circumstances, too, play a significant part in shaping social consciousness. Physical circumstances refer to the material world in which people interact in everyday life. It means that the relations between the material object and the living world determine the relationships between human beings. Relationships between human beings are determined not only by human beings but also by the entire physical world they inhabit. Valmiki, here, talks about the dehumanising experiences they face due to their traditional caste occupation. He narrates:

> Every Taga would have ten to fifteen animals in his cowshed. Their dung had to be picked and brought to the place where uplas or cow dung cakes were made. There would be five to six baskets of dung to be taken out from every cowshed. During the winter months it was a very painful job. The cows, buffaloes, and bullocks could be tethered in long hallways. The floor would be covered with the dry leaves of cane or straw. The dung and the urine of the animals would spread all over the floor overnight. The matting would be changed after ten or fifteen days. Or sometimes, a layer of dry leaves would be added on top of the soiled one. To search for dung in the stinking cowsheds was extremely unpleasant. The stink made one feel faint. (8-9)

When the social concepts of caste are analysed, it is important to note the factors at work within the framework of social status formation. Furthermore, all aspects that can serve as the cultural capital in this particular historical context will have to be considered here. Region, language, food, worlds of contact, the market value of those objects, and social status are determinants of everyone's position within society. These factors have the potential to transform into cultural capital in a

particular context. Associating with animals is treated as an occupation that degrades the social designation of a person. The workspace, as mentioned by Omprakash Valmiki is associated with animals. Engagements with animals and the duration of time Dalits spent in these spaces are the factors that define the caste into what they are today.

Caste communities face lifetime discrimination. To slacken the impact of this everyday discrimination, the excluded communities struggle a lot by procuring the cultural capital in the new socio-political contexts, especially by entering into the mainstream education system and occupation. Valmiki questions:

> I wanted to say, 'Neither am I Hindu'. If I were really a Hindu, would the Hindus hate me so much? Or discriminate against me? Or try to fill me up with caste inferiority over the smallest things? I also wondered why does one have to be a Hindu in order to be a good human being… I have seen and suffered the cruelty of Hindus since childhood. Why does caste superiority and caste pride attack only the week? Why are Hindus so cruel, so heartless against Dalits? (41)

Omprakash Valmiki drags out the vital forces of discrimination that work directly or indirectly in the Hindu religion. Valmiki realises that he gets more alienated by being inside the Hindu religion than outside. From this experience, he blurts out that, for Dalits, Hinduism is heartless, cruel, and against Dalits. Valmiki criticises the world consciousness that is internalised in the religious life of India. The institution of caste has been continued at the level of ideologies that do not integrate value or authenticity to the experiences of Dalits. It is a powerful ideological attack and an intricate spectrum of issues. Ambedkar highlights, "There is no racial difference between the Hindu and the Untouchables" (114). It connotes that caste and Untouchability are ideological attacks.

Valmiki exposes the walls of stratifications and divisive policy that exist in the caste society; the vigorous stratifications are perplexed by caste, occupation, space, and other factors. Valmiki shares his realisation about Dalits' space and status in the social hierarchy. It suggests that subjectivity in the marginalised autobiographies is self-reflective on many levels. Only when Dalits or any subaltern community self-reflectively identify their subjectivity, do the upper classes recognise their social status. In other words, self-reflectivity as a social process is a two-way process. While the social positioning of the upper-lower relations is unleashed, the extrication similarly happens in both directions.

Joothan, in every sense, is a testimonial of the excluded Dalits. The caste system in India has a long history of stratification and exclusion. Dalit thinkers perceive autobiographies as an endeavour to liberate themselves from that history. Such self-expression that emerges from those driven out of the mainstream spaces can be

considered a chance to democratise the casteist spaces. *Joothan* becomes an 'event' in the literary sphere because it creates a public society, where social behaviour, aptitudes, and sense of justice are consummately different from the social conditions that preceded the work. It may suggest that the political background where the self-reflection happens is consequential. With the emergence of the incipient discourses on equity and individuality, the traditional caste-driven values and sense of equity are undermined. In this context, Dalits who are the advocates of the new value system enter the public sphere.

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DEMYSTIFYING THE MYTH OF BLACK PARADISE IN OUSMANE SEMEBÈNE'S "THE PROMISED LAND".

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Abstract: *The universally acclaimed status of France as the paradise for the Black is a putative myth circulated in the French colonies. The myth was a part of the imperial process to spread the French culture by portraying its superiority and universality. Such a constructive image of France along with other bilateral relations influenced the movement of people between Africa and France. However, the immigrants' experiences in Paris brought into light the actual realities that were different from the mythic France. The Francophone African literature tried to document these experiences of the migrants and in the process attempt to demystify the myth of the promised land. Ousmane Sembène's works also concern itself with the Parisian matrix and the position of Black as migrant that ruptured the illusion of Paris. This paper shall discuss how Ousmane Sembène attempted to unravel the myth concerning France by presenting it as the site of alienation where his protagonist Diouana faces racism and all sorts of predicament. In this story, Ousmane Sembène digresses from the circular voyage of migration consisting the expatriation and repatriation phenomenon and attempts to present an alternative narrative by delineating a character who is doubly oppressed both in her native land and in Paris and commits suicide at the end.*

Key words: *Myth, immigration, exile, racism, memory, home, death*.

France plays a central role in the Francophone African literature owing to the shared colonial history between France and Africa. Shared relation between the nations actuated movement of people from the African countries to the colonial capital that spurted after the second world war. Thus, a majority of the writers engaged themselves to explore not only the histography but the condition of France in relation to its colonies that caused the birth of a new genre known as Parisianism. Parisian study has become a popular genre in the contemporary sub-Saharan francophone literature that focuses on the authors' representation of

France/Paris and documents the journey and the experiences of the black migrants in France.

Ousmane Sembène, a francophone film director and producer who hails from Dakar in Senegal attempts to document the immigrants' lives and their experiences in the metropole. The writer endeavours to deconstruct the myth surrounding the metropole that pervades the francophone African literature. His short story "The Promised Land" presents before us a subtly revolutionised writing in his attempt to elucidate the psychological suffering of his character as an immigrant**.** His main character in the story is Diouana, a household maid who accompanies her French employer to France with the hope of becoming wealthy and return back home with great fortune. However, Diouana failed to complete her circular journey of leaving and arriving in her native land, Africa, and ends her life in France. Issues concerning immigration have offered fresh thematic concerns to the authors that have pushed Francophone African literature to a new height and towards a new direction of universalism.

A major portion of the Francophone literature is devoted towards Black migrants' experiences in France or other such European states. Migration between France and Africa goes back to their colonial history when the African subjects were granted citizenship of the French union in 1946 and free movement across the metropole (Thomas 141). Apart from this, there were certain push and pull factors that instigated the migration to the metropole. Circulation of certain myths surrounding the metropole as the promised land for the black migrants is one such determinant that affected the movement of the people from Africa to France. French colonial power in their attempt to manifest their cultural superiority created a vague notion of Europe that acted as an escape for the colonial subjects from their desolate state to achieve the cultural capital. The main tool that the colonisers used was their education policy. The knowledge of the west was mainly implanted in the minds of the Africa subjects through colonial textbooks they read in school. Dakar, the capital of Senegal which served as the most important and privileged of the African French colonies became the centre of all activities and the main area where French implemented their policy of assimilation. The first half of Ousmane Sembene's "The Promised Land" is set in Dakar. In the concerned story, the protagonist, Diouna, is an illiterate girl who works as maid in a household in Dakar. Diouna's awareness about Paris as a 'promised land' showed the inclusiveness and successful implementation of the French policy in establishing their superiority that penetrated and plagued not only the elite African classes but every section of the society.

Diouana was seduced by her French employer with talks of Paris. The moment she was told that she would be accompanying them to France, the thought and imagination of her life in France engulfed her. She was transplanted to an illusionary world where her thought was guided by the mythic representation of the metropole that it was the land of "beauty, wealth and pleasant living" (88). As suggested by the narrator, the very idea of going to France changed her disposition from a quiet girl to one full of vibrance. Earlier, Diouana used to curse the long road she covered from her home to that of her employer's house but her whole attitude changed once her employer told her about the possibility of moving to France. As the narrator states " But for the past month she had been happy and gay, her heart beating as though she had fallen in love" (Ousmane 87). She ignored everything against the 'brighter prospect' that she could have there. Another character that the author portrays is Tive Correa. He is an old retired sailor who returned to Dakar from France after serving there for nearly twenty years. Explaining his return the narrator states " he had wanted all that life could offer, and had brought back nothing but an immoderate love of the bottle"(92). Being aware of all the experiences that an immigrant goes through in a foreign land like France, Tive Correa tried to warn Diouana but in vain. Doiuna indeed sought his advice but never listened to him who had been against her going to France. He wanted to make her realise the difference between living in France and serving there as a servant. However, Diouana did not listen to him which eventually lead to the inconceivable horror that awaits her in France.

The poverty-stricken condition of the west African countries compelled people to migrate to the foreign land that offered high salaried employment opportunities. Diouana, as pointed out by Tive Correa, her neighbour, comes from upper Casamance, a remote village in Senegal. According to Tive Correa, it was the poor condition of the village that drives the young children to seek employment opportunities in the city – be it Dakar or in France. In case of Diouana, the same urge prompted her desire to travel France and earn a fortune there. Moreover, the shackles of the traditional Africa society always acted as a hindrance for the African women to enjoy their freedom. Financial independence did not necessarily bring individual freedom which Diouana wanted to have in France. This desire for freedom is another factor that created that fervour in Diouana to go to France. As the author writes " She dreamed of the freedom she would have to go where she wanted , of not having to work like a horse" (88). Calixthe Beyala, an eminent francophone writer, in an interview with Benetta Jules- Rosette referred to Africa as a "feminine continent" where women hold a considerable share in the economic prosperity and financial security of the family. However, she elucidated how

gender biasness along with sexual stereotypes tied to the black women become the cause of their oppression. Calixthe Beyala tells Jules- Rosette "…there is a desire to deny me my intelligence because I am a woman and because I am Black." (204). If we place Diouna in this matrix, she already exists in the periphery as an illiterate girl who serves as domestic help and hence is doubly oppressed. The low wage system that is prevalent in Africa is hinted through the following lines: " For three thousand francs a month- a miserly wage by European standards- any African girl would have followed her to the ends of the earth" (89). Diouna's exploitation by her employer echoes the history of slavery, exploitation and injustices that plagued Africa. Dominic Thomas in his book *Black France* states:

> " …raw materials and labor served the interests of European market economies in which Africans functioned as physical laborers, a topos that is recuperated transcolonially as the immigrant's body is now also a disposable commodity" (196).

Another important push factor that instigated Diouana's falling for the mythic Black Paradise was the familial responsibility that included social and financial security. The lack of opportunities in their homeland triggers the migration of the African youth to European states. The obligations the migrants need to carry out for their family pressurised them in the distant land. Fatou Diome in her novel *The Belly of the Atlantic* has called it as the "migrant's heaviest burden" (97). In case of Diouana, her friends and relatives back in Dakar who also wanted to experience France through her burdened her with their monetary demands that have already taken away some of her freedom unknowingly. As the narrator states "…friends and relatives crowded round her to say farewell and give her instructions as to what to bring back" (93).

Although Diouana's travel was limited to her earning a fortune but she could not separate herself from the acculturative phenomenon. Her admiration for wondrous monument and landscape the moment she stepped in the foreign land hints at her assimilative tendencies. The termed assimilation, as defined by John W Berry in his book *The Cambridge Handbook of Acculturation Psychology,* is total abandoning of your present state in order to be a part of the other (35). In case of Diouana, this tendency was evident as the narrator points out " All living things around her had become ugly, and the splendid villas she had admired so often now seemed shabby" (87). Africa, for her, became a mere sordid Slum. However, Diouna's excitement did not last long and soon she turned from a happy person to one whose eyes were "sunken and dulled"(94). She could no longer take things in and soon France turned into a vague place. Loneliness engulfed her. The capitalist

and materialist economy of France portrayed a complete contrasting world from Africa. Diouana did not have any exposure to the outside world. She could only see the "unkempt garden, the evergreen hedges of the other villas, and their roof poking up above the green trees and palm trees" (94). Diouana was in a way exploited and used by her employer who gave her considerably low wages. Diouna was treated no less than a commodity who was there only to provide her service. No respect was given to her nor her emotional health was a concern for anybody. Her monotonous routine shattered her expectations and made her full of hatred for the people surrounding her. The only human company she had was the family for whom she was working. But most of the times her employer goes out leaving her inside in charge of the children. The children hardly listened to her and tormented her and treated her as an outsider that added to her miserable lonely life. Pius Adesanmi in his article "Redefining Paris" writes:

> … in Francophone African Fiction, equally marks inscription of Paris as a site of alienation and deracination in which the African subjects is forced to negotiate terms of engagement and identity spelled out in the idiom of race and other cultural markers (962).

Her interaction with her employers was limited to closed answers. She remained confined within herself most of the times. Albeit her presence was limited to the household chores, yet she too became a victim of racism prevalent in the West. The eldest child would play games of colonization where the children played the role of explorers and Diouna was presented as the "savage"(94). They did not stop there but teased and abused her with racial slurs like "there's the Negress, Black as the darkest night" (95). It was the first time that Diouana was made aware of her race and how the difference of colour outcasted her and made her vulnerable to violence. Her identity as a black woman for the first time bothered her. The author writes "At Dakar, the problem of the colour of her skin had never arisen" (95). She was tormented with the thought that she had nothing in common with others. Her desires and dream shattered the moment she came in terms with the reality that was nowhere close to the myth she has for long cherished about Paris as the promised land. Zora Neale Hurtson in her autobiographical essay "How it feels to be Coloured Me" pointed out how she is made aware of her colour only at times when she is placed against the whites. She writes " …I feel like a brown bag of miscellany propped against a wall. Against a wall in company with other bags, white, red and yellow" (para 18). Zora, however, stayed strong and was not tormented as she was independent and was busy living her life. However, that not the case with outsiders who serve as housemaids with the least source of income or

resources at their disposition. Ousmane Sembene's Diouna is an illiterate black maid who could not survive the racial discrimination and exclusion. Diouna is mostly referred to as "their black servant" and was victimised for the prevalent stereotypes about the African women (97). Moreover, the children of Madame P, her employer, who do not even properly understand the concept of racism became its perpetrators which elucidate how deep rooted such bigotries were in the western society. Children's involvement in effecting racism thus brings forth the systemic defect France and its neighbouring states are facing that should be focused on in order to build a better world

The consistent blockage from the host culture created a kind of negative attitude in her towards her surroundings. Her wrath and pessimism were also directed towards herself that finally caused self-hatred. She was angry and abhorred herself for ignoring the words of Tive Correa and for her illiteracy which made her impotent. Bennetta Jules Rosette in her book *Black Paris* sheds light on this issue of anti-social behaviour on the part of the migrants when stuck in a helpless position after being marginalised. Rosette writes " … rejection of the host culture and internalisation of the host culture's perceived rejection as self-hatred" (156). Jules - Rosette also indicated how the alienation and exile of the immigrants in diaspora caused by their exclusion and blockage from the host culture can bring out nuanced responses in the migrant (253). The anti-thesis between psychological resignation and aggression in the migrants either led to death or madness. In case of Diouana, she too became belligerent with an intense loathing for her employer and for herself. At the same time, she became distant from her present environment and recollected the memories of the past life in Africa. It was during these moments of crisis that she starts to long for her native land. She remembers and compares the two landscape and brings forth the differences which is evident in the lines " What a difference between these trees and Casamance forest, so far away…" (97). She recollects how the community bonding in Africa never gave her a scope to feel lonely as opposed to her alienated condition in France. Memory of her home positioned her in a dual existence which Gloria E. Anzaldúa in *Borderlands La Frontera: The New Mestiza* writes about. According to Anzaldua a character while remembering her home in the foreign land tends to live in two places at the same time- one in reality and the other in her memory (49). The narrator states " she became aware again of the present, of the reality of her life in France, where she was doubly a foreigner, and her mind hardened" (98). However, recollecting memories from the past further distant Diouna from her reality in France that finally pushed her alienation to another height that culminated in her committing suicide. Moreover, unable to fulfil the commitment also plays a role in her death.

Failed migration often positioned the characters to lose their respect and worth in the African society. Dominic Thomas has pointed out how failed migration tends to reproduce the marginalised treatment once they returned to their homeland (199).

The ending of Diouana presents a revolutionised writing of the author who digresses from the typical paradigm of what Rosemary Haskell has called " quest and return of the successful epic hero" (138). Journey to France is always a circular one as the implication of "return back home' is always there. Departure is always accompanied by the return. As the author writes "Diouna wanted to visit France and return home from that country so renowned for its beauty, wealth and pleasant living. You made your fortune there" (88). The author clearly mentions that the travel does not have any future oriented bearing for Dioune. However, her inadequacies combined with her peripheral existence made it impossible for her to return to her homeland. Diouna's rights have been jeopardised because of her identity as a black illiterate woman who worked as domestic help. She becomes a victim of racial stereotype that placed her as different from and inferior to them. Diouana's life in diaspora served as a transitional moment where she transits from an innocent girl lured by talks of Paris as a promised Land to one who saw the actual predicaments and oppressive system reformulated in her 'promised land' France. The whole landscape of Paris became strange that occasioned a kind of uncanny feeling within her that finally led her to slash her throat in the bathroom. Death can thus be used as a metaphor for the broken promise of the Black paradise.

Ousmane's story thus presents before us an alternative narrative that demystifies the mythic France. The painful experiences that Diouana had gone through in France disillusioned the fantastic image the colonies held about the metropole. Diouana's suffering intensified with the quotidian experience of racism she faced that finally outcasted her and positioned her as an alienated entity. The extant status of Africans as slave in the European states is evident in Diouna's words " Sold , sold…bought, bought… I've been bought, I do all the work here for three thousand francs. I was enticed here, bound, and now I'm chained here like a slave" (98). Ousmane Sembene through this story of domestic slavery has revealed the enduring history of slavery and exploitation of the Africans in diaspora and the oppressive social mechanism prevalent in the European states that disrupts the vague image of France as the promised land.

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EXAMINING MARGARET ATWOOD'S *THE TESTAMENTS* AS A WORK OF CROSS-FICTIONALITY

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Abstract: *The term "cross-fictionality" was introduced by Mari Hatavara and Jarmila Mildorf in their essay: "Fictionality, Narrative Modes, and Vicarious Storytelling". According to these theorists, the term "Cross-fictionality" can be used to characterize a theory of narrative representation which includes the "factual and documentary" elements in a work of fiction. Keeping in view the concept of "cross-fictionally", which reinforces the exchange between artistic and every day in narratives, this paper reads Margaret Atwood's The Testaments as a work of "cross-fiction" narrative. Whereas the imagined dystopia- Gilead emerges to be excess. Nevertheless, Atwood in one of her interviews on The Testaments states that the events mentioned in the novel have their origins in world history. Similarly, there are other instances in The Testaments that I shall discuss in this paper which supports the idea that the novel is a work of "cross-fiction" narrative. For this purpose, I shall also bring in The Handmaid's Tale (its prequel) and see how it relates to the principal question of construing The Testaments as a work of "cross-fictionality".*

Keywords: *"Cross-fictionality", gender violence, historical crisis, dystopia.*

Introduced by Mari Hatavara and Jarmila Mildorf in their essay: "Fictionality, Narrative Modes, and Vicarious Storytelling", the term "cross-fictionality" can be used "to characterize a narrative where the frame of reference is nonfictional but the narrative modes include those that are conventionally regarded as fictional" (393). Thus "cross- fictionality" can be described as a form of writing where within a narrative work, the body of reference is nonfictional but the narrative device is that of fiction. Moreover, from the definition of "cross-fictionality", it can be rightfully asserted that the writers of this essay aim to provide a theory of narrative representation which includes the "factual and documentary" elements in a work of fiction. These theorists in their approach to fictionality want to accentuate their point that the characteristics associated with fictional modes of "consciousness representation" are not limited to fiction, but can cross into and be employed in other narrative environments outside the literary domain.

Whereas the imagined dystopia- Gilead, a theocratic -totalitarian dictatorship, ruled by patriarchy, its extensive climate change, high rates of sterility, its implementation of firm gender roles by the state's anti-feminists regime based on physiology and women's no control over their bodies, appears to be excess. Nevertheless, in one of her interviews with the Penguin Random House, regarding her sources behind writing her two literary masterpieces *The Handmaid's Tale* and *The Testaments*, she replies that the events which have been mentioned in both the novels have their beginnings in the history of humankind. For instance, in *The Testaments*, we find parallels between the 17th century American Puritan empire and Gilead as in both cases religion becomes the basis of the nation's government. Moreover, by elucidating how women are prime targets of Gilead's reform programs, Atwood alludes to a historical fact of the Salem witch trials acted out by Puritans in the 1619s. Besides this, Atwood in her article "Margaret Atwood on What *The Handmaid's Tale* Means in the Age of Trump", published in The New York Times, also asserts that the events put in *The Handmaid's Tale* are not imaginary and everything had already happened in history, she states:

> "If I was to create an imaginary garden I wanted the toads in it to be real. One of my rules was that I would not put any events into the book that had not already happened in what James Joyce called the "nightmare" of history, nor any technology not already available. No imaginary gizmos, no imaginary laws, no imaginary atrocities. God is in the details, they say. So is the Devil" (2).

Similarly, Nick Bryant his article "Margaret Atwood's Prophecy: How Fiction Merged with Fact in the Time of Trump", states that in his interview with Atwood, she asserts that her sequel: *The Testaments* has been inspired by the world we are living in. Subsequently, there is plentiful evidence in the form of articles and essays by different authors such as Karen E. Macfarlane, Jennifer Keishin Armstrong, Karen F. Stein, David Ketterer, etc. that support the fact the Atwood's novels: *The Testaments* and *The Handmaids Tale* have "the actual world as the frame of reference" but simultaneously "employs fictional modes of consciousness representation and narrative design" (Hatavara and Mildorf 402). This is also justified when Atwood employs dystopia as her fictional narrative device to refer to the non-fictional elements in her writing. The non-fictional or factual elements in *The Testaments* and *The Handmaid's Tale*, is predominantly reflected in the view that the Republic of Gilead has its foundation on the seventeenth century Puritan root which according to Atwood ,"have always lain beneath the modern-day America we thought we knew" (Atwood 2). Likewise, Jennifer Keishin Armstrong

is another writer who rightfully asserts that the American Puritanism is undeniably the chief reference argument in Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale* and *The Testaments*, she states:

> "*The Handmaid's Tale* is always discussed as a feminist warning of sorts, and has also been interpreted as a commentary on sexism in the book of Genesis. But some of what Atwood describes wasn't merely speculation about the end result of the religious right taking power in the US but was based on what was happening elsewhere. Atwood says she was inspired in part by Nicolai Ceausescu's preoccupation with boosting female birth rates in Romania, which led to the policing of pregnant women and the banning of abortion and birth control…But American Puritanism is undoubtedly the central reference point in Atwood's text – and she drew connections between what was happening in the US in the 1980s and the original Puritan colonists in 17th Century New England" (Armstrong 3).

Subsequently, Armstrong's stance that Atwood derived connections between what was taking place in the US in the nineteen eighties and the original Puritan colonists in seventeenth Century New England is validated when Atwood in her article "Haunted by *The Handmaid's Tale*" published in *The Guardian*, asserts:

> "Nations never build apparently radical forms of government on foundations that aren't there already,…The deep foundation of the US – so went my thinking – was not the comparatively recent 18th- Century Enlightenment structures of the republic, with their talk of equality and their separation of church and state, but the heavy-handed theocracy of 17th-Century Puritan New England, with its marked bias against women..." (1).

Besides this, Danita J. Dodson, in her article: " 'We lived in the blank white spaces': Rewriting the Paradigm of Denial in Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*", quotes her interview with Margaret Atwood in which we find Atwood criticising the false notion of democracy behind Puritan's motive in coming to the New World. Atwood asserts that the Puritans were not interested in democracy as it was not a notion during that time, rather they were interested in theocracy. Likewise, in both *The Handmaids Tale* and *The Testaments*, one find parallels between the seventeen century American Puritan empire and Atwood's imaginary Gilead as in both the cases religion becomes the basis of nation's government. Thus, one can assert that through her novels: *The Testaments* and *The Handmaid's Tale*, Atwood attempts to "rewrite the story of Puritanism… to tell the truth about its dystopian legacy of intolerance and violence" (Dodson 70). Moreover, as mentioned earlier, by elucidating how women are prime targets of Gilead's reform programs, Atwood

alludes to a historical fact of the Salem witch trials acted out by Puritans in the sixteen nineteens. According to Dodson, who derives her idea from Rupert: "Such historical truth-telling is common in dystopias, which explore historical conflicts" (Dodson 68). Therefore, both *The Testaments* and *The Handmaids Tale*, can be stated as a recollection of exclusive atrocities of the American experience that Atwood validates by revaluating the images of containment apparent in Puritan philosophy. In addition to this, Shannon Hengen in his essay: " 'Metaphysical Romance': Atwood's PhD Thesis and *The Handmaid's Tale*' ", asserts that Atwood's compels us to acknowledge how gravely "American imperialism and nationalism account for the repressive order which becomes the Republic of Gilead" (155). In both *The Handmaid's Tale* and *The Testaments,* we find Atwood addressing the recurrent effects of American colonialism. In these novels, Atwood attempts to show how the repressive order of Gilead has affinities with the colonial program historically linked with America's numerous policies of domination. Hence, "the intersection between the text and the world is something that Atwood advocates vociferously" (Macfarlane 64). With this view of the "interchange between the artistic and the everyday" (Hatavara and Mildorf 393) in fiction, employed by Margaret Atwood, we can rightfully affirm *The Testaments* and *The Handmaid's Tale*, as a works of "cross-fiction" narrative.

Moreover, to further support the argument that Margaret Atwood's *The Testaments* and *The Handmaids Tale*, can be characterized as a work of "cross-fiction" narrative, it is justified to bring in David Ketterer, who in his essay: "Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*: A Contextual Dystopia", emphasizes that the genre of Science Fiction "is only worthy of serious attention when it is about something real (real story)" and this according to Ketterer, is the "underlying the muted feminist polemic" (209) in Margaret Atwood's both these novels mentioned above. Subsequently, when Atwood asserts:

> "[s]o many different strands fed into '*The Handmaid's Tale*' — group executions, sumptuary laws, book burnings, the Lebensborn program of the SS and the child- stealing of the Argentine generals, the history of slavery, the history of American polygamy . . . the list is long" (Atwood 6).

One can think of nothing but only manifest that there are elements of non-fictionality in both *The Handmaid's Tale* and *The Testaments*, which is presented by Atwood, by employing a fictional narrative mode and in this case, dystopia. Furthermore, following the election of Donald Trump and as a result of some US states passing laws anti-abortion laws , a surge in interest of the book (*The Handmaid's Tale*) emerged. This incident, safeguards the notion that the events which constitute Atwood's imaginary society: Gilead, are occurring now (Supreme Court overturning of Roe v. Wade (1973) in 24th June, 2022) and has existed in the actual world, in the time ahead Atwood wrote her two novels- *The Testaments* and

The Handmaid's Tale, respectively. Moreover, according to Robin Young, "[p]eople often compare living in the United States today to the totalitarian dystopia of the 1985 novel *The Handmaid's Tale*" (Young 1). This is since, the United States parodies the theocratist, white supremacist Republic of Gilead, a view retained by Atwood, herself. Thus, from the above discussion, it is undeniably true to assert that there are elements of non-fictionality in Atwood's both *The Testaments* and *The Handmaid's Tale*. This is seen in the form of historical retelling (non-fictionality) which Atwood attempts by employing science fiction dystopia as her fictional narrative device.

Furthermore, as stated earlier, like its predecessor, *The Testaments* incorporates present-day concerns. For instance, with Donald Trump's "Build the Wall" slogan, which expressed his anti-immigration policy, the recurring question of immigration in the USA, begin to remerge. The predicament of immigration is invoked by Atwood in *The Testaments* through the "SantuCare", which embraces women escaping Gilead. Subsequently, Atwood states the issue of climate change in both *The Handmaid's Tale* and *The Testaments*. For instance, in Gilead, where both these novels take place, nuclear accidents and chemical leakages are accountable for the infertility epidemic, environmental degradation and climate change. Moreover, the sequel portrays youth activism, which has been in the actual media limelight in recent years. For instance, Daisy (also known as Nicole), one of the three female narrators in the novel, takes part with her classmates in a protest march against the oppression of women in Gilead and the disavowal of climate change. Young protesters carry banners proclaiming "GILEAD, CLIMATE SCIENCE DE-LIAR! GILEAD WANTS US TO FRY!" (48). Thus, Laeticia Clavien in "Learning about the Constructivism of Gender in Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaids Tale* and *The Testaments*" rightly asserts, "Atwood's writing was prompted by a feeling of world's degradation, both in 1985 and 2019" (70). Hence, from our above discussion of the two novels, we can affirm that Atwood responds to the worldwide alarming tendencies with *The Handmaids Tale* and their re-emergence in the contemporary world with *The Testaments*.

Moreover, according to Laeticia Clavien, Atwood's Gileadean society has its origins in historical events such as the Iranian revolution of the eighties, where "Ayatollah Khomeini had forced women out of Iranian universities, out of their jobs, and back to their burqas and their homes" (Neuman quoted in Clavien 71). This event is manifested in *Chapter XII* of *The Testaments* when Aunt Lydia narrates the scene in which women were being driven from their jobs by the force of arms. She expresses her dilemma in the following lines: "[a]t that moment the main door was kicked in. Five entered, two by two and then one on his own, submachine guns at the ready" (*The Testaments* 67). Subsequently, more historical events such as, the compulsory childbearing of Romania, literacy deprivation of Afghan women, which is now a reoccurrence, male guardship laws of Saudi Arabia

(Guardians accompanying Gilead's women in both the novels), fit into Atwood's inscription of both *The Handmaids Tale* and *The Testaments*. Therefore, it can be stated that Atwood wrote both *The Handmaid's Tale* and The Testaments to reveal the detrimental impact of patriarchal prejudice in the fictional regime, "which Atwood alleges is not entirely fictional" (Stein 62). During the Trump years, the Handmaid costumes became the common symbol of feminist protests of laws that aimed to restrict women's reproductive rights. Besides this, Donn Lu in her web article- "Margaret Atwood's *The Testament's* Anti-Science World is a Grim Warning", asserts that the fertility epidemic caused by environmental degradation, which Atwood predicts in both *The Handmaids Tale* and *The Testaments*, is already happening in developed countries. For instance, she states, "fertility is dropping: in the past four decades, sperm counts in developed countries have fallen by more than half" (2). Moreover, Atwood's projection in both her novels, about the fact that children will be the worst affected group by environmental damage, is also happening in the real world. For instance, "in July, the US Environmental Protection Agency said it wouldn't ban chlorpyrifos, a pesticide that has been linked to nervous system damage in young children" (ibid). The above fact reinforces the idea that the deterioration of the environment is directly linked to deterioration (health) in children. Nevertheless, this notion is not only limited to children and by all means, but any irreparable damage to the ecosystem will lead to an extensive shift in how human beings live their lives. Thus, the fate of the natural world and the fate of humankind are inseparably connected. Hence, Atwood's dystopia has become far too honest. Subsequently, her projections in both the novels smear the line between fact and fiction. Both of Atwood's novels- *The Handmaids Tale* and *The Testaments* are the realistic dystopias that Atwood penned.

In her essay- "Margaret Atwood on What *The Handmaid's Tale* Means in the Age of Trump", written for *The New York Times*, Atwood emphasized her use of the literature of witness. She states this in the following lines:

> "…the literature of witness. Offred records her story as best she can; then she hides it, trusting that it may be discovered later, by someone who is free to understand it and share it... Robinson Crusoe keeps a journal. So did Samuel Pepys, in which he chronicled the Great Fire of London. So did many who lived during the Black Death, although their accounts often stop abruptly. So did Roméo Dallaire, who chronicled both the Rwandan genocide and the world's indifference to it. So did Anne Frank, hidden in her secret annex" (Atwood 6).

In the above quotation, Atwood alludes to the stories handed by individuals standing as witnesses to the miseries of history they have encountered. Similarly, irrespective of means, of the single narrator in *The Handmaid's Tale* or several narrators in *The Testaments*, Atwood's fictions appear to reconstruct the past and

present events of the world, "[i]n fact, what they manage to achieve is to support the thesis of alternative histories and elusive truth" (Chifane 1181). The Republic of Gilead, pursues malevolent customs similar to other totalitarian regimes, for instance- "Nazis and Soviet Communists: erasure of data, burning of books and documents and executions of their opponents, all of which force later generations to rely more upon alternative sources for evidence of their totalitarian rule" (Labudova 101). Subsequently, countless allusions by our multiple narrators in *The Testaments*, leads us to existing conditions such as, "children ripped from their parents, a refugee crisis, inhuman detention cent[res], pedophile scandals– mirroring current TV news" (Labudova 103). Thus, Atwood's makes use of the literature of witness, which is based on true events (facts), in her dystopian fiction (narrative mode), in attempts to retell, "[W]hat happened to someone in the real world", an important feature of "cross-fictionality" (Hatavara and Mildorf 394). Hence, it is justified when Atwood states of the literature of witness, "that someone, somewhere — many, I would guess — are writing down what is happening as they themselves are experiencing it. Or they will remember, and record later, if they can" (Atwood 7).

Atwood's dystopian fictions- *The Testaments* and *The Handmaid's Tale*, renders striking pictures of the dreadful ramifications of inaccurate political policy by the fictional totalitarian regime- Gilead. However, Atwood asserts, in an interview, that "there's nothing in the book that hasn't already happened" (Atwood quoted in Stein 64). Moreover, amidst *The Handmaid's Tale* and *The Testaments* lays the strong indication that the "progress toward global human rights will never be possible until nations of 'freedom' face their own incarcerated dystopian realities" (Dodson 66). Similarly, in her interview with Nick Bryant, Atwood asserts that, after the publication of *The Handmaids Tale*, a huge number of people in Europe as well as the United States did not believe that, Atwood's Gilead represented America. This is because, according to Atwood, "America was viewed in the shining light, the home of the free" (Atwood quoted in Bryant 2). Moreover, Atwood asserts, "[t]hey (the skeptics) couldn't believe it because they didn't know much American history" (ibid), that it had already happened in the United States. For instance, the Puritan's sacred mission of the heavenly realm in the New World was underpinned through "dystopian methods of capturing, ousting, and silencing apostates against the patriarchal communal vision, especially women dissidents- e.g., Anne Hutchinson, Tituba, and Mary Webster (Dodson 66). Subsequently, by attending to the affiliation between church and state, Atwood points to the inflexible doctrines of the first Protestant movement in America, doctrines that led to the prosecution of "basically anybody who didn't agree with them [the Puritans] religiously" (Dodson quotes herself 69-70). Therefore, by underlining the context of inhumanity in the foundation of colonial empire, Atwood compels us into an "intertextual rereading of both American history and American literature" (Dodson 70). Thus, from the above

analyses, we must acknowledge the broader political contexts in which Atwood's *The Testaments* and *The Handmaid's Tale*, were written and, perhaps more importantly, in which they are read" (Macfarlane 64). Consequently, Atwood emphasizes the importance of context, "to draw questions of violence, women, complicity and human relations to nature and the environment together" to investigate the intricacies "of any connection between these positions" (ibid). Hence, this justifies our point that Atwood's Science fiction dystopia- *The Testaments*, can be stated as work of "cross-fictionality", where, "the text and the world in which it is written and in which it is read…cannot be teased apart" (ibid).

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QUEST FOR IDENTITY IN THE SELF-NARRATIVE OF DALIT TRANSGENDER LIVING SMILE VIDYA'S *I AM VIDYA: A TRANSGENDER'S JOURNEY*

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Abstract: *Identity is one's inner cognizance of one's self and life in general. It can not only define but also confine one from living the life of inclination. Gender is one of the markers that can define as well as confine the identity of an individual. Transgender is the term used for those people whose assigned sex at birth does not correlate with their sense of gender identity as per the social norms. The socio-cultural discourse of gender binary, which strictly classifies gender only as man and woman, fails to recognize the gender non-conformity of the transgender people and thus marginalizes them as the 'other.' The transgender community in India, despite being highly visible and one of the ancient communities whose presence can be discerned throughout histories and traditions of cultural practices, mythological and literary narratives, is one of the most suppressed and ostracized communities and is compelled to live on the periphery of society. The marginalization of these people can be even worse when their gender identity intersects with their Dalit status in the social hierarchies. Living Smile Vidya is a Dalit transgender whose autobiography I am Vidya: A Transgender's Journey is a testimony of such sufferings and her quest for her true identity. Her self-narrative is a prominent representation of transgender literature from India that depicts the painful journey of her quotidian struggle to live with dignity, the trauma, and identity crisis, her transition from male to female (MTF), and her experience as a Dalit transgender, whose caste position exacerbates her gender experience in Indian society. This paper attempts to study Vidya's self-narrative as a field of identity construction and the literary relevance of such narrative. The primary concern of this paper will be queer theorist Judith Butler's idea of "gender performativity" and other queer theory in understanding the transgender identity crisis in Vidya's autobiography.*

Keywords: *gender, identity, marginalization, self-narrative, transgender*

Introduction:

Identity is one of the cutting-edge issues of the twenty-first century and "is ubiquitous cultural in contemporary social science, cutting across psychoanalysis, psychology, political science, sociology, and history" (Stryker and Burke 284). Identity can be said as an introspective idea about the self that defines the individual and that person's social interactions. "In popular and academic discourse, the term identity is sometimes applied as a catch-all label for biological characteristics, psychological dispositions, and/or socio-demographic positions" (Schwartz et al. 2). It can not only define but also confine one from living the life of inclination. Prominent identity theorist Sheldon Stryker modifies George Herbert Mead's 'structural symbolic interactionism' and puts forward the idea of identity as a result of the construction of the meaning of the self through social interaction. "Identities require that persons be placed as social objects by having others assign position designation to them and that persons internalize the designations. Identities are then self-cognitions tied to roles, and through roles, to position in organized social relationships" (Stryker 20). Stryker's definition of identity then provides the multifaceted aspect of identity and how a person can be seen as having multiple identities "as there are organized systems of role relationships in which they participate" (Stryker 20). Thus, Stryker's theorization has indicated the relationship between identity and role performance. While talking about identity and performance we have to appraise queer theorist Judith Butler's "gender performativity" theory as it has destabilized the earlier notions of gender as a fixed and stable identity of an individual.

Gender Identity:

Gender is one of the markers that can define the identity of an individual. World Health Organization (WHO) defines it as "gender is used to describe the characteristics of women and men that are socially constructed, while sex refers to those that are biologically determined." So, while sex can be considered biological, gender is cultural and is constructed as well as maintained via various socio-cultural practices. The biological dichotomy of sex as male and female is attributed to the cultural association of man and woman, along with various roles, behaviors, stereotypes, and their performative acts as masculine and feminine according to social dictum. This male-female dichotomy is known as gender binarism. "From dress to language, everything is codified by this binary" (Giri 266). The gender binary of male and female is challenged by Butler's "gender performative theory" and her radical theorization of both sex and gender as cultural and hence unstable. According to Butler, "Gender is in no way a stable identity or locus of agency from

which various acts proceed; rather, it is an identity tenuously constituted in time---an identity instituted through a *stylized repetition of acts*" (Butler 519). Butler's definition of gender provides her notion of gender as the performance of repetitive actions and gender is thus constructed through the performance of gender itself. Thus, Butler's deconstruction of gender identity as a performative act resonates with Sheldon Stryker's identity and role performance, which will further help in understanding the socio-cultural behavior of an individual in defining that person's sense of identity in terms of gender.

As mentioned earlier gender binarism is the socially constructed notion of comprehending gender only either as man or woman, which creates a whole cultural discourse of language, dress code, behavior, and even stereotypes. Anyone who deviates from the rubrics of gender binarism is seen as unnatural, the other, and unacceptable. In *A Life in Trans Activism*, the transgender writer A. Revati states,

> The gender binary splits and compartmentalizes people into male and female gender roles, gender identities, and attributes. In this rigid map of what it means to be male-female, man/woman, people who are gender diverse- whose gender identity, gender experience and biological sex do not 'match' or align with social norms, are marginalized and thereby excluded because they do not conform to normative gender expectations associated with one's biological sex. Genderism, or the belief that there are only two genders and that gender is inherently associated with one's assigned sex at birth, is the basis of the pervasive transphobia or the widespread fear, hatred and avoidance of people such as transgender persons (xxx).

Transgender is the term used for those people whose assigned sex at birth does not correlate with their sense of gender identity as per the social norms. "Transgender is a broad category typically used to denote any individual whose gender-related identification or external gender presentation conflicts in some way with their birth sex, and who therefore violates conventional standards of unequivocal "male" or "female" identity and behavior" (Diamond et al. 630). Since they do not conform to the societal codifications of gender binarism, they are treated as the other and marginalized in society in the worst way possible. The transgender community is thus marginalized for ages without having proper access to basic human rights even after having constitutional remedies in the past few years. They live on the periphery of society as the ostracized community of the subalterns. Despite their hypervisibility in society, they are rendered invisible from the mainstream socio-

cultural discourse as they defy the codes of gender binarism. Only after some recent development in the legal and cultural as well as literary representation, the living condition of transgender people is available for public sympathy and understanding. The literary representation of transgender people is acknowledged as transgender literature, a literary genre that is dedicated to bring the truth about their marginalized lives. Transgender literature is vastly limited to self-narration or autobiography and biography in Indian narratives, which has developed in the twenty-first century only.

Quest for Identity in Vidya's Self-Narration:

Self-narrative is a genre of establishing coherency of life and the identity of the narrator. Self-narrative fills the gap between the narrative self and tangible self and thus creates a bridge in understanding one's own identity. *I am Vidya: A Transgender's Journey* (2007) is one such self-narrative by transwoman Living Smile Vidya or Smiley, who captures her struggle with gender dysphoria from a young age and her subsequent sex-reassignment surgery. She implores in her book "I do not ask for heaven--- I am begging to be spared from living hell. I plead for myself and fellow tirunangais" (138). Vidya's pleading reveals the hell alike living conditions of the 'tirunangais' (a Tamil term for hijra or transgender), she explains, "I wanted to live like a normal life like all men and women. Me being a tirunangais was natural, just as men are men, women are women, and cats are cats. Trouble arises when people do not understand this simple truth. We cannot even describe our problems as those of the minorities. All we need is equal opportunity to work and earn a livelihood" (130). Vidya's creation of the literary self is her quest for identity which is "a negotiation between [her] I and Those, the self and the other, the individual and the community" (Santosh Gupta et al. 2). Her autobiography thus provides a broader platform for her to speak for herself and her community that has been rendered voiceless by the popular narratives. She challenges the heteronormativity (the presumption of heterosexuality as the normal mode of sexual orientation) and gender binary in society through her self-narrative and takes the authority to represent their story.

Vidya was born in 1982 as Saravanan, a boy in a Dalit family of the Arunthatiyar caste. Her self-narrative traces the trouble of her gender identity as a male, her self-realization as a transwoman at a young age, the struggle to accept her true gender identity, her accomplishment in higher education under the strict surveillance of her father, her acceptance of identity as transwoman and experiences after traumatic sex reassignment surgery. Vidya was born after two girls and enjoyed male privilege in the family in terms of education and exemption from household

work unlike her sisters, "I was the sole beneficiary of all the love and affection at home by virtue of being a boy" (13). However, she had to face her father's wrath and corporal punishment in acquiring her education as he had put over-emphasis on her being always at the top in her academic records, she recounts in her autobiography, "he never allowed me to have a normal childhood" (16). Amidst all family turbulences of her mother's death, her father's remarriage as well as her father's coercing in academic excellence, Vidya had struggled to come to terms with her gender identity as a boy and her assigned roles in the society. She loved to wear her sister's skirts by the age of six or seven years old, "I usually locked myself inside once all of them had gone out, put on girls' clothes and sang and danced. I loved it" (18). Vidya's acts of self-indulgence in privacy reveal the uneasiness of her behavior in the eyes of cishet society. Her effeminate habits which were dismissed as childish behavior were gradually seen with disavowed. She questions in the book, "What's wrong with my preferences? Why should a boy only wear shirts and trousers? I like skirts and blouses. Why can't I wear them? Why do people find something odd in what comes to me naturally?" (22). Her younger self was unable to comprehend the societal ways of gender roles and behaviors. Susan Stryker, the notable gender theorist, defines the trouble of transgender's identification with gender binarism as,

> Each person has a subjective sense of fit with a particular gender category; this is one's gender identity. For most people, there is a sense of congruence between the category one has been assigned to and trained in, and what one considers oneself to be. Transgender people demonstrate that this is not always the case—that it is possible to form a sense of oneself as not like other members of the gender one has been assigned to, or to think of oneself as properly belonging to another gender category (13).

Like most of the transgender narratives, Vidya's self-narration is also built around the transgender dilemma of "trapped in the wrong body" paradigm, which inevitably resulted in her trouble associated with the given gender identity of male. In her words, "I was a girl. Unfortunately, the world saw me as a boy. Inwardly I wanted to be a girl, but I made every effort possible to hide my femininity from the outside world. I took the particular trouble to remain inconspicuous… I lead a false life of strenuous attempts to swagger like a man and speak like one" (33). Vidya's initial attempts to hide her preferences were because of the school and college bullies as well as the public humiliation in daily life, which "made [her] wary of the external world and increased [her] loneliness" (24). She gradually relied on unisex clothes and after her association with a Non-Governmental Organization

(NGO) working for the transgender community, where she "came face to face with the distinct world of tirunangais" (48). The self-realization of her gender identity as a transwoman came into full prospective after this association while she was doing master's degree in linguistics from Tamil Nadu University. During those days she was also actively involved with theatre and stage performances as she had always been fascinated by cinema and drama. By that time, she "was dying to express" (54) as she narrates, "It is difficult to describe the flaming desire inside me at that time to parade as a tirunangais… Wanting to walk tall in my new identity" (54). Her growing femininity and desire to identify herself as a tirunangai was mounting high as she could no longer bear to lead a double life. She preferred to die instead of identifying herself as a man, she "wasn't confused" (56) anymore she "was in search of [her] self, going beyond [her] confusion over [her] gender" (49). She further recalls, "In my heart, the decision to become a woman had taken firm root, the transformation in my mind and body complete" (66). Her decision of male to female (MTF) sex reassignment surgery led her to decline the offer of pursuing a doctorate degree from her professor and she fled from home to Mumbai. Before taking such a life-altering decision she was warned and suggested by many of her well-wishers not to jeopardize her career and life. She was even told to "find expression for [her] desires in privacy" (56) and about social disapproval constantly. But she was adamant about assure her identity as a transwoman, it "was [her] need: [her] existence; [her] very survival" (63). She was registered with the "Bhendi Bazaar parivaar" (75), a tirunangai family in Mumbai, and realized the hardships of transgender life, "In a world of men and women where no one has the maturity to accept us naturally, the place of tirunangais was always going to be a problem" (81). The plight of the transgender community in India during the early twenty-first century (even today despite several legal modifications) was so woeful, that there was no social security or way of earning a livelihood with dignity, as Vidya writes, "The only way I could live the life of a woman was by begging or becoming a sex worker. Neither my linguistics nor theatre experience could help me here" (66). Despite her higher qualification, as a transgender, she had no option other than begging on the streets and trains for her livelihood and surgery. Although initially, she found begging derogatory, she eventually started enjoying asking for alms, she considered "it [her] revenge, [her] claim of compensation from each and every member of the prevailing society" (93) and as she states "[n]othing was shameful now that I no longer had to hide my identity" (87). Apart from her quotidian struggle for a living she also often had to experience traumatic physical abuse. In one such unpleasant incident on the train she was abused by four or five people "one of them held my arms and intertwined them

between the stairs of the ladder to the upper berth; another pulled my hair; a third thug whipped me with the buckled end of his belt, hitting my face" (96). Vidya endured all these inhuman treatments only to liberate her trapped identity as a transwoman from her male body, "I desperately needed money--- not to buy fancy stuff but to redeem my identity…to achieve…nirvana. Nirvana was an operation…[which] would slash and remove the sin of my birth as a male" (98). Her nirvana was traumatic and painful as it was incautious and done without proper medical treatment. Her rhetorical question on why anyone would go through such indescribable pain of operation which was illegal in India at that time finds the answer in her opinion, "a person of my kind never feels male. Our male identity is an unfortunate accident. We are---we want to be---women. We feel like women… We are women at heart desperately seeking to delete or erase our male identity. That is why we crave the surgical procedure that will give us the bodily likeness of the female identity" (99-100). Even after the surgery Vidya's struggle to assert her identity in society and live with dignity was not over. She had to face a legal battle for more than a year to change her "name from Saravanan to Living Smile Vidya" (133). Vidya still had to fight for her family's acceptance of her identity, especially from her father. Her father refused to see her in a sari upon meeting for the first time after her elopement from home. Her attempts to convince her family were so heart-wrenching, "I am not Saravanan, but I am a human being, not some monster. Not some demon" (80). Her sister often addressed her with the Tamil male pronunciation of "da," to which Vidya constantly showed her irritation. As Stryker puts "one's gender identity could perhaps best be described as how one feels about being referred to by a particular pronoun" (13), this can be discerned in Vidya's irritation at being called "da." On the other hand, she expresses her delight in being addressed by people as "dee" the female pronunciation in the Tamil language.

Conclusion:

Although there are many saliences of identity in understanding Vidya's quest for her identity, such as her Dalit caste, which on many occasions exacerbates her gender experience in Indian society. For instance, she got death threats for being outspoken about transgender and Dalit rights. However, in this paper, I have focused on her identity crisis in regards to her gender through her self-narration as the field of identity construction. Throughout the narration, Vidya asserts her identity as a trans woman and challenges gender identity as mere performance as Butler asserts, "If the ground of gender identity is the stylized repetition of acts through time, and not a seemingly seamless identity, then the possibilities of gender transformation are to be found in the arbitrary relation between such acts, in

the possibility of a different sort of repeating, in the breaking or subversive repetition of that style" (520). Thus, by subverting her given masculine gender identity Vidya provides the alternate possible gender identity via her self-narration. To conclude Vidya's self-narration "is like a teaching not only to transgender but all other non-normative sexualities giving lesson how to respond the inner urge and do accordingly defying traditional gender binary that is biased by socio-cultural construct harming individual self" (Giri 274).

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FROM MONSTROUS TO MATERNAL: A STUDY OF YAKSHI IN RELATION TO MOTHERHOOD

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Abstract: *Yakshi is a frequent character in the folklores of Kerala. The recent films, music videos, stories etc. that feature yakshi show that she stays 'alive' in the cultural imaginary of Kerala. As far as yakshi is concerned her gender matters a lot. She cannot be easily classified either into the category of monsters/ghosts or into that of celestial beings. She shows both characteristics at different times. This makes the character of yakshi more complicated as well as interesting. Apart from that, one of her interesting characters is her connection with motherhood. This paper tries to understand how motherhood is connected with yakshi by analysing some representations of her in Malayalam films. The study uses theoretical concepts that come under psychoanalysis and feminist film theories.*

Keywords*: Yakshi, Monster, Gender, Motherhood, Patriarchy,Cultural imaginary,Folklore, Myth.*

The Kerala folklore is enriched with the stories of 'Yakshi'. According to the myth she lives in *palamaram* (devil's tree) or *karimpana* (palmyra) and lurks there to seduce and exterminate lonely male travellers through a sexual intercourse. The myth passes on from generation to generation, orally as well as by other means. Earlier the yakshi was a frequent character in the folklore of Kerala. Then she started to appear in novels and poems. With the advent of cinema, she made her entry to the silver screen. Thus, yakshi is there in the cultural imaginary of Kerala from the time immemorial. The recent portrayal of yakshi in music videos such as *Panipaali* and *Panipaali 2*, directed by Neeraj Madhav affirms that people of Kerala still have a fascination for the concept of yakshi.

Yakshi is usually depicted as a beautiful voluptuous female creature who seduces men. According to the myth, the yakshi invites lonely male travellers to the tree in which she dwells. For them the tree seems like a spectacular mansion. She makes them come inside and seduces them to have sexual intercourse with her. And when they come in sexual contact withher, they will either be castrated or exterminated.

The eeriness gets risen up when it is said that only the nails, teeth and hair of the victims can be found under the palmyra or devil's tree the next morning. This brings about a situation in which men are on the boundary -the boundary put forward by the social customs, which they have a natural urge to cross. When they tend to cross the boundary, it becomes fatal or may end up their masculinity. This fear of castration is lurking behind the myth of yakshi. What makes yakshi and her story interesting is that even though men are afraid of her, that is, afraid of losing their masculinity towards a female who has extreme sexual prowess, they have a fascination for her at the same time. This can be read along with the concept of the 'abject' put forward by Julia Kristeva in her seminal work, *Powers of Horror*(1980).

Yakshi and her tales of seducing are plenty not only in folklores, poems, novels, plays and films, but also in other artworks. For instance, the world-famous Yakshi statue in Malampuzha sculpted by Kanayi Kunhiraman shows how much other art forms like sculpting takes up yakshi. Yakshi is peculiar from all other monsters in the world. Even though she has monstrous traits, she cannot even be called a 'monster', as she has some specific characteristics that make her stand out from the rest of the monstrous creatures. But this tendency to stand out from the crowd or the unwillingness to get classified into some groups makes her more interesting. Jeffrey Jerome Cohenstates in his seminal work, *Monster Theory* (1996) that:

> This refusal to participate in the classificatory "order of things" is true ofmonsters generally: they are disturbing hybrids whose externally incoherent bodies resist attempts to include them in any systematic structuration. And so the monster is dangerous, a form suspended betweenforms that threatens to smash distinctions. (Cohen 6)

When yakshi is brought under close observation in the light of Cohen's monster theory, it becomes clear that shesatisfies the seven theses he puts forward for a monster. The refusal of getting classified is one among them. Besides, according to Cohen, "The Monster's Body Is a Cultural Body", that is, "The monster is born only at this metaphoric crossroads, as an embodiment of a certain cultural moment—of a time, a feeling, and a place"(Cohen 4). Each yakshi tale is an embodiment of a certain moment; it may be connected with the history of Kerala, the Malayali cultural imaginary, and about the geography of Kerala. For instance, the story of Kalliyankattu Neeli is connected to the place 'Kalliyangadu' near Thiruvanathapuram (then a part of Travancore). It takes a Malayali back to the 'time' – that is to the time of Travancore reign.

Another thesis he puts forward about the monster is that, "The Monster Dwells at the Gates of Difference" (Cohen 7). This too is true in case of yakshi. The temple culture of Kerala proves this point. Yakshis are usually enshrined on the outskirts of the temple, far from the main deity. This clearly shows the difference between Bhagavathi and Yakshi in the consciousness of Malayali. That is, yakshi "isan incorporation of the Outside, the Beyond"; she is given a divine status, but at the same time, she cannot be perceived as a real goddess – someone equal to Bhagavathi. This justifies that yakshi too dwells at the gates of difference.

The fear men experience about yakshi,can be seen as an aftermath of patriarchal conditioning that would not let them tolerate women in the power (obviously sexual) position. Close observation of the cultural practices exposes that albeit yakshi is connected with fear, she is worshipped in many places in Kerala. In some temples she is enshrined on the outskirts of the temple as '*Yakshiamma*', and is worshipped for fertility. Here what happens is that a motherly attribute is given to yakshi. Again, patriarchy is at play – by giving yakshi a motherly nature, patriarchy is trying to control her otherwise uncontrollable power. She is transformed from the demonic to the divine.

The history of cinema shows that even the earliest horror filmshave something in connection with motherhood. For instance, in Alfred Hitchcock's *Psycho* (1960) and Ridley Scott's*Alien*(1979),maintain motherhood or a connection with motherhood as a thematic attribute.. It plays a significant part in scaring the audience. According to Sarah Arnold, (in her *Maternal Horror Film: Melodrama and Motherhood*),

> Typically the horror film is understood as invoking deep, primal or unconscious fears about the human condition, death and so on. However, with these fears resides a certain corresponding pleasure. That the maternal (in either body or sign) so often acts as the site of pleasures or anxieties, or both, points to its extraordinary significance culturally and filmically. (5)

Yakshi's myth is connected to motherhood not only in the way she is being worshipped as a fertility goddess, but also in some myths in which she is 'allowed' to live as some sorcerer's wife. Here, again, yakshi, who was once a monster is made to live the life that satisfies patriarchy. In Malayalam cinema, this connection of yakshi and motherhood can be seen if one closely watches the films with the help of psychoanalytic and feminist film theories. The very famous film, *Kalliyankattu Neeli* (1979), which was a huge hit horror film of its time and one of the films that popularised the horror genre among Malayalees, portrays Neeliyamma as a pregnant woman who is killed by her greedy husband, as in the

myth. According to the myth, Neeliyamma is seven months pregnant when she is brutally killed.The same fact has been portrayed in the film too. Another instance is there in*Akashaganga*(1999), directed by Vinayan; the protagonist is killed by burning her alive when she is carrying a baby. This matter of pregnancy not only adds weightage to the murder but also carries some hidden connotations with respect to the myth of yakshi. As yakshi is a female monster, she and her stories revolve around celibacy, pregnancy, miscarriages etc. In the film *Yakshi* (1968),directed by K. S Sethumadhavan and *Akam*(2013),directed by Shalini Usha Nair miscarriages have a say in the plot. They used the mythical element, that is, yakshis are fond of consuming human embryos.The portion penned spectacularly by Malayattoor Ramakrishnan in his novel is represented on screen by director Sethumadhavanwithout losing the impression that Ragini is responsible for Kalyani's miscarriage. Shalini Usha Nair, the director of *Akam* has saidthat Sethumadhavan's film inspired her more thanMalayattoor'snovel, adding eeriness to the scene by filmingRagini eating the foetus and blood dripping down from her lips. The scene is capable of creating fear as well as a kind of aversion which is caused by blood; the impact on the audience is same as the process of abjection explained by Kristeva in *Powers of Horror*(1980).

> In Kristeva's post-Freudian theory of psychoanalysis, abjection describes both the founding and traumatic moment of separation from the child's archaic and undifferentiated relationship with its mother, and the process of the expulsion from the body of substances such as excrement or menstrual blood. At the same time, the experience of abjection establishes bodily boundaries by facilitating the introduction of a distinction between the inner and the outer, and then between the ego and the non-ego. (Macey 1)

Barbara Creed works further on Kristeva's concepts and tries to apply the same in horror films. Creed,in her *The Monstrous Feminine,*statesthat, abject would appear in horror films in three ways. First, the horror film abounds those images that create subjection such as corpse, bodily wastes like "blood, vomit,saliva, sweat, tears and putrefyingflesh". Second, "the concept of a border is central to the construction of the monstrous in the horror film; that which crosses or threatens to cross the 'border' is abject".The third way of bringing abjection to the horror film is by the construction of the maternalfigure as abject. In her essay, "Horror and the Monstrous-Feminine: An Imaginary Abjection", she puts out:

> Images of blood, vomit, pus, shit, etc, are central to our culturally/socially constructed notions of the horrific. They signify a split betweentwo orders: the maternal authority and the law of the father. On the onehand, these

> images of bodily wastes threaten a subject that is already constituted, in relation to the symbolic, as 'whole and proper'. Consequently, they fill the subject - both the protagonist in the text and the spectatorin the cinema- with disgust and loathing. (Creed 51)

Albeit the yakshis are worshipped in some temples as fertility goddesses and there happens glorification of motherhood, motherhood always tries to connote something else that is not visible in the first look. A thorough reading of the myth using the concept of 'archaic mother' reveals details of the society and politics of Kerala. Yakshi, who is worshipped for fertility many a times is portrayed as an all-engulfing archaic mother. This is the threat she constantly poses to the society. She has her own ways of doing it, like seducing the lonely male travellers and castrating/exterminating them. In *Akashaganga*, Ganga returns as ayakshi to avenge her murder. She poses great threat to the males of that *tharavadu*(ancestral house) that if they end up their celibacy, she can take hold of the power and destroy the entire *tharavadu* and its inhabitants. The *muthashi* (grandmother), the grand old matriarch of the *tharavadu* keeps reminding every male member of the family that it is necessary to keep their celibacy.

A close reading of the films which portray yakshismanifests that not only a maternal attribute is given to yakshis in some films, but also, in most of such films, motherhood is in some way significant in the plot. This may be related to the gender of the 'monster' discussed here – yakshi. The view of yakshi as a 'female monster' shows a tendency to connect her tales with motherhood. And this connection of motherhood is brought about by the presence of characters who are pregnant women, mothers of children who are greatly concerned about them and evenby foster mothers. In some films, the yakshi helps the mothers to protect their kids from some kind of threats and, in some other films, the yakshi herself becomes threat to the mother-child relationship.

For instance, in the film, *Neeli*, released in the year 2018, directed by Althaf Rahman, the plot revolves around motherhood. The protagonist of the film is Lakshmi who works as a speech therapist and is a single mother. She along with her daughter visits her ancestral village, Kalliyangadu. Later her daughter is kidnapped. The rest of the film portrays the pursuit for her daughter, Thara. All her attempts are in vain. Then he meets Reni, a paranormal investigator, and they together start searching for Thara. In the end, it is Neeli, the yakshi who helps them to find the child. Here, yakshi gets the image of the goddess or the protector who can be pleased by her worshippers. An intertextual reading would make out how the yakshi, Kalliyankattu Neeli is integral to the plot of the film. There are

suggestions in the film that proves this. For example, Lakshmi's ancestral village is 'Kalliyangandu', which immediately reminds the audience ofKalliyangadu. So, it can be understood that Neeli, who once killed all the travellers who passes through Kalliyangadu is now satiated with rituals and is now showing motherly attributes.

The portrayal of motherhood can be seen very subtly executed in the film *EnnuSwanthamJanakikutty*. Though it may not beeasily evident for an ordinary audience, a keen watching of the film can unravelthat motherhood/a motherly nature is attributed to Kunjathol, the yakshi portrayed in the film.The protagonist Janakikutty who faces loneliness in the home finds relief in Kunjathol. Janakikutty, who is a teenager, starts sharing everything to Kunjathol, like every teenage girl does to her mother. ThusJanakikutty is getting comfortable with the motherly nature of the yakshi portrayed in the film. It may be noted that when she happens to see the monstrous nature of Kunjathol, she could not stand it and she faints.

> It is precisely this 'image' of maternal devotion, with its corresponding jouissance, that has come to dominate representations ofthe maternal, particularly in the case of filmic representations. Suffering, in both giving birth and child-rearing, is structured as a meansthrough which women can achieve satisfaction and fulfil their desire. Suffering and self-sacrifice are the conditions by which the mother isrepresentable. Her pain and the endurance of it – the pain of givingbirth, of losing the child/of being left without the child, of enduringgreat hardship so that her own child can achieve – is a measurementof her saintliness. It is precisely these two binaries, of abject omnipotent mother and mother safely contained within the Symbolic, thathave come to dominate maternal horror. (Arnold 17)

These examples illustrate that Malayalam cinema, by and large uses yakshi stories in order to portray maternal horror. The reason for the treatment of motherhood in films featuring yakshi may be the binary nature of her representation – a character similar to what Arnold defines as the 'abject omnipotent mother and mother safely contained within the Symbolic' (Arnold 17). That is, yakshi is 'divine' when she is pleased and she can turn into her monstrous form if she is threatened by any means. So, these representations tend to suggest that a mother/woman who is controlled /enslaved by patriarchy would anytime break her chains and come out. This again shows the threat faced by patriarchy when a woman's sexuality is let free.That is, patriarchy conditioned males to think in such a way that women with high sexual prowess can anytime threaten the entire system of patriarchy. The fear towards yakshi myth proves the same.

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PARTITION AND THE REFUGEE QUESTION: A READING OF SELECT FICTIONAL WORKS

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Abstract: *The Partition of India in 1947 caused wide scale displacement along religious lines, which created overwhelming refugee crises in the newly constituted dominions—India and Pakistan. However, the conditions of people moving across borders, of being displaced or of being labeled 'refugees', have gained unprecedented attention over the years. Alongside the predicaments of being forced to flee, recent studies direct our attention to the lived experiences of the people displaced as part of the Partition, to their experiences of forced mobility or getting stuck in one country preventing their return to their places of origin and how discriminations against the displaced people or the refuges were meted out and so on. In case of the Indian Partition, reconstituting identities for the refugees through the documentary evidences of identity cards, passports and visas was based on the assumptions that new citizenship for them would be best functional even after new nationalities had been imposed on them. This paper advocates a rethinking of the conditions of the Partition-induced refugees who tried to negotiate with an event which was life-changing yet beyond their control through a reading of some fictional works.*

Key words: *Partition, Refugees, Lived Experience, Displacement, Identity*

Introduction:

In recent years, there can be seen a significant shift in academic scholarship from the Partition and its immediate impact to the 'lived experience' of the people turned migrants or refugees due to the Partition. Haimanti Roy in her "Partitioned Lives: Migrants, Refugees, Citizens in India and Pakistan, 1947-65" refers to two of the important works in that direction. The first one – *The Long Partition and the Making of Modern South Asia* (2007) by *Vazira Fazila-Yacoobali Zamindar* studies the aftermath of Partition in Karachi and Delhi and examines the official policies designed to control migration after the Partition. Zamindar captures the

uncertainties in the status quo of those caught on the wrong side of the border, as they negotiated the documentary terrain of permits, passports and evacuee property that were instituted by both India and Pakistan to prevent migration and return of Muslims in Pakistan and India respectively. While, the other one *The Spoils of Partition: Bengal and India, 1947–1967* (2007) by Joya Chatterji examines the impact of the Partition on those living in the divided regions. Such works, among some others, provides a critique of the official policies in India and Pakistan that were the determinants in defining and imposing national identities on the 'partitioned' people where the actions and decisions of the official functionaries, minorities and refugees were central. As discussed by Roy (2012), rather than being passive victims of state legislations, the ordinary people manipulated legal clauses to better able to manage their status, and negotiated, complained and sometimes ignored official dictates. The purpose of this paper is to argue that literary works on the Partition can both showcase and challenge the processes of representations of the displaced people in opposition to the predominant social and political representations that display ambivalences, ingrained prejudice and stereotypes regarding the refugees and the migrants. The main focus of this paper therefore has been the literary representations of the Partition induced refugees and how they would engage with their immediate surroundings as showcased through certain fictional works.

The Moving Away:

It is worth noting that at the initial stage of the Partition, it was predominantly believed that it was a temporary affair and soon situations will gain normalcy and people would be able to return to their homes once the anomalous events would disappear. Khushwant Singh's novel *Train to Pakistan* (2009) is a classic example to observe this stage when the Muslim population of Mano Majra was getting evicted after the Partition. Mano Majra was a tiny place, a small village, half a mile away from the banks of the river Sutlej which had a peaceful atmosphere "lost in the remote reaches of the frontier" (Singh 2) with only about seventy families with only one Hindu family of Lala Ram Lal and Sikhs and Muslim families, about equal in number (Singh, 2) "until the summer of 1947" (6) till the arrival of the "ghost train" (82) from Pakistan with "a full load of corpses" (124).

Gradually Mano Majra, one of the "oases of peace" (Singh 2) started showing signs of change marking its impact on the Muslim population which despite being similar in number like the Sikh families was pushed to the margins after the creation of Pakistan, a place for the Muslims. The conversation between Hukum Chand, magistrate and deputy commissioner of the district and the sub-inspector of

police is notable in this regard. The sub-inspector reported that most of the Muslims of the nearby villages had started leaving for the refugee camps but the Muslims of Mano Majra were still there and the arrival of forty or fifty Sikh refugees from Pakistan who took refuge at the temple became a matter of concern for Hukum Chand:

> 'Why were they allowed to stop?' asked Hukum Chand sharply. 'You know very well the orders are that all incoming refugees must proceed to the camp at Jullundur. This is serious. They may start the killing in Mano Majra.'
>
> 'No, sir, the situation is well in hand up till now. These refugees have not lost much in Pakistan and apparently no one molested them on the way. The Muslims of Mano Majra have been bringing food at the temple.' (102)

The prevalent situation after the arrival of the Sikh refugees and the way they were attended to by the Muslims at Mano Majra pointed that religious fanaticism could not make its inroads till then. Furthermore, the refugees from Pakistan "have not lost much in Pakistan and apparently no one molested them on the way." (102) Nonetheless Hukum Chand, who represented the administration, did not want to take any risk and asked the sub-inspector to send word to the commander of the Muslim refugee camp asking for trucks to evacuate the Muslims in Mano Majra, "After you have done the needful, send word to the commander of the Muslim refugee camp asking for the trucks to evacuate Mano Majra Muslims." (104)

The way the administration handled the condition of the Muslims pointed to the top-bottom method where there was a chain of orders to be followed by the subordinate officials who were to handle any situation as per exigency for which they were answerable to the authorities. As such their primary aim was to forestall any unwanted eventualities and could not think about the ground realities, especially how the Muslims of Mano Majra would get affected once they were turned refugees, getting evicted from their place of birth. Situations soon hurtled fast towards lawlessness and there was a fear looming that the lives of the Muslims were at stake because of the influx of refugees from Pakistan who may turn violent at any time and "wreak vengeance" on the Muslim tenants of Mano Majra.

A sixty-year-old person like Imam Baksh, who held himself erect bearing a dignity and an aura of righteousness and was held in high esteem in Mano Majra too was transforming towards a refugee. He went to meet the Sikhs who had congregated at the lambada's house to discuss what they could do for their Muslim tenants with whom they have lived for years and "no one had the nerve to suggest throwing

them out, even in a purely Sikh gathering." (132) Imam Baksh uttered in a despondent mood:

> 'Well, brothers, what is your decision about us?' He asked quietly.
>
> There was an awkward silence. Everyone looked at the lambardar.
>
> 'Why ask us?' answered the lambardar. 'This is your village as much as ours.'
>
> 'You have heard what is being said! All the neighbouring villages have been evacuated. Only we are left. If you want us to go too, we will go.' (133)

The sudden change of Imam Baksh's position from a person who did not have to who took for granted the space where he lived became an outsider in it, a minority though not being in terms of number (Sikhs and Muslims were of equal numbers in Mano Majra) revealed a unique situation where the boundary line and the religion one belonged to became the decisive factors in providing right space to a particular individual. Khushwant Singh presented the amity amongst communities of Mano Majra and the helplessness of the Sikhs who could not do anything to support their Muslim 'brothers', had to bow down to the circumstances unwillingly and "several of the people started crying quietly and blowing their noses" (133) in a moving scene when Imam Baksh broke down by saying that they have nothing to do with Pakistan. They asserted their allegiance to Mano Majra, the place their ancestors and they were born, and the people amongst whom they have lived in friendliness.

The lambardar spoke for the Sikhs who by virtue of their religion got immunity and asserted their concern for the Muslims. It was because of this concern and the safety of their Muslims brothers that (whom they may not be able to protect from the refugees coming from the other side) he advised them to go to the refugee camp while the trouble was on, to lock their houses with their belongings and promised to look after their cattle till they returned back. It is remarkable that countless politicians announced that Partition was temporary there was every chance that there will be a reunion of the subcontinent with no less than a decade. Yasmin Khan cites a declaration of Rajendra Prasad, the first President of India, on the day the plan was made public "I have not lost faith in an undivided India. I believe no man can divide what God has created as one." (Khan, 95)

Imam Baksh did not try to prevent the inevitable and accepted what emerged with a calm resignation. In a telling way he said that they have to clear out of their homes in a night which took hundreds of years for their fathers and grandfathers to make. He foregrounded a tradition that was inherent in a home which not only sheltered

the current people but also had a deep and a loaded past. Thus, the severance from their home and the associated trauma that it generated could only be sensed by the people who went through it; after all Partition was something that happened to the people of the land when the land was partitioned. His conversation with his daughter, Nooran pointed that Pakistan meant nothing to her, as it did not mean anything for those who were forcibly turned into refugees for which they were never prepared and were not ready to accept. The narrative mentions:

'Get up and pack. We have to go tomorrow morning', he announced dramatically.

> 'Go away? Where?'
>
> 'I don't know…Pakistan!'
>
> The girl set up with a jerk. 'I will not go to Pakistan,' she said defiantly.
>
> …
>
> 'You may not want to go, but they will throw you out. All Muslims are leaving for the camp tomorrow.'
>
> 'Who will throw us out? This is our village. Are the police and government dead?'
>
> 'Don't be silly girl. Do as you are told. Hundreds of thousands of people are going to Pakistan and as many coming out. Those who stay behind are killed. Hurry up and pack.' (Singh, 136)

Individual voice and protests hardly mattered as decision to divide the land was already taken by the leaders at the helm of affairs and common people were required to follow it silently. People had to choose between two extreme options – a possible but not assured life by leaving and impending death by staying in their place of birth. It is appropriate here to bring Jennifer Yusin's understanding of the border between India and Pakistan to understand the trauma that the displaced people underwent as India was partitioned. According to her, the border between India and Pakistan is both a geographical separation and the site of an ungraspable trauma; for this reason, it can be understood as a physical entity as well as a symbol. She uses the expression "geography of trauma" to convey the idea that "the borders created during the Partition exist at once as geographical separations and as a spatial, temporal figure for the unspeakable experience of that history, and as such become the site where the knowable realities of history become inextricably bound up with the problem of grasping trauma." (Yusin, 459)

Poor people like the Mano Majra Muslims had to face dilemmas like whether to move away from their house or to cling into it. Same was not the case with certain classes of wealthy people. Yasmin Khan has mentioned about some strategies adopted by the rich people before Partition to secure their assets, "The wealthy, far-sighted and well-connected made sure that their assets were safe. It is no surprise that the great industrial magnate G.D. Birla who had long been advocating Partition managed to extricate 80 percent of his liquid assets from Punjab and Sind months before Partition." (Khan, 101)

Pushed to the Margins:

What lay in store for the refugees in terms of their identity as refugees is worthy of consideration. "In Exile" (2009) a story by Mohan Kalpana provides a potential ground to investigate this issue through the character named Mohan who along with his mother and two sisters were turned into refugees and a cyclone that occurred the night before "had brought his house down. His mother had suffered from head injuries, so had to be hospitalized. His two sisters had been sitting outside a broken barrack" (Kalpana, 158). He needed to rent a new place for which he required to submit an application and went to the government office to get a form.

The treatment that he received at the office and his responses to them presented the ironical status of the refugees, their quandaries and helplessness. To get the form Mohan was supposed to produce the refugee certificate but he did not have any in spite of an application for the same months ago. His discussion with the clerk which soon turned into an interminable argumentation and presented the rigmarole of getting what was the right of a refugee and insensitivity of the administration that had power and privilege by its side that asked Mohan to prove his identity as a refugee pushing him to an absurd state. The clerk wailed:

> 'How do we know whether you are a refugee or not?'
>
> ….
>
> Mohan replied, 'My friend, my presence in this office proves that I am a refugee and I have come to a government office for refuge.' (160)

It is a paradoxical situation that to assert his identity as a refugee Mohan needed a refugee certificate which he cannot acquire as he did not have any document to establish it. Kalpana highlighted the plight of the refugees who were not in a situation to leave their homes peacefully when they were uprooted as was seen in the case of Imam Baksh and the people of Mano Majra, the crisis they had to

withstand when no time was given to them for a peaceful evacuation. They were not the welcome lot in the place where they got displaced and they were repeatedly asked to give formal proofs of their identity that was impossible. The narrative mentions:

> The clerk could now comfortably smile, and smile he did, like a toothpaste advertisement. 'I regret to inform you that in the absence of a certificate, I cannot be of help to you.'
>
> The clerk had replied in the kind of English he knew, but, seeing that Mohan had not gone away, he shouted, not in English, 'Go away, you idiot,'… (160-161)

It can be considered an administrative lacuna that no full-proof plan was devised to address the problem of the refugees especially those who were forcibly displaced from their homes. Very soon there was an altercation between the head clerk and Mohan, and in a feat of rage he pulled the head clerk by his collar and demanded him to apologize, and warned him that he would break his jaw if he did not apologize. Two peons came to rescue the head clerk and dragged Mohan bodily to throw him out of the office. When Mohan wrestled to break free, the duos rained blows on his body, pulled his hair and beat him up mercilessly.

Mohan's physical assault depicted the status to which a refugee was pushed into where all the legitimate questions were not attended to and he was left to fend for himself, mocking at his situation for which he was not at all responsible. He literally became a person who was neither here nor there, who could not belong to Pakistan and was not officially considered to belong to India as the sahib sarcastically stated, "Right now, you are neither in India nor Pakistan. You are a refugee. A refugee! You do not have a home either here or there, you people are like washermen's dogs – neither free nor pets." (165)

Mohan's request for a house cannot be considered a luxury as it is undeniable that is a necessity for the survival of his family and he cannot afford to lose time and should have been allotted on a priority basis. The frivolous comment propounded by the sahib indicated the lack of concern of the officials for the duties they were paid to perform and maintain an orderly situation. His conversation with Mohan can very well point this aspect:

> 'I don't want your sympathy. I need a place to stay – which you are in a position to give me.'
>
> 'Go break a lock and take any place. Why do you need to ask?'

I need to, I need permission. I believe in the law, and if I understand that, why can't you understand our helplessness?' (164-165)

The status of refugees like Mohan and the treatment meted to him demonstrates how the refugees became 'stateless' yet 'still under the control of power' as Judith Butler has argued:

Moreover, the populations we are trying to describe, those who have become effectively stateless, are still under the control of power. In this way, they are without legal protection but in no way relegated to a "bare life": this is a life steeped in power…. The stateless are not just stripped of status but accorded a status and prepared for their dispossession and displacement; they become stateless precisely through complying with certain normative categories. As such, they are *produced* as the stateless at the same time they are jettisoned from juridical modes of belonging. This is one way of understanding how one can be stateless within the state. (Butler & Spivak, 16)

Refugees and Identity:

Those who could reach the stage of filing claims for reimbursement of properties left behind had different kind of predicaments to face. The situation of Joharmal, a refugee from Sindh *The Claim* (2009) by Narayan Bharti can be taken as an instance to analyze this trait. Joharmal came to an office thinking it to be the one for reimbursement of claims and was informed that it was the one for filing claims. The particulars that were asked from him and his inability to provide them presented the gaps and fissures in understanding the identity of the refugees and the skewed notion that documentary evidences only marked/established their identities to claim right over properties. The typist who was recorded the details and typed Joharmal's application asked:

'Have you brought any documents of your property?'

'What kind?'

'Details about the size of the land, the number of acres. How many plots? Location? The measurement and value? Was the land leased or did you own it? If you were the owner, how much did you buy it for? Proof of possession? Any tax receipts from the talati's office? All these details are necessary.' (Bharti, 108)

In this regard two things merit consideration – firstly, such details should have been a part of the administrative machinery prior to the Partition days, so that they could be readily available with the common people which they would provide whenever asked for; secondly, Partition should have been realized through an orderly manner so that the displaced people could carry such documents with them to the place where they would be provided refuge. It can be well seen in the story discussed that both these pre-requisites were not there and when a simple person

like Joharmal was asked to submit them the only response that came from him was incomprehension:

A bewildered kaka looked at the typist. All this was a completely new language to him. He realized that he didn't have any property deed documents. Maneklal had told him that whatever one mentioned got written down. But this is … I am a Sindhi, is that not sufficient evidence? (109)

The confirmation of identity to file claim got confined to the formal documentary evidence which an individual was required to produce and, in this regard, what could not be documented became null and void. The lower officials had to follow the instructions from the top brass and they were handicapped from altering any rule. Rules were devised in a general way and they could not address the specific instances where refugees like Joharmal could not conform and they were marginalized. The clerk mentioned, "No, kaka, I am not making fun of you. I am telling you the truth. This is a government rule – says that individuals can file claims only for the property they owned and left behind, not for anything else. (110)

Joharmal's query regarding such rigid rules destabilized the very structure /pointed to the failure of the government machinery established to sort out the claims filed by the refugees. He referred to the loss of his friendship because of Partition that was irretrievable which no government can ever return and which was much valuable than the claiming of properties that he was asked to prove. He was even reluctant to leave his birth-place and left only upon the insistence of his daughter and son-in-law. His stance showed the fractures in the smooth transfer of power during Partition where both the British and the Indian politicians who scripted the lives of the general populace. Their decisions forced the people to leave their place without paying attention to what they had to endure and if they could withstand the pain of turning into refugees for no fault of their own. The properties and shops for which people were filing their claims were de-valued by him and he nullified this entire project of filing a claim which could not redeem his friendship and his *watan*, his country of origin which was irreplaceable by the country to where he was uprooted.

I don't want to file a claim, to hell with it. What do I claim? What do I make you to write? My friendship has more value than my shop, my *watan* has … I came here because my daughter and son-in-law were making a fuss. Otherwise, you think I would have left Sindh. (111)

Joharmal's identity as a person where he was a bona fide citizen in his place of birth Sindh and in India as a refugee was completely opposite. At Sindh he was not required to establish his identity as a Sindhi but in India where his identity was that

of a refugee, he needed papers to file his claim for lost properties and validate his identity. J. Edward Mallott has aptly observed:

Partition forced a new understanding of national space, as it radically altered the region's geopolitical borders; for the emerging nations to survive, each had to adapt quickly to a different sense of space and self. The notion of "who we are", in national terms relied on the cartographically mandated definition of "where we are"; the same held true for the powerful, yet illusory connection between "who we are not" and "where we are not." (Mallot, 184)

Refugees and Memory:

Literary works pertaining to Partition that deal with memory have the potential to act as critical counters to institutionalized accounts of the past through gleaning and representing quotidian experience. Fictional characters' reaction to trauma can open up how national boundaries both silence memories and can be subverted in important ways by people for whom Partition is an ever-present experience.

In Krishna Sobti's story "The New Regime" (2012), the old woman called Shahni is not at all prepared for Partition in the prime of her life it was going to be difficult to adjust with her life that lied ahead in a new land. She had spent a substantial portion of her life and was the bearer of the memory of her husband and the legacy that she wanted to transfer to the posterity. Incidentally she was handicapped as her son had already left her. Despite that she thought this tradition would live till she was alive and she passed her life amidst her loneliness. She threaded her life from the day she came as a bride, her life with her husband, his death, the leaving of her son, and the lonely life that she passed in the *haveli*, the mansion; all the memories jostled in her present building a tradition that was going to be severed once she left the place and the mansion where they occurred. Her stage of transition from being the owner of a house to a refugee in a camp is deftly depicted in the story with crisscrossing of different threads from her past and present. The story narrates, "Shahni recalled how on this very bank she had one day come as a bride. A today … today Shahji was dead. Her highly-educated son was also gone. She was lonely and disconsolate in Shahji's big and magnificent *haveli*." (Sobti, 148)

Shahni's acute pain can be well surmised as the heritage that she was the preserver of could not be retained by her for long once her displacement became imminent and her son who had already left her would not do anything or its sustenance though she had clung to her home braving all odds, "With her head covered, she cast a final look at her *haveli* through her tear-dimmed eyes. The heritage she had preserved after Shahji's death was now slipping out of her hands." (152)

Partition was unlike the circumstances that she had undergone in her life as she was no longer in control of them which showed its gravity and enormity in the life of those people like Shahni bearing life-changing effects. The immediate reaction was

reflected in her 'tear-dimmed eyes', having the potentiality to bear unseen pain in the near future. Even Shahni had started to show the signs as she repressed the prominent marks of her pain when she felt overwhelmed and refrained from looking at every nook and corner of the house before her final parting. She "refused to look small before those in whose eyes she had remained so exalted." (152) bowing before the inevitable that had happened and approached the truck to carry the refugees dragging her feet.

When Shahni reached the refugee camp at night she mused over the changed circumstances that evolved as the British rule was overthrown and a new currency would replace the old one; however, she knew it well that her memory of that place would never get erased and it would travel with her wherever she moved. After all memories cannot be bordered and they subvert the materiality of borders because of which people were turned into refugees. J. Edward Mallot had persuasively pronounced that nationalism may appear to advocate forgetting but is in fact involved in quite complicated, often contradictory, notions of what to remember and what to forget at the same time while, literary responses themselves offer "memories" of the marginalized, even as they temper their insistence on memory, or note the limits and the problems inherent in recalling the past. (Mallot, 19)

Conclusion:

This paper marked a sense of discovery through its analysis of the "underside" of nationalized narratives that eschew and gloss over the remarkable contestations of ordinary people who moved against the flow of Partition's narrated migrations and braved all odds to negotiate between the place of birth and the place of displacement. The emergence of new categories of identity such as migrants, evacuees, refugees, displaced persons, aliens or even infiltrators, terms signifying inferiority in the social hierarchies with certain negative connotations, was a major element of the process of establishing post-Partition national orders and turning colonial subjects into 'national' citizens. Further, these identities were produced discursively, mediated through the actions of officials located at the periphery of the nation, especially at the borders and diplomatic missions. This is the point made more explicit by *Zamindar* (2007) and Chatterji (2007). Refugee documents, border slips, and passports and other papers became the means through which the Indian State sought to differentiate between refugees, migrants, aliens, and citizens (Roy, 5). As also opined by Zamindar, "In 'India' and 'Pakistan' we live in the shadows of this long Partition, and it is by placing its history alongside other histories of a twentieth century, marked by all the violence of making modern, 'ethnically cleansed' national identities, that we can interrogate the postcolonial world that we are forced to inhabit, and from which meanings of culture and identity continue to be contested." (Zamindar, 12) As it is quite explicit, fictional works on the Partition often provide access to the bare realities of the partition

induced refugees against the predominant representational politics that markedly display ambivalences, ingrained prejudices and stereotypes regarding the partition-induced refugees.

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COLONIAL MOBILITY AND BENGALI TRAVEL WRITINGS: HISTORICISING INDIAN MIGRATION TO SOUTHEAST ASIA

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***Abstract**: This paper examines the absence or gap of Bengali Travel Writing on Southeast Asia in the History of Bengali literature. Bengal and Southeast Asia has their long history of cultural exchanges. Perhaps, Bengal is one among very few provinces which has influenced significantly the region by way of religion, culture and civilization. There are also enormous historical evidences to suggest that there were flourishing economic and cultural relations between Bengal and the countries of Southeast Asia in the pre-colonial era. Such as the relation between Bengal and Arakan can be mentioned here. Even this connection became more visible during the colonial era and in the time of Indian freedom struggle movement when some of the Southeast Asian countries especially Burma turned into a place for employment for Bengali people and land of free movement to the Indian freedom fighters. Therefore, from the colonial time, Bengalis became more and more interested in traveling to different countries in Southeast Asia. Hence, this paper will investigate Bengali Travel accounts on Southeast Asia and it will try to historicize these travel writings and along with it this paper will try to propose an alternative literary history where along with majoritarian Bengali travel narratives on Europe and Japan, discussions of Bengali travel narratives on Southeast Asia will take place.*

***Keywords**: Travel Writing, Southeast Asia, Bengali Literature, Literary History*

The relationship between Southeast Asia and India is almost a thousand years old. This interaction becomes more prevalent between the two subcontinents in ancient times and was later strengthened through trade, religion and cultural exchanges (Ray 98). This exchange became more intense during the reigns of the *Chola* and *Pallab* dynasties of South India and during the reigns of the Pala and Sen dynasties in Bengal. The spread of Buddhism in Southeast Asia was even more conducive to the growth of dialogue between the two regions. *Jatak's* stories testify to this. Later, even in the Middle Ages, this interactions and exchanges became more intense. The movement of Bengali and Manipuri Brahmins to various places in Southeast Asia along with the arrival of South Indian merchants into Southeast Asian countries hinted towards this connection. After the arrival of the British in

the Indian subcontinent, this exchange reached a new level and the movement of Bengalis in various countries of Southeast Asia such as Burma, Thailand, Malay etc. began to increase. The trend that grew with the Bengali movement in Southeast Asia was the writing of Bengali travelogues about these countries. The idea of travel without any moral or spiritual purpose and this tendency to write it started in the colonial era. At the same time, these sojourns were conscious attempts to get to know themselves and explore each other at the same time. As Bhaskar Mukhopadhyay writes in his article-

> Thus, travel per se was not the cause of the rise of travelogue as a genre in Bengali.What was instrumental in its rise was something else: the development of vernacular prose and the four basic genres that help express the modern self: novel, biography, autobiography, and diary. We can postulate that the rise of the modern travelogue in Bengali was part and parcel of the project of fashioning a 'modern' Bengali self (Mukhopadhyay 298).

With the advent of the printing press, modern Bengali travel writings emerged as a distinct literary genre. The printing of books in Bengal started in the early eighteenth century on the initiative of the missionaries. At that time, the missionaries translated some of the literature into English, whose characters were nomadic. At the initiative of such national missionaries, novels such as Robinson Crusoe or Gulliver's Travel were immediately translated, which were full of adventures and completed the story of traveling to a new country (Saha 16). However, in the Bengali literature of ancient and medieval times there is a considerable mention of the travels of the Bengalis. The description of travel can be found in *Charyapada*, the oldest specimen of Bengali literature. Apart from this, references to travel are also found in later *Mangalkavyas*. But since the Middle Ages, the reasons for traveling to other countries have begun to change. For various reasons, Bengalis started spreading in different parts of the world and from this time onwards, Bengalis started traveling outside their lands in search of livelihood. Sarvani Gooptu in her article demonstrates this reason for embankment to the Southeast Asia. As she puts it in her article-

> From the 19th century acquiring knowledge and disseminating information became an important ingredient of nationalism. With the rise and spread of education among the Bengalis, awareness of foreign lands and reading about travels in them became an exciting pastime. Bengali literature and magazines are replete in translations of famous real life adventure stories in the initial phase and then travelogues by men and women travelling to

> distant lands. The first popular travel writings in the Bengali magazines were in western countries but gradually from the beginning of the 20th century, the focus came to be Asia (Gooptu 397).

From the second half of the nineteenth century, India and its neighbouring Southeast Asia have become an important research subject for Indian historians. The search for India's cultural influence in art, architecture, religion and language in Southeast Asia is called Indianisation. In addition, contemporary historians consider Indian migration to be a significant aspect of Indianisation in Southeast Asia.

A penchant among Indian historians can be observed from the beginning of the twentieth century, where they began to interpret and explore India's connection with Southeast Asia from a biased perspective. Their approach to this interpretation was highly India-centric and they believed that India played a crucial role in shaping Southeast Asia in their civilization and culture. Analyzing the reasons for this growing interest of Bengali historians in Southeast Asia, we see that the rise of nationalist consciousness gave birth to a vision of Bengalis and Assamese in Southeast Asia (Mukhopadhyay 2). The Indian nationalist movement played a significant role in this national uprising. Thus, historians had a hidden agenda to write a national history of India which includes Southeast Asia into and the main purpose of this nationalist historiography was to prove the antiquity of Indian civilization. At the same time to prove that Indian culture is far ahead of Western civilization. Bengalis played a significant role in writing this nationalist history. At that time, a society called Greater India Society appeared in Bengal. The members of the Greater India Society, founded in Calcutta in 1926, were undoubtedly inspired by Rabindranath Tagore's(1861-1941) ideas about Asia.

One of the main activities of this society was to propagate and write about the Indian nationalist ideology. Their India-centric approach to writing national history gave birth to the idea of a Greater India. To establish the superiority of Indian imperialism, Bengali historians claimed that long before the contact with Europe, India was an advanced civilization in Asia and hegemonic and civilized power (Zebarskaite 265). However, some scholars argued that the idea of a more incredible India was prevalent before the birth of the Greater India Society. The primary purpose of these Bengali historians was to prove the superiority of Indian civilization and to promote national pride. But this nationalist thinking came from Europe. The idea came from European Indologists and profoundly affected Indian historians in defining the life and language, artistic forms of Southeast Asia. Bengali nationalist historians like RC Majumdar, Radhakumud Mukherjee believed

that Indians influenced every aspect of Southeast Asian culture. Nationalist scholars believed that Southeast Asia was plunged into the darkness of barbarism until Indian civilization was confronted. These historians included Southeast Asia as an Indian colony and referred to it as part of Greater India. Historian R.C. Majumdar has expressed the same attitude on this subject in his book. According to him, Southeast Asia is the only colony of India. This group of Bengali historians placed more emphasis on the search for Indian elements in the art and culture of Southeast Asia, and the role of Southeast Asia was presented in such a way that they were mere recipients. They strongly rejected the idea of indigenous Southeast Asian cultures. Historians did not want to give any credit to the locals for the famous architecture of Southeast Asia. For example, Borobudur, one of the best architectures in Southeast Asia, is described as one of the finest examples of Gupta architecture. Overall, it can be seen that the nationalist Bengali historians emphasized how they civilized the people of Southeast Asia and ignored the evolutionary process of their own indigenous culture. In short, this history of Southeast Asia was described by the concept of nationalist historians and was written within the framework of an Indian nationalist.

Bengali historians have repeatedly explained Southeast Asia through some of their conventional ideas or preconceived notions. Here is the significance of writing Bengali travelogues about different countries in Southeast Asia. Bengali travel in Southeast Asia represents an alternative narrative of Southeast Asia which is different from the descriptions of Bengali historians. In the nineteenth century, a genre of literature emerged in Bengali literature as a traveling writer with novels, autobiographies, etc., along with other literary genres. However, the whole genre is not at all alien to the Bengalis. Travel literature existed in Bengali literature before the arrival of the British in India. Therefore, the Bengalis were well acquainted with this literary genre. This literary genre was prevalent among the Bengalis. Initially, the description of travel that we find in Bengali literature was travel somewhere for religious and spiritual reasons. The idea of traveling to a new country without any purpose or religious or spiritual purpose came much later in Bengal. Thus, Bengali travel writings presented one more story about our neighbour outside of history.

Bengali travel writings about Southeast Asia denies the methods created by Bengali nationalist historians and presents a different picture before us. In this travelogue, Southeast Asia is given in a new way, not just the colony of Indian civilization. Bengali travel writings such as the *Rabindrasangame Swipamay Bharat o Shyamdesh(1940)* sought an alternative history of Southeast Asia.

However, this travel story has refuted many statements of Bengali historians. Similarly, the same thing can be noticed in other Bengali travel stories. Bengali writers like Bimal Mukherjee(1903-1987) and Ramnath Biswas(1894-1955) rejected the nationalist approach in their writings. In their description, Southeast Asia is not just an emblem of Indian civilisation. They recognized Southeast Asia's unique identity and its indigenous culture. The Bengali travelogues written about Southeast Asia such as *Rabindrasangame Swipamay Bharat o Shyamdesh(1940)* deals with the details of Rabindranath Tagore's voyage in various countries of Southeast Asia can be found in this travelogue. In this travelogue, Shri Sunitikumar Chattopadhyay (1890-1977) recorded Rabindranath's experience of traveling to various countries in Southeast Asia, including Thailand, in 1926 (Chatterjee 518).

In the post-independence situation, India attached utmost importance to re-establishing its relations with Southeast Asia and India, emphasizing strengthening diplomatic ties with Southeast Asia. India's foreign policy was to emerge as a significant power in South Asia. From the outset, India felt the need to establish closer ties with Southeast Asia and prevent China from dominating the region. In the post-independence period, India was the first to prioritize Southeast Asia in determining its foreign policy. The question of the sovereignty and security of the newly formed India was directly related to Southeast Asia. As Jawaharlal Nehru, the first Prime Minister of India, said, India is the gateway between West and Southeast Asia. Hence, good relations with Southeast Asia helped strengthen India's independence and security. Any political upheaval in Southeast Asia was a potential threat to India. Through this understanding, India played an active role in the fight against various political movements in South-East Asia, such as the Dutch and Indonesian conflicts. The post-Cold War situation and realities persuaded India and the Southeast to strengthen strong economic and security ties. The Government of India adopted various policies and initiatives such as ASEAN and the Look East Policy to maintain good relations with different countries. Undoubtedly, this had an impact on India's relations with these countries.

India's diplomatic relations with Southeast Asia make it clear that in the post-independence period, bilateral relations between India and Southeast Asia became more intense than before. As a result, Indian travel to Southeast Asia increased in the post-independence period, and many Indian diplomats travelled to Southeast Asia. Journalists can be mentioned here who went to Southeast Asia to change political news constantly. These leaders, diplomats, or journalists who were Indian wrote numerous travelogues about Southeast Asia, which helped the Indian mind imagine Southeast Asia in the post-independence context. In addition to

political reasons, tourism from Southeast Asia, in particular, attracted Indians to travel to Southeast Asia. As a result, numerous travel articles about Southeast Asia were published in various journals at different times. Nimai Bhattacharya's Travelogue *Ekchakkar Dakkhin Purba Asia(2017)* is a travelogue that helped Bengalis understand Southeast Asia in the post-independence period. Nimai Bhattacharya was a prominent journalist and writer. He came in contact with many political personalities in his career and traveled across the country to gather news. Nimai Bhattacharya's travelogue *Ekchakkar Dakkhin Purba Asia* (2017) discusses three regions of Southeast Asia, namely Singapore, Malaysia, and Thailand. One can understand why the Bengalis re-imagined Southeast Asia in the post-independence period by reading Nimai Bhattacharya's travelogue. In the introduction to the book, he explains how his vision of the West was closed from the beginning due to colonialism and the rise of Asian powers like China and Japan during World War II kept him in the dark about Southeast Asia. He added that despite his interest in Southeast Asia, there was always a lack of enthusiasm, which created a kind of ignorance about this region of Southeast Asia. (Bhattacharya 11)

During the nationalist movement in subjugated India, re-imagining Southeast Asia was a conscious endeavour of historians and scholars. The main objective was to erase Southeast Asia's distinctly rich history and present the Southeast as part of Greater India to foreign powers. This nationalist historiography of India had a profound purpose. To prove India a great nation and ancient, they included Southeast Asia in the national history of India. However, there were many deviations in this imagination which they never wanted to accept. Instead of looking at the relationship between the South and the Southeast, their biased views and one-sided narratives have given rise to ignorance about Southeast Asia's countries. Bengali and Assamese travel stories written about Southeast Asia tried to dispel that ignorance and introduced Southeast Asia to the Bengali masses in a new light. Thus, it can be said that the Bengali travel writings written about Southeast Asia initiated a new dialogue in the history of Indo-Southeast Asian interaction. The new Act is significant for the success of the Look East Policy. The interest of Bengali people of two in a particular region and the attempt to construct a literary statement about Southeast Asia by denying the opinions of its predecessor's historians demands special discussion in the field of comparative literature and obliges to rethink Southeast Asia.

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"WHAT'S COOKING ON TELEVISION?" A STRUCTURED ANALYSIS

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Abstract: *Television in Kerala as elsewhere, is a strong medium to propagate ideologies among the target group which mostly consist of women and cooking is a mundane activity which is invested with a lot of glamour when it appears on screen. Food and the processes of preparing food engages with the viewers on multiple levels, physical, psychological and in fact they contribute to a creation of cultural artefacts. In this context this paper tries to analyse the cooking shows aired on prominent Malayalam channels to engage with the prominent power structures/ ideologies at play.*

Keywords: *Television, Malayalam, Annie's Kitchen, Cooking shows, Magic Oven Food is everything we are. It's an extension of nationalist feeling, ethnic feeling, your personal history, your province, your region, your tribe, your grandma. It's inseparable from those from the get-go. (Anthony Bourdain)*

Introduction

Food being one of the primary needs of man has always been the focal point in all human endeavours throughout the ages. In the modern world discourses on food have gained popularity in multiple ways as food has come a long way from production to consumption . The modern man is more concerned with what, why, when and how of food consumption/ production than in any other point in history. Food and cooking is serious business and so are the television shows that deal with it.

Cook Vs. Chef

Vineet Bhatia, Alfred Prasad, Atul Kocchar, Karunesh Khanna, Sriram Aylur,Vikas Khanna, Manjunath Mural, the top seven Indian chefs who received Michelin Stars, the French honour which is a hallmark of fine dining quality are shining stars in the culinary field. Indian chefs began winning since 2001 but it was only long two decades later that Garima Arora became the first female Indian chef to win the Michelin star in November 2018. Isn't it quite amazing that in India food is associated with greats chefs in mythology like Nala, and in modern day with icons like Chef Sanjeev Kapur , Vikas Khanna, Ranvir Brar , all men but cooking in the context of the family is solely a prerogative of women. If at all a man dares to venture into this territory and manages to cook he is praised for being considerate and for being every woman's dream of a perfect man. Nothing is more

shocking even today than a woman who cannot cook. Even more astonishing is the fact that an accomplished home maker/ career woman featured in the advertisement for a ready to cook breakfast food company is equated with Ma Durga with her many hands but here those hands whip out various breakfast dishes to cater to the whims of all the family members who span three generations boldly visualising the fallacy of being the ultimate provider!

On the home front in Kerala we have masters of cooking like Pazhayidom Mohanan Namboothiri who had been feeding the participants of Kerala youth festival, one of the first of its kind in Asia for more than a decade. In Kerala be it catering, we have stalwarts like Hari Thampan of Poornasree catering and Anantaraman of Vinayaka Catering to name a few (both Brahmins and the caste equation is interesting). We cannot forget Naushad, Big chef for non-vegetarian dishes but clearly there is gender disparity in a field which is solely considered to be the domain of women.

Cooking in the Small Screen: An Analysis

Television viewing, in particular, is an increasingly ubiquitous space of cultural consumption, as television audiences consume, decode, and make meaning of the cultural texts presented through this medium (Wright 402). This paper takes into consideration the cooking shows featured on various channels today and tries to analyse them critically to determine how popular television cooking shows produce, package, commodify, and market food related "lifestyles" for their audiences. A Gramscian approach views consumption as a space of contestation where hegemony is played out; in this view

> consumption is akin to communication, and goods are better than, for instance, prayers or stories in making visible the categories of culture . . . .Routine and ritualised consumption practices train participants in the relevance and cultural content of social categories, inequalities and diversities associated with gender, race, class, and age. (Martens 346)

Here market becomes a pedagogue by teaching you consumer culture and people learn more about culture through consumption practices. Goods are better in making visible categories of culture. *Sadya* is an example. We call forth the cultural practices around this annual festive event (Onam) while regular participation by household members in main meals that incorporate a variety of foods and other objects (like banana leaf, flower carpet, the *mundu* and *setmundu* with matching ornaments read traditional attire), create family and gender relations . Routine and ritualised consumption practices "train participants in the relevance

and cultural content of social categories, inequalities and diversities associated with gender, race, class and age" (Martens 346). This is quite evident from the fact that almost all people don the attire that you associate with the image created by the media of a Malayali family and more importantly post their pictures on *Facebook* to declare to the outside world that we conform to the norm and that no matter the pandemic the practices will live on without sparing a thought to the ideological indoctrination that we have been subjected to.

It is safe to say that on Malayalam television women seem to have better visibility with respect to cooking shows as in the case of other programmes because all popular cooking shows are hosted by women. There is a lot at stake because these programmes have enjoyed a steady viewership throughout decades. *Magic Oven* by Lakshmi Nair on *Kairali* has been ongoing for twenty years while her travel show *Flavours of India* has lasted for a decade. Come festive season , read Onam, we feast on special cookery programmes on how to prepare vegetarian dishes for the *sadya* and invariably the anchor sports the latest in Onam fashion and you can refer to them for clues in fashion. This year TV even featured a programme in which the recipes were introduced in a song format. The two anchors/ actors went through the step by step cooking procedure by singing. That's how you sing your way through a dish and a programme!

It would be quite pertinent to analyse some characteristic features of the cooking shows at this juncture. The format of the cooking shows featuring in different channels seem to be quite similar. The anchor and the chef, sometimes they are one in the case of *Annies Kitchen* and *Magic Oven*, well groomed and placed in a beautiful kitchen/ workspace which sports many beautiful, decorative things which have no utility value shares a recipe while preparing them in front of the camera to the accompaniment of some friendly banter. The time consuming process of chopping and preparing the ingredients are done away with as they work on previously prepped ingredients. The audience are given close up shots of their well-manicured, painted nails and fingers adorned with rings as they perform the mundane activities/ processes of kneading, mixing, chopping things with their fingers while they appear to be actually enjoying the same while inviting viewers into a fantasy. Ketchum identifies it as "a fictitious construction of consumer realities" (217). Not once do they sneeze or grimace even while preparing spicy dishes involving the use of chilly powder and pepper powder which are quite challenging to any nostril. The anchor might go to the extent of saying that the spices are giving out a strong smell, and that's the end of it. So we are given a romantic version of the activities that go on a daily basis in kitchens every day. The

latest episode of *Magic Oven* features a lot of passive advertising in the background in an attempt to blend content and ads. The viewer cannot help but see items manufactured by a certain sponsoring food company displayed prominently creating a new opportunity for establishing brand awareness and a new method for selling their goods. Sometimes the anchor prepares a dish featuring the said product. The integral cooking machines like mixer grinder and stove are advertised in a similar manner seamlessly in the course of the programme. For example while grinding an ingredient the anchor says that the brand of mixer that she uses for the purpose is absolutely powerful and gets the process done in a jiffy while referring to its brand name multiple times.

In Kerala, the cookery show hosts sport heavy jewellery and makeup, a far cry from a person actually preparing something in the kitchen. The TV serial is fictitious and we can give them a lot of creative liberties with respect to their attire as in everything else but cookery show hosts also don a similar style attire thereby creating a new normal (huge finger rings , long nails with a perfect coat of nail polish). Cookery shows like *Masterchef* which appear worldwide in the same format differ in that no such fancy appearances are seen there. The performers/cooks are dressed in everyday clothing which ensures ease of mobility and are completely suited to the work at hand because the dish is the star there. The participants who are working in the kitchen wear aprons which hide their outfits unlike our shows where the anchor's costume is deliberately meant to be eye candy reminding us of the characters portrayed in Television serials. The secondary focus is on the food item cooked. Except for Jagee John (who rose to popularity with her show *Jagee's cookbook* on *Rosebowl* channel before meeting with an untimely death) all hosts don traditional wear. But *Annie's Kitchen* on *Amrita TV* differed in format and hence need to be studied closely.

Ketchum considers programming related to food to come under the instructional genre as it instructs people to buy, prepare and consume food (218). The majority of sponsors in TV belong to the FMCG category and food is a major player. Our forefathers didn't have to worry much on what to eat as their diet consisted of seasonal and locally available produce but here we are being fed on a fantasy to increase our powers of consumption. The sets of the show could also motivate the viewers for a remodelled kitchen as viewers can have a glimpse into the "necessary" things to ensure that you have a beautiful kitchen. Most of the viewers are influenced unconsciously. It is true that many upper middle class homes in Kerala have two kitchens, one filled with decorative things and one for the actual

cooking process which is not so romantic. This helps in the construction of an upper middle class space through careful purchases.

Unlike other programmes on TV, the cookery shows acknowledge the presence of the viewers by addressing them as " you" and engage with them on a different level throughout the programme. It creates the fantasy of an intimate connection with the viewers and the promise of satisfaction through consumption. Rather, a discourse through which the customers/ viewers are "urged that their dreams should be realized through the acquisition and use of particular goods" (Ketchum 217). The anchor takes the audience into confidence unlike the other genres by telling them to try this dish at home and they offer comments like it was really tasty and if ever any dessert was tried it would invariably be followed by a comment that the kids at home would love it. Whenever possible they ask you to try this at home and feed your family. This works in multiple ways, by reinforcing a larger gender stereotyped fantasy of social relations. The pressure put in is enormous because you need to cook well and serve with love while looking your best always. In our programmes emphasis is always on cooking for the family. It is definitely a struggle to represent taste and smell in a medium that uses only sight for communication so the exaggerated expressions and sounds the anchor uses could be taken as a way of substitution for this communication.

Cooking Ideologies: *Annie's Kitchen*

Amrita TV's website introduces the show which began in 2015 as "a kitchen chat coupled with the taste of homely food". It was hosted by Annie, an actress who had acted in sixteen films between 1993 and 1996. The show differed from the other cooking shows in format as it included a section in which the prepared item was served to a celebrity guest who would answer some questions put forth by the anchor while enjoying the delicacy. The preparation of the dish was telecast in less than fifteen minutes and the rest of the hour was devoted to the guest celebrity whom the anchor Annie interviewed. During the lockdown viewers came very hard on the show exploding against the regressive ideas that were showcased as a result of which the programme has been stopped. Annie tried to save herself by claiming that she is just "an ordinary Malayali woman" there by attributing all her personal characteristics (desire to be addressed only as Mrs. Shaji Kailas instead of being addressed by her maiden (Annie) or even assumed name (Chitra) ,does not read anything else other than preschool children's magazine, upholding the value that a woman is always below her husband) traits to the quintessential Malayali woman . Her aim in *Annie's Kitchen* by her own admission was "to pass on knowledge and information to others" (Krishnan).

The packaging of the show itself was paradoxical/ interesting, in the sense that the anchor was expected to use her popular maiden/screen name Annie, instead of the name (Chitra) and religious identity (upper class Hindu) that she had assumed post marriage. We have innumerable examples of actors donning a new screen name to cater to those forces that govern the market but here we have an inversion of the same process whereby the actor adopts a different name and religious identity when she chooses to settle for matrimony and going back to the first when she enters the mini screen hoping to cash in on her erstwhile popularity. You never see her (Annie/ Chitra) without the prominent *bindi* and dash of *sindoor* adorning her forehead except in the X'mas episode where she had toned it down a bit going for a less conspicuous style of wearing *sindoor*. The guest for the X'mas episode again happened to be a Christian (Tovino Thomas). Throughout the show she speaks with an affected accent/ slang (Though no dialect is superior or inferior to any other, could it be another way of trying to achieve proximity to the viewer by emphasising that she too is from a small town and not sophisticated in her speech, drawing on her Christian roots as it is befitting to the occasion, ie, X'mas), emphasising her Christian origin but that seemed to be absent while talking to Santosh Pandit whom she held quite in contempt. There is a marked increase in her accent/ displayed when she is preparing Christian, read non vegetarian dishes where she would always mention her *Ammachi*/ grandmother as if to counteract the upper class Hindu image that she had acquired. Even the accent seems to be missing in the other interviews that she had given along with her husband in other channels.

Annie was "consistently endorsing patriarchy and censoring female guests about the choices they have made in their life, and offering them her own patronising stereotypes about the role of women in a family" (Menon). A look at a few episodes of the programme would prove this argument. Dr. Vasuki IAS , actress Kaniha, a BITS Pilani graduate and a multifaceted entrepreneur, actress Navya Nair were among a few women who had to face questions from the anchor who was too eager to pass judgement on them for their inability or their lack of interest in cooking. She openly admonished Nimisha Sajayan, an award winning young actress who had the audacity to say that she doesn't wear makeup. This comment did not go well with the anchor who relies heavily on makeup herself and declares that it is the norm taught by elders in the industry. An interviewer should have some basic general knowledge about the people who she is in conversation with, which is sadly lacking in the anchor in question. Maybe the idea put forth is that being a pea brain is acceptable and that they need beauty without brains or common sense to move the programme forward. The introductory question put to Tovino

Thomas was about the name of his wife who had come on her show several years ago with Tovino. To err and to forget is human but a simple Google search would have saved her from this misdemeanour. The moral of the her interviews seem to be the following :

1) A woman's marriageable age cannot go beyond 25

2) A good homemaker should be a good cook

3) Feminism is pointless

4) A woman's primary duty is towards her family

5) If she can't be a good mother, she deserves no better (Menon)

The anchor and some participants in show were mercilessly roasted over their comments. As a result of which actress Sarayu Mohan who had made a comment on this show that feminism is not needed and that women should always be subservient to man had to retract her words via a public apology through social media where she declared that her views had changed since then.

We can come to the conclusion that the programme was meant to cater to the fancy of those people who would love to see a star of yesteryears cooking with all her paraphernalia and glamour which is a kind of reaffirmation that stars too are ordinary like us in daily life . But in order to make it believable a persona/ character of a lady who belonged to the affluent section of society, a career woman decades ago who chose to remain a homemaker sporting all the outward signs of prosperity / conventional ideas , who was so naive as to adopt a morally high ground and find fault with other people/ read mostly women for the choices that they have made in life(be it career, family etc.) was created and televised.

Conclusion

"Political and economic discourse transmitted through the mass media, advertising and marketing industries train people . . . and form a self- concept" (Macdonald 5).Television has the power to mould generations because of its strategic positioning within the familial sphere, but unlike cinema no kind of censorship exists with regard to the programmes aired except for a feeble, mandatory message appearing on screen that any complaints the viewers may have with regard to any of the programmes could be taken up with the Broad Casting Contents Council of India. These shows are an invitation to engage in a fantasy like the other programmes but has a utilitarian side to it and propagate gender disparity, inequality and caste. Hence it's high time that serious deliberations are done and results achieved with regard to the television programmes which seem to be getting

more and more regressive in content as years fly. "To regular viewers of primetime Malayalam shows, views such as Annie's will not seem like outliers. But this is also why it's encouraging to see these ideas challenged on other platforms and for actors to publicly acknowledge that they have revisited toxic ideas they once endorsed" (Sebastian). The writer here does not agree with the harsh methods used by critics to declare that this programme was propagating patriarchy, sexism and misogyny but appreciates the fact that their protest resulted in the withdrawal of the programme and this would definitely be a reminder to those programme producers to censor and relay only sensible content.

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DIVERGING TREATMENT OF LOVE IN THE SELECT FICTION OF DOSTOEVSKY AND IRIS MURDOCH

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Abstract: *Love, a quintessential feeling of the universe has been an indispensable part of fiction. In fact, it is impossible to delineate a character without portraying his feelings of love or hatred for other characters. Every fine work of fiction seeks to dwell deep into the complex feeling called love and bring to the fore its various forms. The reader is always baffled at the ambiguous but intricate nature of the feeling called love. The present paper makes an attempt to delineate love from the perspective of Fyodor Dostoevsky, a Russian novelist of the nineteenth century and Iris Murdoch, a prolific British writer of the twentieth century. It endeavours to put before the readers different shades of love they ruminate over in their fictional works.*

Keywords: *Love, agape, Nietzschean, philautia, Eros.*

> "What is hell? I maintain that it is the suffering of being unable to love" (Dostoevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov* 1880)

"We can only learn to love by loving" (Murdoch, *The Bell* 1958).

Belonging to different centuries and nations-Fyodor Dostoevsky (1821-1881), a Russian philosopher and novelist, and Iris Murdoch (1919-1991) a European philosopher and novelist - revealed various affinities. In fact, after overpowering the hurdles of different preconceptions and stereotypes defined by a different nation, and the endeavours of Europe to demean Russia, Iris Murdoch was able to comprehend its culture and identity and appreciate Russian literature. Her prominent novels such as *The Green Knight, Nuns and Soldiers, The Sacred and the Profane Love Machine, The Bell,* and *The Time of the Angels*- are either have Russian characters or have references made to Tolstoy and Dostoevsky. In an interview with Literary Gazette (1991), she confessed her fascination and appreciation of Dostoevsky in the following words:

> I have almost a religious feeling for Russia. It came through reading Russian novels of the 19th century and is associated primarily with Tolstoy and Dostoevsky. Literary circles in England are just crazy about them ...

> these two are the kings. I think they are the greatest novelists of all time. They are even greater than Dickens (7).

How deeply was Murdoch influenced by Dostoevsky has been highlighted in *Tiny Corne*r by Gillian Dooley. She admits Dostoevsky's influence as he "fed my imagination very deeply"(202-03).

In the world of moral anarchy, the fictional works of both writers display sado-masochistic drama of life, demonic obsession of characters, their emotional anguish, and active form of love. Both are anatomists of traditional culture and are concerned with morality, evil and God. In her philosophical thesis, *Metaphysics as a Guide to Morals* (1992), she discusses in detail Dostoevsky's character, Raskolnikov to highlight how myths can no longer explain the peculiar disposition of people .Nathan P. Carson in "Value Realism and Moral Psychology: A Comparative Analysis of Iris Murdoch and Fyodor Dostoevsky" mentions:

> ...while there are substantial differences between Dostoevsky and Murdoch, their similar attempts to connect transcendence to immanence and Metaphysics and morals yields rich interpretive results and provides fruitful moral reflection on the human struggle to become good…

Dostoevsky and Iris Murdoch encounter the essential question whether love is a cognitive ability or innate instinct. They ruminate if it can be acquired or felt intuitively. They are baffled with the idiosyncratic characteristics of love. Both Murdoch and Dostoevsky had firm faith in the capacity of love. Various shades of love are visible in the fiction of both writers. Both writers, in their own ways, reflect on the fallibility of love. But they end up in recognizing that love is capable of redeeming the world. The main affinity between these writers is that they reject in their fiction what is called Nietzschean love. Willow Vervek in "Nietzsche on Love" writes:

> Nietzsche disassociates love from its other-worldly Christian–Platonic heritage, and so asserts his ethical claims concerning the value of the Earth over the other-worldly, and the truth of the body over the sacred.

In *The Gay Science*, Nietzsche considers love an expression of egoism, an animal instinct and can never be considered good. Both Dostoevsky and Iris Murdoch do not show compliance with this conception of love, though there are glimpses of selfish love in their novels. In *Crime and Punishment*, Luzhin's seemingly selfless love for Duniya stands for selfish and erotic love – a way of possessing a hapless female. Luzhin's idea of love echoes existentialistic thinking:

> Love yourself before all men, for everything in the world rests on self-interest... in acquiring wealth solely and exclusively for myself, I am acquiring, so to speak, for all (131).

Dostoevsky experiments with different shades of love in his novels. But he endorses and advocates Christian love in his novels. He uses it as a weapon to fight against invasion of the secularism and rationalism of the West. This form of love is founded in the suffering of Russians in particular and mankind at large. Dostoevsky avers, "If you love, you will belong to God....With love, all things may be redeemed, all things may be rescued". Love is a saviour from nihilism and chaos of the world. Various women and saint–like characters of his novels are the harbinger of altruistic values and they depict Christian love. Darya's love for Srtavrogin in *The Possessed*, Sonya's compassion for Raskolnikov in *Crime and punishment* are self-sacrificing love. These characters profess, "We are going to suffer together, we will bear the cross together" (Dostoevasky, *Crime and punishment* 405). Similarly, in *The Brothers Karamazov*, Prince Myshkin's share of Nastasya's sufferings is an example of Dostoevsky's Christian love. Here individuals sacrifice their happiness to save others from guilt and sin and pave path towards salvation. This love is far away from Sartrean love. It is a compassion, not passion. It also negates Nietzsche's claim that love is a delusion.

Lee Trepanier finds that Dostoevsky propounds the concept of "active love" a base of true love. This form of love is not based on any abstract idea, but it is concrete, practical and related to masses, exemplified by:

> "Zosima's vision of epistemological humility, self-constrained freedom, and a socially bound community where the ideals of Christianity become contextualized and consequently can become possible".

Active love is not erotic. It needs a lot of labour and is away from show off. Nathan Rosen finds active love of Dostoevsky "a movement towards the preservation or creation of a moral order. In *The Brothers Karamazov*, love is considered as a *teacher*. It teaches to look beyond our egotistic selves. It comes close to what Iris Murdoch in the twentieth century called 'attention' where' just and loving gaze' was needed to judge others flaws. While observing one's own prejudices and faults and accepting other's frailties with equanimity, "love is a treasure beyond all others: one can gain the whole world through it" (Dostoevsky 51). That is why, he pleads for loving human beings with all their sins. It is a sort of 'divine love' in Dostoevsky's terminology. Raskolnikov's love for Soniya passes through various phases in *Crime and Punishment*. Pride and egotism prevent Raskolnikov to reveal any gesture of love for her. He continuously

torments her and wound her vanity. But the infinite love he feels for her is a form of Christian love-a love that takes away all despair.

Murdoch's keynote is the discord between two mechanisms of Eros. She does not overlook the enormity of erotic love. Amorousness is thrilling or exhilarating. But when refined, even erotic love becomes a source of attaining goodness. Eventually, it shows the readers a way to the more elevated and spiritual apprehension of reality.It illuminates the spirit. She contemplates (1970):

> Love is the source of our greatest errors; but when it is even partially refined it is the energy and the passion of the soul in its search for Good, the force that joins us to Good and joins us to the world through Good. Its existence is the unmistakable sign that we are spiritual creatures, attracted by excellence and made for the GOOD. It is a reflection of the warmth and light of the sun (*The Sovereignty of Good* 100).

Murdoch's this concept of love is "A different kind of love from the ordinary messiness of passionate relationshipwhich becomes enmeshed in the mechanism of the possessive ego" ((Slaymaker, 2002).

Dostoevsky and Iris Murdoch were aware of the difficulty of attaining this highest form of love. Ivan in *The Brothers Karamazov* postulates the impossibility of attaining Christian love. The world is full of cruelty and nobody is keen in addressing the sufferings of others. Moreover, love brings a lot of sufferings. In *Notes from Underground*, Dostoevsky avers, "To love is to suffer and there can be no love otherwise." He is fully aware of the darkest and gloomy reality of love.

For Murdoch, love is quintessential for life. Discarding various philosophical thoughts like existentialism and utilitarianism that were in vogue those days, she avers (1997),"We need a moral philosophy in which the concept of love, so rarely mentioned now by philosophers, can once again be made central"(.*Existentialists and Mystics: Writings on Philosophy and Literature* 33). Her fiction is a unique blend of all shades of love. She mainly focuses on three concepts of love-Eros, Philautia, and Agape. She reveals how these different types of emotions overpower her characters and sometimes pave path for each other in an ambiguous way. Most of her characters exhibit the feelings of Eros and philautia, cope with dejection and despair, and some of them move toward the path of agape. Kathleen Mary Tierney observes, "Murdoch saw love a tool headed for morality and goodness and for her redirection of erotic energy away from the self toward realities; it is the central activity of moral life".

Murdoch does not confine herself to the infatuated and libidinous aspect of love. She is more concerned with the multi-faceted obscure and ambiguous nature of love in her fiction. In *The Nice and the Good* (1978), love tends to become erotic and agape at the same time and it is confusing. It introduces beauty and order in the universe. But at the same time, it makes lovers powerless and they are heart-broken. Her saint Tallis, in *A Fairly Honourable Defeat*, aptly reiterates when Morgan declares, "I'm going to be free and love people". He is unable to endorse it, "Oh don't talk such sickening rot, Morgan!". Morgan cannot realize that one cannot go on loving people as one's whims and fads dictate. It is complicated and obscure.

In fact, Murdoch's delineation of love seems to be inspired from Greek philosopher Plato's Eros. For Plato, Eros can be crude and spiritual. Love which is egocentric can easily be labeled as crude love. Homosexuality, sodomy, incest, primordial heterosexual love between man and woman -all are different forms and extents of crude love. In *The Bell* (1958), the homosexual relationship between the priest Michael Meade and the charmer Nick Fawley that results in destroying the whole community is given prominence. Her *Under the Net* (1954), *A Severed Head* (1961), and *The Black Prince* (1973) are replete with sexual themes- the main focus being on the taboo called incestuous love. Martin in *A Severed Head* (1961) seems endorsing Murdoch's views on incestuous relationships when he answers Palmer, "I don't disapprove of incest. I don't think that you're committing any sin by embracing your sister; that is, not any sin that arises from the fact that she's your sister".

Crude Eros is obsessive in nature. In Murdoch's fiction, we find various instances of obsessive love where her characters feel overwhelming desire to possess others. Here, the lovers have an impulsive desire to control the behavior of those they are in love with. The erotic and obsessive nature of love that makes lovers maniac baffles her. In *The Black Prince* (1973), she contemplates that human beings become so obsessed that they pine for the bodies of each other. But amazingly, they ignore others who are available to them. This form of obsessive love is destructive in nature as it does not refine others. Rather it stops them from finding conjugal harmony. Dora's dalliance in *The Bell* (1958) can be truly judged in the perspective of her partnership with her husband. He is not her refuge. His overbearing nature makes him a person she desires to escape from. His presence snatches her joy and peace. That is why, she finds an accomplice in Toby Gashe which is unacceptable by the community. It brings ruin in Dora's life. This is

Plato's Crude Eros that distorts the vision of reality. Nussbaumm Nasrulla (2002) comments on Murdoch's portrayal of love in her fiction:

> It is frequently suggested, both in Murdoch's philosophical works and in her novels that sexual desire and the bodily component in love are sins in the Dantean sense. They are the source of egoistic self-delusion and self-immersion that persistently come between us and the reality of those we love.

Philautia, another form of love, finds frequent expression in Murdochian fiction. In *A Fairly Honourable Defeat* (1970), Morgan's love is philautia in negative sense. It is narcissistic and egocentric. In *Nuns and Soldiers* (1980) Gertrude's love for Tim Reede is also egocentric. Hence, it lacks the potency of amelioration. Murdoch's claim that human beings are essentially narcissistic is applied in the behavior of her characters like Morgan, Gertrude, Rupert Forster and Greenfield. Positive aspect of philautia that finds expression in knowing and respecting one's own worth coincides with agape in her novels. Dora Greenfield in *The Bell* (1958) is on the path of transformation. After getting constant nagging from her husband and the community, she decides to recognize her worth, rejects her husband and helps Michael Meade in taking care of Catherine. So does Anne Cavidge in *Nuns and Soldiers* (1980). She leaves aside the world that was bullying her and leaves for America to spread unconditional love in the world.

Both Dostoevsky and Murdoch affirm faith in the potential of love. For them, even worthless love is not totally frivolous. It has its own value. Both find love a driving force to save humanity from disaster. Love brings transformation in the heart of lovers. True love is a life –providing force, a source of infinite support and strength. They look upon love in terms of freedom and responsibility

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UNDERSTANDING THE KOREAN VALUE SYSTEM: YI CHONG-JUN'S NOVEL 'SEOPYEONJE'

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Abstract: *An adequate understanding of a nation's literature can reveal much about a society and its value system. The literature of any country potentially mirrors its society and its value system through characters that may or may not be ideal. In other words, literature is a tool that disseminates the value system of any country across the world. Yi Chong-Jun Korean novel 'Seopyeonje' (1976) offers insights into the value system of contemporary Korean society and people whose lives have been devastated because of the Korean War and attempts to facilitate an understanding of the musical storytelling genre 'pansori.' This masterpiece by Yi endeavours to show why many Koreans try and adhere to traditional values and struggle to transfer them to younger generations despite enduring deep pain. Understanding 'Seopyeonje' and the traditional Korean folk opera 'pansori' also offers deep insight into the value system known as 'Han' (deep sorrow), as well as the idea of filial piety.*

Key words: *Seopyeonje, Korean Value System, Han, Filial Daughter, Pansori*

Introduction

Literature is a bridge that helps people to engage with the past as well as the contemporary period in the life of a country. Literature gives access to history, culture, and people's thoughts through critical interpretation, dialogue, and vivid characters. The study of literature helps people find out about the uniqueness of physical places and their cultural values that distinguish them from others. In other words, it helps people to develop evaluate complex cultures and historical artefacts through literature by exploring cultural change over time. Culture itself is perceptible in language, literature, and verbal and non-verbal behaviour of people (Patil, 2015: 143). Hence, literature that expresses aspects of the culture can be used as a rich resource to develop the ability to communicate appropriately with others. The deeply embedded culture and value system in literature attempts to raise awareness of cultural variations and develop intercultural communicative competence (Ibid: 144).

According to Jaishree Mishra, literature best does its job as a mirror that depicts society and its women in books that change along with society (Times of India

2022). Kim has argued that it is literature that offers the most concrete and deep knowledge of the sensibilities, moral values, and aesthetic views that have guided the lives of Koreans in the twentieth century (2005: 2). Hesaraki has illustrated that language and literature express the feelings and emotions of any society (2014: 24). He adds that the interaction between culture and literature is due to the involvement of culture in different areas like traditions, thoughts, and human perspectives, and in this process, literature acts as a powerful instrument (Ibid). Hence, a human being needs both literature and cultural values which could help them in making robust relationships with people from different cultures. It shows that literature is not only affected by society, but it also affects society since it teaches the art of making socio-cultural relationships.

Consequently, literature is a powerful tool for expressing social as well as cultural values. Hence, the purpose of literature could be divided into two parts, social purpose, and cultural purpose. The social purpose of literature could be perceived as a tool for making the human bond stronger since it teaches people solidarity, empathy, and kindness. The cultural purpose of literature is passing the cultural values from one generation to another through written and non-written texts. These processes show that there is a profound correlation between society and literature. Hence, it would not be erroneous to say that there is a relationship between literature, culture, and value systems (Figure-1).

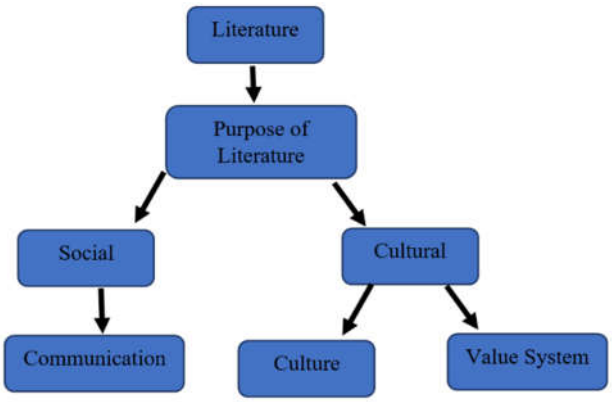

Figure-1: Relationship between literature, culture and value systems.

Seopyeonje and the Korean Value System

Seopyeonje is a story about a traditional *pansori* master who travels across the country with his son and daughter. It is the story of a family of traditional

Korean *pansori* singers trying to make a living in the modern world. It is the first South Korean novel to draw over one million readers and has had a significant influence in reviving popular interest in traditional Korean culture and *pansori*. The writer of the acclaimed book, Yi Chong-jun, was born in 1939 and died at the age of sixty-eight in 2008. He graduated with a degree in German literature from Seoul National University (SNU). In 1965, he debuted with a short story titled 'Leaving the Hospital.' Yi is considered one of the foremost writers of the 4.19 Generation (people from 19th April Revolution in 1960 to oust corrupt Rhee Syngman government) and his literary output has been critical since he has portrayed internal conflict and the effect of civil war through the characters in his works, which include, 'The Wounded' (1966), which probes the dissatisfaction of Korean youth after the Korean War, 'This Paradise of Yours' (1976), which explores the dialectics of charity and the will to attain power, and 'The Fire Worshipers' (1985) meditates on the meaning of human rituals conducted in a godless society where no ultimate guarantees can be given. Yi's fictional characters encompass a broad range of dissatisfaction, hardship, sorrow, plight, and traditional values of Korean society. Yi's work draws from traditional folk art and the Korean values embodied in them. '*Seopyeonje*' focuses on the genre of *pansori*, a traditional Korean oral performance that features a singer of folk tales accompanied by a single drummer. '*Seopyeonje*' has helped in reviving popular interest in the art of *pansori* since it is a mode of reconciliation with life. According to Kim Byeong-ik, Yi opened a new path for Korean literature before the true modern literature of Korea was established in the 1960s for which he has received various awards such as Dong-in Literary Award, Yi Sang Literary Award, Korean Literature Prize, Isan Literature Prize, and Ho-am Prize in the Arts (YTN News, 2008).

Seopyeonje characters relation

Seopyeonje is a story about three people: a father who wants to stick to traditional values, a filial daughter, and a son who wants to become rich (Figure-2). Song-hwa, a young *pansori* singer and Yu-bong's daughter, dedicates her life to *pansori* and to following Yu-bong's vision and passion to disseminate *pansori* to the masses. Yu-bong, a *pansori* singer, tries to pass on his technique and vision of *pansori* to his children. Nonetheless, Dong-ho, Yu-bong's son runs away due to conflicts with Yu-bong and the impoverished situation of his family.

Seopyeonje is set in the 1950s after the Korean War in a remote area of the Korean peninsula which is home to the traditional art of *pansori*, a beautiful style of storytelling performed by travelling musicians. In the story, Yo-bong's son disappears, leaving his father and sister to travel and perform alone since he

believes that his father caused his mother's death due by being completely engrossed in *pansori* thereby ignoring his duties to the famil, but also because he believes that he cannot become rich if he stays in the village. Hence, Yu-bong makes her daughter blind in apprehension that she might also run away like his brother. However, Song-hwa looks after her father until his last breath despite knowing the truth of her father having made her blind. Hence, her character could be related to the filial daughter, simcheonga. At the end of the story, her half-brother arrives in a village and finds his sister living alone. Dong-ho asks her sister Song-hwa to sing for him, and with his drum accompaniment, the two perform *pansori* songs throughout the night though not revealing their relationship. The novel depicts the unforgettable chain of events and depicts ideas about forgiveness, innocence, and following traditional values. This novel could also be called a fusion of traditional *pansori* and modern cultural values.

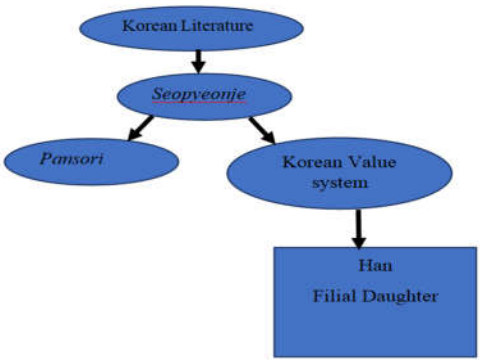

Figure 2: Literature and the Korean value system.

Reflections on the Korean Value System in Seopyeonje

Song-hwa: A Filial Daughter

Yu-bong makes her daughter Song-hwa blind so that she cannot run away like his son Dong-ho and portrays Song-hwa as a filial daughter who is ready to sacrifice her life for her father. Filial piety was founded upon the Confucian moral principles of loyalty, filiality, and fidelity, during the *Joseon* dynasty which promoted these principles of maintaining the social and ethical order in society (Kim, 2018: 481-502). Filial piety, which is called '*hyodo*' is defined as supporting and serving one's parents, and is considered a natural duty of a person. In the past, morality in oriental society was derived from the '*hyojae*' of Confucianism which means honouring one's parents and it also represents peace and harmony within the family. Furthermore, the term '*Hyonyeo*' which means filial daughter comes from the concept of filial piety which originated in Confucianism. According to

Confucius's philosophy, a woman has to live for her father, husband, and her children. In East Asian, the culture of filial piety was established by the Confucius thinkers and the idea of filial piety has been taught to children as part of their moral education for thousands of years. Moreover, it is considered the most important part of virtue for an individual, family, and nation since a nation can be peaceful only when families are well governed, which is possible only when individuals have a well-cultivated mind. Hence, it shows that families can be well governed based on filial piety and the culture of filial piety can make the whole world peaceful. The only country that has flourished and inherited filial piety until now as a culture is Korea (Sung, 1998: 90). The family system in Korea which is based on filial piety is a valuable asset that has been passed on from one generation to another generation for thousands of years and can be seen in the traditional custom of Korea children living in a mud hut built near their parents' tomb for three years or more after their deaths (Kim, 2008). The Korean tale of '*Simchung*' is a great example of a filial daughter who sacrifices herself to gain three hundred bags of rice to make her father see her again (Naufalia, 2019: 120). In other words, the culture of filial piety is the intangible cultural heritage handed down from generation to generation in Korea. A child has to perform various duties to get recognized as a filial son and daughter in Korean society. Providing physical and financial sacrifices for their parents, fulfilling their responsibility and obligations to parents including devotion including care and protection, showing respect love, and affection for parents, saving face for the family by entertaining their parents' friends and maintaining the shrines and graves of their ancestors, following religious teachings about parental care, and carrying out difficult or unusual tasks for parents are the main aspects of practicing filial piety in Korea (Sung, 1995: 24).

Year	One-person households (%)
1980	4.8%
1990	9.0%
2000	15.5%
2010	23.9%
2035	45.0%

Figure 3: One-person households (Kim, 1387)**.**

However, the concept of 'filial duty' is disappearing from Korean society. The number of elderly people living alone is increasing exponentially, which suggests that the concept of filial duty is gradually fading (Pulse Maeil Business News Korea, 2021). There were 1.66 million South Koreans aged sixty-five and older who are living by themselves in 2020 (The Korea Herald, 2021). However, the

number of single-person households is expected to reach forty-five percent in 2035 (Figure- 3). As the ratio of elderly people is increasing, children living in Korea may be losing the traditional ideals around filial piety and taking care of the older generation, considered one of the most valuable cultural heritages of Korea. The idea of caring for older people may need to be actively promoted among upcoming generations if it is to survive. As per a survey result by a local pollster, more than seventy-five percent of South Koreans think that there should be a new system that institutes a 'filial duty contract,' a legal document which makes it obligatory for all grown children to financially and emotionally care for their aged parents (The Korea Herald, 2015).

Han

Yu-bong's daughter Song-hwa is a perfect example of *Han* since she suffers as a filial daughter. Her mother died in her childhood and she also gets separated from his brother Dong-ho. She has lost her eyesight because of her father but still, she looks after her father until his last breath. Hence, Song-hwa's irreparable pain and unheard sorrow is essentially the essence of *Han*. Most foreigners perceive '*Han*'as a peculiar cultural value that explains much of 'Korean-ness,' especially as the source of an emotional component. Korea is a country that has faced many hardships such as Japanese colonization, a brutal civil war, U.S. dominance, *isangajok* and the 1997 financial crisis. It was not until recently that South Korea has been able to be nearly free of being controlled by outside forces, but the memories of these tumultuous historical experiences are still alive in the Korean citizenry as many of the atrocities happened just a few decades ago. Korean people generally describe these hardships through '*Han*.' It is hard to find the meaning of '*Han*' in English since the definition of Han in Korean is unique and could be only expressed through feeling and emotion. In other words, the best way the English language can describe Han is as an emotion that has an amalgamation of sorrow, resentment, and hatred. *Han*, in Korean, has many different translations in English, but no word exactly describes what it means, sometimes even native Koreans change their definition of what '*Han*' is. Suh Nam-Dong has described "*Han*" as

> "a feeling of unresolved resentment against injustice, a sense of helplessness because of the overwhelming odds against one, a feeling of acute pain in one's guts and bowels, making the whole body writhe and squirm, and an obstinate urge to take revenge and to right the wrong." (South China Morning Post, 2020).

According to Kang, it is very difficult to explain 'what is *Han*,' and only who have suffered can probably apprehend what is *Han* (2018: 14). The Koreans are familiar

with *Han* because it is deeply embedded in Korean society and its people (Ibid). Eun Koha, a famous Korean poet has argued that "Koreans were born and brought up in the womb of *Han*" (Ibid). Sometimes *Han* expresses itself as resignation, adaption to reality, and nihilism, and sometimes it explodes in the form of revenge, protest, and revolt (Ibid). Professor Michael Shin has highlighted that *Han* is frequently explored in Korean literature, art, and film, and is casually brought up in conversation since it is prevalent in pop culture and everyday life (CBC, 2019). Hence, after juxtaposing above all definitions, *Han* can be said as a mixture of deeply embedded pain, sorrow, and resentment. The Korean definition of '*Han*' did not exist until the Japanese occupation of the Korean peninsula. This word became popular to describe the shared suffering of the Korean people under Japanese colonialism, which was marked by brutal suppression and the forceful Japanization of Korean people in a attempt to wipe out Korean identity. According to Kim (2017), *Han* drew attention during the Japanese colonial period in the 1920s, especially in the works of the Japanese writer Muneyoshi Yanagi (Boman, 2020: 1-14). Kim has also explained its development, "as a national phenomenon or specifically Korean characteristic since *Han* did not exist in ancient Korea but was an idea anachronistically imposed on Koreans during the Japanese colonial period" (Ibid).

Male Preference over Female

Yu-bong wants his son Dong-ho to become a *pansori* performer in his hometown but he runs away since he believes that performing *pansori* in his hometown would not make him rich. Hence, Bong is left with no option other than fulfilling his dream by making his daughter Song-hwa a *pansori* performer to accomplish his dream of spreading the *pansori* around the country. Hence, it shows that there was a male preference over females in the patriarchal *Joseon* dynasty which existed in Korea until the last century. The reason for male preference over females lies within the Confucian ideology, since during the *Joseon* dynasty, not bearing a son was considered nothing less than a crime (Han, 2004: 138). Historically, Korea was a rigid male-dominated society during the *Joseon* dynasty. One of the seven faults of women during the *Joseon* dynasty was not bearing a son, which was the ground for divorce by husbands (Ibid). In extreme cases, women were deserted by their husbands or mothers-in-law for not conceiving a son (Ibid). Even in the 1970s and 1980s, women often received undergarments worn by women who had delivered sons from their mothers-in-law hoping for grandsons (Korea JoongAng Daily, 2012). This illustrates the fixation on having a male child is still evident in contemporary Korean society.

In South Korea, male preference is attributed to the patriarchal family system and lower female autonomy which is a result of the Confucian value system. Available statistics indicate that the sex ratio at birth which is the number of male births per hundred female births has been increasing and was 105.4 in 2018 (Figure-4), (Guthridge, 2020: 2).

Country/territory	**Sex ratio at birth Period**
Azerbaijan	114.6 (2018)
China	111.9 (2017)
Vietnam	111.5 (2018)
Armenia	111.1 (2018)
Republic of North Macedonia	110 (2018)
Georgia	107.9 (2018)
Albania	108.0 (2018)
Nepal	110.6 (2012-2016)
South Korea	105.4 (2018)
Bangladesh	104.8 (2014)

Figure 4: male births per 100 female births (Ibid).

Gupta et al. have highlighted that many societies are undergoing a fertility decline that has "heightened pressure to remove daughters" (2003: 153–187). Eun showed that in a cross-country comparison of gender preferences for children in Asia, South Korea younger people tend to prefer daughters, while older people and more 'male-centric' people tend to prefer sons (2013: 1-33). Moreover, after analysing recent data it has been found that socio-economic and cultural factors are associated with a preference for a son or daughter (Ibid). According to Oh-Han, a scholar of women's studies and an advocate for women's rights, "one of the common oriental medicines someone could easily get from nearby clinics is pouches of a concoction that supposedly helps anybody to conceive the male baby" (Korea JoongAng Daily, 2012). Medicines for bearing a male child and the decriminalization of abortion policies have made it easy to abort girls.

Recently however, the preference for a male child over a female child is gradually decreasing. In 1976, sixty-one percent of married women indicated that a son was essential however, in 1991 that figure dropped to 40.5 percent, then plummeted to 16.2 percent by 2000, and in the last decade, it dropped even further to 8.2 percent in 2012 (Boer and Hudson, 2017: 119-147). Chun and Gupta have suggested that South Korea is changing its gender preferences for babies and now prefers daughters rather than continuing the practice of aborting girls (2021). Chung and Gupta (2007) have credited economic and social development for the shift in gender preference, arguing for a relationship between development and male gender preference and proving that economic and social development has changed people's perception around this issue.

Hweja Jongni Goja Pilban*: *if there are goodbyes, then there's bound to be hellos

Yu-bong's daughter, Song-hwa and son, Dong-ho both meet and get separated. Eventually, both of them end up meeting together at the end of the story and again get separated. It illustrates the Buddhist concept of '*Hweja Jongni Goja Pilban*' which means if there are goodbyes, then there are bound to be hellos (Pyonggwang, 2022). In this four-character idiom, '*Hoeja Jongni*' means "the person you meet will get separated," or getting separated from somebody is an inevitable rule of nature. However, another part '*Geoja Pilban*' is based on the premise of reunion, meaning that 'the person who has left will surely return' (The Korean Economy, 2018). This also illustrates another philosophy of Buddhism that everything is temporary and bound to change bed be destroyed, as well as destruction itself (Hoang, 2019: 19). Although everyone is emotionally connected with other people for a long time, they will have to be separated from that person someday, which is inevitable. Even the cycle of birth and death is also an example of '*Hweja Jongni Goja Pilban*' since people are separated after death and again meet after rebirth. The famous Buddhist temples '*Seokguram* Grotto' and '*Bulguksa*' temple in Korea are also examples of this concept when Kim Dae-Seong built '*Seokguram* Grotto' for his parents from his previous life and '*Bulguksa*' temple for his present life parents (Han and Ahn, 2006: 91). *Seopyeonje* illustrates that many Korean people still believe the Buddhist ideology of '*Hweja Jongni Goja Pilban.*' Furthermore, Korean phrases such as '*daeume bwayo* (See you later),''*daeume mannaja* (See you later),' '*najunge mannaja* (See you later),'and '*tto mannaja* (Let's meet again)' also show that Korean people despite of saying 'good bye' they believe in meeting again after separation. In other words, Korean people believe that they would meet the same person somewhere again in the future.

Adhering the Traditional Values

Yu-bong wants to use *pansori* as a source for earning money whereas his son Dong-ho wants to use it to become rich. Hence, it shows the conflict between father and son over adhering the traditional values. Although Korea has gone through an unprecedented change post-independence wherein they have adopted western culture owing to American influence as well as globalization, they have still kept their own cultural practices. Although it is not easy to escape from foreign cultural influence, Korean people have tried to preserve their traditional culture so that they can transfer it to coming generations. In recent times, the fusion of Korean and western culture could be easily seen in Korean societal practices such as marriage, which takes place in two parts, first in western attire and the second part in the traditional Korean attire, *hanbok* (Kim and Kim, 2013: 13). In addition, Korean people celebrate New Year in western style on every first day of January but they also celebrate the *Seollal* (Korean Lunar New Year) which is one of the most important festivals in Korea, when all the family members get together to perform the ritual tries for their ancestors. On this auspicious day, Korean people also greet their parents by wearing *hanbok*. Another example where Korean people are still found to be sticking to their traditional culture can be seen in schools and offices wherein a junior employee does not take the senior employee's name, which has its roots in Confucian ideology (Kim, 2016: 100-101). Hence, it can be said that despite the western cultural influx in the post-war period, Korean people are still connected to their traditional culture by many such practices.

Conclusion

The Korean novel *Seopyeonje* has facilitated the understanding of the Korean value system and Korean traditional storytelling genre *Pansori*. *Seopyeonje* also depicts the concept of *Han* through its protagonist Song hwa who has suffered since childhood and throughout her life. It also manifests the male child preference over female child emanating from Confucius's ideology deeply embedded in Korean society. It has also depicted the concept of the filial daughter through the character of Song-hwa since she learns *pansori* according to the wish of her father and takes care of him until his last breath. Moreover, it demonstrates the Buddhism philosophy that if there are goodbyes, then there's bound to be hellos, since Song-hwa and Dong-ho are separated and reunite again at the end of the story. The conflict between father Yu-bong and son Dong-ho suggests that many Koreans adhere to tradition since Yu-bong wants his son Dong-ho to become a *pansori* performer in the village but his son wants to become rich by performing the *pansori* in the city. Furthermore, Song-hwa and Yu-bong's separation and reunion

illustrate the Buddhism concept of *Hweja Jongni Goja Pilban*. Hence, many Korean people evade saying 'goodbye' and it could be also seen in Korean phrases which show that they firmly believe in meeting with the same person again.

This study has shown that the purpose of literature could be divided into two parts, social purpose and cultural purpose since literature is a powerful tool for expressing social as well as cultural values. The social purpose of literature can be perceived of as a tool for making the human bond stronger, and the cultural purpose of literature can be shown as a vehicle for passing the cultural values from one generation to another through written text. In addition, this study shows that literature can be a medium for depicting contemporary Korean society and its value system. Hence, it might pave the way for acquainting people with Korean cultural values, duties, customs, and rituals.

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TAGORE BRINGS BENGAL TO LATIN AMERICA: A CRITICAL TRAJECTORY

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***Abstract**: This paper aims to study the literary interaction between Bengal and Latin America during the early decades of the 20th century. It is a deeply significant study that locates the trajectory of this literary-cultural interaction that led to the beginning of a long association, presumably one of the most significant literary trajectories of literary reception and survival via translation. The paper closely studies the Rabindranath Tagore-Victoria Ocampo interface, influence of Tagorean philosophy on Latin American literature and readership and his reception in Spanish. The paper also discusses the reactions of important Latin American poets, authors, and litterateurs to his works on grounds of literary and philosophical merit.*

***Keywords**: Rabindranath Tagore, Victoria Ocampo, Latin America, Spanish, translation, religion, humanism, poetry*

Tagore's Visit to Latin America: The Tagore-Ocampo Initiation

The literatures of Bengal and Latin America were first brought into interaction with each other by Rabindranath Tagore and Victoria Ocampo way back in 1924 in Argentina. In September 1924, the Peruvian Government sent an invitation to Rabindranath Tagore requesting him to attend the country's Commemorative Centennial Celebration, the 100th anniversary of Peru's victory over the Spanish Colonial power. (Kushari Dyson, 1996: pp.32-35) An exhausted and disappointed (his idea of Nationalism was heavily criticised) Tagore, who was 63 at this time, had just returned home after a four-month long trip to Japan and China. Nonetheless, Tagore immediately accepted the invitation and was all set to leave for Peru. He sailed from Colombo en-route Europe on vessel Haruna-Maru. From France onwards through the rest of the journey till Peru, it was the English agronomist Leonard Knight Elmhirst accompanied Tagore acting as his secretary. Tagore and Elmhirst boarded the Andes which was leaving for Argentina. Tagore had met Leonard Elmhirst four years ago, in 1920 while he was visiting the United States. Within just a few days of the Andes setting sail, Tagore fell ill onboard with a flu and was soon bedridden. After three long tiring weeks at the sea, the Andes finally reached Buenos Aires on November 6th. By now the aging poet was severely weakened and was unable to continue his trip to Peru from Argentina. Once checked by the doctors, further travel was out of question given that would

be life threatening. Tagore was in serious need of prolonged rest and medical treatment and was forced to abandon his plans of attending to the Peruvian government's invitation. (Ibid)

Meanwhile, all of Argentina was awaiting Tagore at Buenos Aires. This was in September 1924. In this crowd was also a young lady, Victoria Ocampo who was waiting to meet the poet in person. For Victoria, who had held on to Tagore's Gitanjali since a decade earlier the idea of meeting her spiritual saviour was the chance of a lifetime. In anticipation she had already read many of Tagore's translated works. By then Rabindranath Tagore was already a major literary figure in Latin America, thanks to the massive translation works of Juan Ramon Jimenez and Zenobia Camprubi. Between 1914 and 1922, the couple had translated as many as twenty-two of Tagore's books. Tagore's popularity in Latin America had reached its zenith. Gabriela Mistral, Jose Ortega y Gasset, Octavio Paz and Pablo Neruda were deeply influenced by him.

When the Andes reached Buenos Aires on November 6th, Victoria was all prepared to meet the poet. Meanwhile, doctors had prescribed the ailing poet strict rest. But the problem was accommodation. Victoria came to rescue. She arranged, on rent, a beautiful bungalow called Miralrio overlooking the River Plata in suburban San Isidro. The place was close to Victoria's own residence, Villa Ocampo. She sold a dear diamond tiara to arrange the money for the accommodation. Tagore and Elmhirst heartily accepted the invitation while Victoria arranged her housekeeping staff to look after them. Tagore stayed at San Isidro for two months recovering from the flu while the scenic beauty and serenity of the place made him feel at home away from home. His favourite spot in the house was the balcony on first floor with a spectacular view of the river and the surrounding countryside. Victoria had later said,

> I had instinctively led Tagore to that balcony immediately upon his entering Miralrio, certain that if he was to take anything away on leaving it, it would be this: the memory of the landscape that would meet his eyes morning and evening, with its changing light. That landscape was the only gift worthy of him. (Ibid: pg.148)

The lush beauty around, the rippling river, the canopying trees and the lovely blossoms of San Isidro offered Tagore just the nourishment that his body and soul needed. Tagore, Elmhirst and Victoria spent the most enriching times together in these two months taking long walks along the riverbank. Tagore found one of his most precious friends in Victoria whom he saw as a woman of intelligence, striking beauty and a deep spiritual yearning. Tagore was thirty years senior to Victoria but

that didn't impact the deep friendship they shared. While in San Isidro Tagore wrote several odes dedicated to Ocampo, some of the noteworthy ones being 'Last Spring', 'Fear' and 'Guest'. Victoria on the other hand was overwhelmed to receive the rare chance of hosting her saviour in whom she found the ultimate spiritual solace. After two peaceful months of rest and revival Tagore started feeling restless at Miralrio. Though he deeply regretted it later, but after just two months of rest, on January 4th, 1925, Tagore accompanied by Elmhirst left Argentina for Europe boarding the vessel, Julio Cesaro. Though he left Buenos Aires, memories of his foreign hostess kept coming back to him repeatedly. Once Tagore wrote to Victoria from Shantiniketan referring to the time spent in San Insidro,

> Time and again, my mind flies back to that veranda in San Isidro. I still recall quite vividly the exquisite festival of red and blue flowers glittering in the morning sun. And the endless display of colours atop that great river.

The poet would spend his mornings writing, strolling in the garden, or reading. During the evenings, he would receive visitors and admirers. (Ibid: pp.153) Even in his last hours, 16 years after having bid goodbye to dear Victoria in Buenos Aires, Tagore wrote:

> How I wish I could once again find my way to that foreign land where waits for me the message of love! The dreams of yesterday will wing their way back and, fluttering softly, build their nest anew. Sweet memories will restore to the lute its lost melody … Her language I knew not, but what her eyes said will forever remain eloquent in its anguish. (Ibid: pp.153)

Tagore referred to Victoria by a name he lovingly bestowed on her, Bijaya. He went on to dedicate the famous collection of poems *Purabi* (published in 1925) to Victoria Ocampo stating, 'to the Lotus Palms of Bijaya'. As many as thirty poems from Purabi were written in Miralrio, San Isidro.

Tagore wrote to Ocampo,

> I am sending you this book written in Bengali. I would have preferred to give it to you personally. It has been dedicated to you, even though you will not know what is contained in it. I trust it will spend more days at your side than did its author. (Ibid: 156)

The affection and admiration were mutual between Tagore and Ocampo and the latter too couldn't forget her Oriental Guest till the end. The two met again, six years later, in 1930 in Paris. Meanwhile, they had kept the correspondence alive

through constant letters. In Paris, Victoria Ocampo organized a huge exhibition showcasing Tagore's paintings to the European art circle. She had, back in Miralrio, discovered his unusual drawings and sketches which had a curious uniqueness to them. It is known that it was Tagore's Bijaya who had first discovered and seriously encouraged the poet to paint.

Tagore's Idea of God: Influence on Victoria Ocampo

Rabindranath Tagore's concept of spiritual humanism and the way he conceptualized the relationship of Man with the Divine attracted Victoria Ocampo's attention to his works in the first place. Tagore attributed definitive importance to Man in relation to Nature, the Divine and the Cosmos. In his pursuit of Spiritual Humanism, Tagore laid focus on Man, Man to be the end, a complete entity. According to Tagore, God was the symbol of human perfection, and he is God humanized. Tagore's philosophical insights, his idea of divinity and religion was unique and distinct. His religion was essentially a poet's religion. He in fact believed that religion was the inherent essence of human life, and that God created diversity which lies at the core of the fundamental rules of unity. Tagore refused to meet his God through logic and reasoning. Thus, he indicated that divine for him was an immanent presence in all his creations and every creation is the manifestation of that Divine power. Hence, for Tagore, there existed a completely harmonious relationship between Man, God, and Nature. To Rabindranath the universe was that of Human Beings and not just God's universe. In Tagore's own words, "In the larger life of social communism, man feels the mystery of unity, as he does in music. From the sense of that unity, men come to the sense of their God." (Ibid: pp.216)

Victoria Ocampo on the other hand was brought up to believe in a completely different identity of God. Born into a wealthy ruling class family in Buenos Aires, she grew up in a household that enjoyed both economic and political power in the state:

> It was an upper-class society dominated by the two mutually supporting institutions of the Church and the extended family, in which men were still encouraged to pursue a Latin cult of virility, while women, with the new home based education they were receiving, were coming out of the older bondage to purely domestic functions and gaining new accomplishments such as the ability to speak in French, English, or German, to recite poetry, or to play on musical instruments (in the drawing room, of course)….. Victoria's adolescence was of necessity less happy than her childhood. Pampered with every possible material luxury, she was, nevertheless, -- by

> modern Western standards of female freedom—a bird in a gilded cage…. (Ibid: pp.222)

Ocampo got married to Bernando de Estrada or Monaco Estrada, a prospective suitor from her own social milieu, in 1912. However, in no time she realized her mistake. Estrada's jealous possessiveness made her feel suffocated and claustrophobic. Thus began a thirteen-year long affair. But in Catholic Argentina divorces were not an option, so no matter how much they wanted, neither could Victoria leave her husband, nor could she marry Martinez. With time the secret rendezvous fell apart and the two lovers eventually drifted apart. While Victoria was trying to grapple with the situation and come out of this prolonged trauma, she discovered Tagore in Gitanjali in 1914. Ocampo read Andre Gide's French translation, just when she was beginning her secret and passionate affair with Julian Martinez. In her own words, she termed those first few moments as her first encounter with Tagore. Reading Gitanjali instantly brought tears which she didn't know how to explain. She writes in her autobiography, I quote:

> How to explain …that nothing is the matter, and that nevertheless what is already happening to me today, without my understanding it in an exact way, what must happen to me tomorrow, had just been revealed to me in an instant, like an unfamiliar landscape is revealed by a flash of lightening at night. (Sur 1941: pp.434)

Though in this quote we do not find any direct reference to God or the idea of the Divine, the deep thought that Tagore had ingrained in Victoria's psyche was clear. She further mentioned in her autobiography how the East had entered her life with a balsamic effect, the effervescent lines of Gitanjali fell like refreshing dew drops on her ailing heart. It was the happiness of having found emancipation in a God who was man's friend and not a punisher. In Ocampo's own words,

> My lack of faith in God occupied an immense place in my life; it changed in that moment of fear, of choice, of sorrow, of reckless happiness, into a heart –rending presence through absence…That is why I wept with despair and tenderness, reading the Gitanjali… God of Tagore, do you hear me? … could the Gitanjali awake more powerful echoes? (Dyson, 196: pg.232)

Though she never mentioned in her writings the personal context of her tryst with Tagore's Gitanjali, but she did hint to the spiritual freedom and emancipation that the poet had brought her. Tagore never differentiated between what man gives to his deity and what the lover gives to his beloved. Both these offerings spring from one and the same source. To go by his own words, — দবেতারে প্রয়ি করি,

প্রিয়রে দেবতা (debatare priyo kori, priyere debata) which literally translated as —we make the deity our beloved, and the beloved our deity. To a young and troubled Ocampo Tagore's Gitanjali appeared like enlightenment that redefined her idea of the divine and the beloved.

Bangla Literature meets Spanish Readers: Juan Ramon Jimenez, Zenobia Camprubi and Jose Ortega y Gasset

The point of discussion now are the untiring efforts of renowned Spanish poet Juan Ramon Jimenez and his wife Zenobia Camprubi in introducing Tagore to the Spanish speaking world. In 1913-1914 they translated his noteworthy work Gitanjali into Spanish. Sisir Kumar Das mentioned in the Introduction to his seminal work, শাশ্বত মৌচাক: রবীন্দ্রনাথ ও স্পনে (Saswata Mouchak: Rabindranath O Spain or The Eternal Honeycomb: Rabindranath and Spain) one of the primary reasons that led to Tagore's diminishing popularity in Europe was his own translations of his works. Interestingly, it was these English translations that had once brought him fame and popularity in all of Europe. However, the credit for Tagore's continued popularity in Spain and Hispanic America is the result of the unrelenting efforts of his Spanish translators. It was through translation of translations that Spain and Hispanic America had been introduced to Rabindranath Tagore. Hence, more than Tagore the credit for this popularity went to his able translators.

Spanish poet Juan Ramon Jimenez had translated his works into Spanish for the first time. His translations are still valued for their literary quality. The primary inspiration behind this project was his wife, Zenobia Camprubi. She was a bi-lingual proficiently versed in English and Spanish. In fact, it was Zenobia who first came up with the proposition of translating Tagore's works in to Spanish and she herself was the first translator to do that. When she started translating the *Crescent Moon,* she had just met Jimenez. By then Jimenez was already an established modernist poet in Spain. On Zenobia's request he read Tagore's poetry for the first time in Zenobia's translated draft and edited it. Thereon, Zenobia would first prepare a draft from English into Spanish, then she would explain all the English words and their context and meaning to Jimenez; he would then come up with a final draft of the translation having added the poetic flavour to it. Jimenez and Camprubi translated many of Tagore's poems, plays, stories, essays, and novels producing as many as twenty-five collections of Rabindranath's works in Spanish. Juan Ramon Jimenez played an instrumental role in introducing Tagore's works to the Spanish speaking world. This was the earliest recorded interaction between Bengal and Spain.

On 27th January 1918, the *El Sol* magazine published a long letter by renowned philosopher Jose Ortega y Gasset. The letter was headed '*Un poeta indo'* (*An Indian Poet*) and was addressed to Zenobia Camprubi. This letter was important since it gave an idea of Jose Ortega's views about Tagore, it gave an idea of the reactions of Spanish readers to Tagore's translations, and it brought forth Ortega's own views on the Tagore-Camprubi literary interaction. Obviously, Ortega y Gasset had a very clear idea of who Tagore was and how his works had played the role of catalyst in bringing Zenobia and Jimenez closer and finally leading to the culmination of their relationship into marriage. The following section is quoted from শাশ্বত মৌচাক: রবীন্দ্রনাথ ও স্পেন (Saswata Mouchak: Rabindranath O Spain or The Eternal Honeycomb: Rabindranath and Spain),

> Juan Ramon Jimenez is incessantly drawing his own poetic creations and the two of them are translating poetry from a far-off land……. Juan Ramon and Zenobia have introduced us to the poetic geniuses of the Indian poet Rabindranath Tagore…What are the ingredients which a poet chooses to use for his poetry? What magical ingredients comprise his songs? …. Tagore doesn't need to draw in from any historical incidents; he doesn't need anything uncommon or extraordinary to lean on when it comes to time or men. A little bit of sunlight, a slice of the open sky and floating clouds, an eternal thirst for discovery, a gust of wind, riverbanks, a peek from a window, an open door, and finally the ever-glowing flame of love for the Divine- these are all that he uses for his songs… Zenobia, can you say from where comes this voice, from the East or West, from near or from far. Zenobia, sit in whichever way you want and listen to the voices of your heart, don't you think these words are whispers out of your own heart? Aren't you telling the very same words? …I will safely keep to your secret; I won't share with anyone how you are quietly nurturing an Indian poet within your heart. (Das and Gangopadhyay, 2011: pp. 53-54) [Self translated]

The above lines indicated how Jose Ortega was deeply moved by the poetic geniuses of Rabindranath. This way it wasn't just Tagore gaining popularity among leading Spanish poets, litterateurs, and philosophers like Camprubi, Jimenez and Jose Ortega but the Bangla world of letters was also steadily travelling to Spain, the process of literary influence and reception had begun.

Again, in February 1918, Gasset published another letter addressed to Zenobia Camprubi in *El Sol*. The letter closely discussed Tagore's famous play, *The Post Office*. In her very first letter that Zenobia wrote to Tagore she had mentioned that

amongst Spanish readers Tagore's *The Crescent Moon* and *The Post Office* were remarkably popular. Hence, analysis of this play by one of the most well-known Spanish philosophers did demand careful attention. In Spain, even before this letter was published there were already some discussions about Tagore. Tagore did have a vague idea about Spain's interest and appreciation in him and his works.

When read closely this letter appeared to be less of a philosophical analysis and more of an appreciation by a sensitive literary enthusiast. He wrote to share his thoughts on reading *The Post Office* with Zenobia because he knew she was equally smitten by Tagore. Tagore's poems transported Gasset to a deeper level of insights on life. It also meant that when celebrated litterateurs like him started showing interest in Tagore and his works, translation of his works, their publication, sale, and critical academic discussion around these works saw a growth in Spain and Hispanic America. In fact, when Tagore was about to visit Madrid in 1921, a group of young performers under the guidance of Camprubi prepared to stage a production of *Bisharjan* were a young group of Spaniards including Rubio, Bun~el, Carmen Udor, and a boy who would in future become one of Spain's most famous poets ever, Frederico Garcia Lorca had played the parts. That was the extent of reception that works of Tagore had seen in the early years of their journey to Spain.

Interest of Latin American litterateurs in Rabindranath and Bangla Literature

Tagore had given Latin American poets and writers humanist poetry with its mystic charm that helped them abandon the idealized notions propagated by Classical Europe. In Tagore's works and his thoughts, they found a non-European source of literary inspiration. They could now draw inspiration from their own native instincts to write, in their own voice about their own people and their own land. The impact of Tagore's ingenuity on the Latin American writers and poets was not just in terms of the moral and intellectual high ground, it was also in terms of the powerful visions that he had presented them. They were highly influenced by these new developments that reached their shores from Spain in the form of translations of various poems, novels, short stories, essays, and academic journals by Tagore. Some of the significant figures who were deeply inspired by Tagore were the Mexican poet Octavio Paz, the Chilean poets Pablo Neruda and Gabriela Mistral. There were very few poets in Latin America who were as deeply influenced by Rabindranath Tagore as the Chilean poet Pablo Neruda.

Neruda fell in love with Tagore and his poetry at a very young age and later critics like Octavio Paz, on close analysis, did comment that Neruda's poetry in its turn

was deeply saturated by the original essence of Tagore's philosophy. The poet Neruda was catapulted to fame with the publication of his first book of verses, *Twenty Poems of Love and a Song of Despair* (1924). The poems in this collection were loaded with romantic passion and sensuality which was till then unknown to Latin American Poetry. When studied carefully this collection had a strange similarity to the thoughts and philosophical insights of Tagore. In fact, poems number Sixteen and Thirty from the collection were almost indistinguishable in thought and expression with Tagore's famous poem *The Gardener*. Claims of plagiarism rose immediately and this were to follow him for the rest of his life. Neruda mentioned that he had considered putting in an explanatory note recognizing that these two poems where paraphrases of Tagore's *The Gardener*.

Octavio Paz was of the view that it was not just the cultural and historical similarities between India and Latin America that led to the huge attention and admiration Tagore received in Latin America, but it was the sheer magic and charisma of Tagore's poetry. Paz explained it thus,

> The true explanation lies in the magnetic power of his poetry. The young men read his poems with the same fervour with which their grandfathers had, a hundred years back, read the great romantic poets. One example would be enough to convey an idea of the cult which surrounded his name. Around 1920 the writer Jose Vasconcelos, the founder of modern education in Mexico, decided to publish free editions of universal classics, and in that collection, he included an anthology of the Bengali poet alongside Plato, Dante, Cervantes, Goethe, Tolstoy…Through those books we Mexicans of our generation discovered that all great poets, although expressing themselves in separate languages and affirming different truths, spoke in a universal language... [Quote from *Los manuscritos de Tagore* by Octavio Paz, published in *El Tiempo* from Bogota on 2nd April 1967] Ibid.

Tagore's popularity in Chile had reached its zenith during 1915-1920. One of the foremost enthusiasts of Tagore in Chile during these five years was another Nobel Laureate and well-known poet, Gabriela Mistral. She had candidly mentioned that along with Dante, the Bible and the Russians Rabindranath Tagore had had crucial influence on her thought process and had played an instrumental role in shaping her psyche as a poet in the early phases. Tagore in fact had a very strong philosophical influence on Gabriela Mistral. She immediately took to the spirit of peace and the message of love that Tagore upheld so often in his poems, finding an assertion of her own hunger for the ultimate spiritual love. Tagore helped her envision God, the Divine and the universe, the cycle of life and death in a

completely new light which was in coherence with the ideals of Buddhism and Theosophy. (Kushari Dyson, 1996: 111-113)

She later participated in a collaboration that compiled some of Tagore's best poetry. When translating, Mistral added various layers of her own thought as a reaction to the anxiety of *The Gardener*. Tagore thus became a source of enthusiasm and inspiration for Pablo Neruda, Octavio Paz and Gabriela Mistral. They saw him as a philosophical source of inspiration and an exponent of novel literary aesthetics.

The list of admirers also includes the famous Argentine litterateur Jorge Luis Borges. In the initial phase his interest was less initiated by his own infatuation with the poet and more on the insistence of his literary companion Victoria Ocampo. However, there were certain basic differences that distinguished Borges from Tagore. Borges discovered mysticism of the human soul within duality, speed, and appropriateness. Nonetheless, he did pay attention to Tagore and his works. In fact, on more than one occasions these two geniuses met and conversed. He possibly had already read Tagore's works before meeting him at San Isidro while the latter was staying at Miralrio. When Borges wrote this particular piece, he was actively participating in a literary movement called Ultraismo in Spain. In the same year 1921, he came back to Buenos Aires and set up a literary movement by the same name. He further proclaimed the postulates of it in Nosotros, a literary magazine edited by Alfredo Bianchi. His primary thought was that a lyric should be concentrated with its original images, elements, and metonymy. These were the turbulent days of the early phases of Ultraismo in Argentina and Borges seemed to be inspired by Tagore's famous anthology *The Crescent Moon*. In 1935, in the 35th issue of the Cosmopolitan he published an article called *La Metafora*. The question around this publication was whether the experience of reading *The Crescent Moon* influenced Borges in any ways in writing this article and start the literary movement of Ultraismo. The moment he constructed the phrase ―our Rabindranath and Lugones, Borges had drawn Tagore closer to himself. These feelings were clandestine in his heart when in 1924 he met Rabindranath in person at Buenos Aires. Borges announced with considerable passion, Tagore's arrival in Buenos Aires in the November issue of the newspaper *Proa*, the essay was captioned *Arrival of Rabindranath*. However, another article that he wrote the same year titled *La Metafora* didn't reflect any fascination for the poet. It was a critique of Tagore's works which oscillate amidst hope and despair. However, nowhere in the article did he highlight any of these differences. He chose to

mention those differences much later in 1937 while reviewing Tagore's *Collected Poems and Plays* in the 11th edition of *El Hogar*.

It appeared that the thinker and essayist in Rabindranath Tagore appealed more to Borges rather than the poet and dramatist in him. When Borges met face to face with the thinker in Rabindranath, he found him a lot more relevant. Borges could immediately relate to the thinker Tagore and admired the visionary in him. In the May-June edition of *Su*r published in 1961, Borges published yet another essay on Tagore and his ideas on nationalism. It was dedicated to the poet on his birth centenary in 1961. Borges, irrespective of his differences of thought and opinion with Tagore in respect to his literary philosophies and artistic preferences did identify the indomitable power of Tagore's philosophical insights.

The Early Stages of Reception of Latin American Literatures in Bangla – till 1980

Almost two decades later this interaction stirred up ripples within the corpus of the native Bangla readership. To name the two most significant works in this context would be the efforts of the renowned Bengali poet Shankha Ghosh and the scholarly academician Ketaki Kushari Dyson. In August 1973, Ghosh published one of his most well-known works of translation with Dey's Publishing. During his time at the Iowa Writer's Workshop, he came across a curious book at the library. It was a Spanish language book on Rabindranath Tagore written by the Argentinian writer and poet Victoria Ocampo. Prior to this discovery Ghosh had come across a couple of essays by Ocampo on her interaction and her time spent with Tagore at Miralrio, San Isidro in 1924. This book that he had discovered was Ocampo's *Tagore en las Barrancas de San Isidro*. Discovering an entire book on Tagore, in Spanish by Victoria Ocampo was nothing short of a treasure. After checking with several scholars in Bengal he realised none there knew about the existence of any such book. Ghosh further clarified with Victoria Ocampo and was informed that it was not even translated into English. That is when Shankha Ghosh decided to translate it into Bangla. Ocampo instantly gave her permission but mentioned, "I should like the Bengali translation to follow exactly the Spanish version." (Ghosh, 1973: pp.7)

When Ghosh started translating this book, he didn't have a sound knowledge of the Spanish language. So, he took help from Prof. Richard Barker, a bilingual who taught both English and Spanish at Iowa. After Ghosh returned from Iowa his translation was already complete and it had been serially published in the magazine অনুক্ত. Later, under the supervision and insistence of the editor of অনুক্ত, Shri

Sunil Kumar Nandi, it was published in the form of a book by Dey's Publishing. Ghosh's translation of Victoria Ocampo's *Tagore en las Barrancas de San Isidro* informed the Bangla readers about the awe and overwhelm that Tagore had cast on Ocampo and the entire Latin American sub-continent. Ghosh also added a Foreword and an Introduction which analysed how Tagore the poet had been deeply influenced by his Argentine hostess Victoria Ocampo. How the serenity of his stay at Miralrio helped him re-gain the clarity of poetic thinking that the ailing poet was grappling with.

Time and again Tagore had talked of a 'বদিশেনী' in his songs and his poems, the idea of an anonymous lady love. Who was this 'বদিশেনী'? Did she have a name, an identity? We have for long sought the answers to these questions. Sometimes we thought it was a woman, at other times we thought she was just a figment of his poetic imagination. Undeniable is the fact that any feminine figure might have given him the impression of being the one who could lead him to ultimate truth. Hence, it was not unlikely that a song that he wrote in his youth, he might have dedicated it in his receding years to his Argentine hostess, a friend who gifted him a home away from home. And that is how Victoria Ocampo, without any conscious realization of the fact came to inspire Tagore in a big way. hypothesis I would like to draw here is that these early seeds were the initial steppingstones, the early connections between Latin American litterateurs and Bangla litterateurs. While they were reading each other's works they were also being influenced by each other's thoughts and that finally reflected in their respective works.

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MESSIANIC CONSCIOUSNESS IN IBSEN'S PLAY: *THE VIKINGS OF HELGELAND*

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Abstract: *Henrik Johan Ibsen, a Norwegian playwright of 19th century, is acclaimed by common consent of diverse critics to be the father of modern realistic drama. As a playwright of messianic consciousness, he brought about revolutionary transformation both in social structure of patriarchal society and dramatic techniques by rejecting the conventions of melodrama and sentimentalism of the preceding age. He has been upheld as the 'messiah' of the oppressed section of the society, particularly the female-folk whom he encouraged to rise against the long-held traditional gender roles of submissiveness and subjugation ascribed to them by patriarchal system of society. Before the discussion of the play* ***The Vikings of Helgeland,*** *a cursory attempt has also been made to trace back emerging consciousness among the female characters in his earlier plays– Catiline (1850), Lady Inger of Oestraat (1854), The Feast of Solhaug (1856) and Olaf Liljekrans (1857). The play, under consideration, is based on old Icelandic family saga but it has been dealt with from a different perspective i.e. suppression of women and a simultaneous Messianic Consciousness among them towards their independent existence.*

Key Words: *Messianic consciousness, iconoclast, patriarchy, subjugation, victimization, emancipation and material commodity.*

Henrik Ibsen is generally regarded as an iconoclast, social reformer and a moral aficionado with an admirable penetrating insight into the contemporary social problems. Ibsen's modernism is founded not only on his rejection of melodrama and sentimentalism of the preceding age but also on the projection of a kind of messianic consciousness in his plays. The first prerequisite of messianic consciousness is to effect a change in the long-held traditions in order to foster transformation in the life of human beings accordingly. The word 'messianic' has been derived from 'messiah' which stands for a person who conveys a new message to the community for its welfare. Messiah endeavors to set a new social order in order to make people free from the trammels of orthodox and conservative society, and to make them independent individuals capable to recognize and assert

their rights. As a messianic playwright Ibsen also brought about revolutionary changes in the social mindset through the message he conveyed in his plays. For the women-folk he was certainly a messiah who infused in them the spirit of messianic consciousness for their independent existence and emancipation from their slavish domestic drudgery that has been imposed on them by the patriarchal system of society. He had a mission with soaring ambition about which he told his sister Hedvig. His ambition was to reach, "the greatest and most perfect of all that could be attained in greatness and clarity." (Harald Beyer, 171) A man of multi-facet personality it is impossible to encapsulate Ibsen's genius into a single dimension. Charles Lyons describes him as "the realist, the iconoclast, the successful or failed idealist, the poet, the psychologist, the romantic, the anti-romantic." (4) Indeed, he was against all shams and worn-out traditions that constrict the free spirit of individuals. According to Arnold Hincliffe Ibsen, "is more concerned with destroying conventional lies and exorcizing the 'ghosts' of death truths; and most of all concerned to make people think and see for themselves." (64)

The play that is generally considered to be of the greatest social significance establishing Ibsen as a messianic playwright and the champion of women's lib is *A Doll's House* (1879) in which Nora, slamming door against her husband in search of self-entity, encouraged women-folk throughout the world to think and live for themselves. But *A Doll's House* is only the culmination of Ibsen's crusade to stir up women's consciousness because he had already depicted audacious and intrepid female characters in his early plays since *Catiline* (1850), his first play in which Furia flouts the rules ascribed to a vestal Virgin to take revenge on a man, her own lover who had ravished her sister. Harold Clurman therefore rightly says that Hiordis is "the first of (Ibsen's) problematic women of which Furia in *Catline* is the abstract prototype. Hiordis is the epitome of 'all the bold women who refused to live a tame life." (46) Though *Lady Inger of Oestraat* (1854), the first play written entirely in prose, deals with Norway's struggle for independence from Danish rule in the late middle ages, it has two strong women: Lady Inger with "the heart of man" and her daughter Eline with "wild spirit". They are of heroic stature and have power to lead humanity; and its protagonist Lady Inger convinces us that only a woman possesses 'the greatest power' in the society and without her co-operation a man can't 'fully realize his potentialities.' His next play *The Feast of Solhaug* (1856) has a married woman, dauntless Margit, who, distraught in loveless conjugal knot, nearly succeeds in poisoning her husband in pursuance of her volition to get her lover. In *Olaf Liljekrans* (1857) Alfhild, an old minstrel's daughter burns down a mansion of Lady Kirstin (her lover Olaf's mother) where

his marriage with another girl Ingborg was being held. She also protests against her father and dare follow her man, Olaf chosen by her own free will. Thus Ibsen's women (since his first play) don't condescend to accept traditional gender-role ascribed to them by patriarchy from the time immemorial. They initiate transformation in gender-bias social structure of patriarchal society for the amelioration of their deteriorating condition.

The play *The Vikings of Helgeland* (1858) belongs to Ibsen's first phase of dramatic career consisting of his early dramas written in verse and is modeled on ancient romantic historical tragedy and Norse saga. Like his other early dramas, he started writing *The Vikings of Helgeland* in verse but soon he turned to prose in the manner of sagas. Its plot is based on the *Volsung Saga* but Ibsen has produced in Hiordis a realistic version of the Valkyrie baffled by a dragon slayer. For the character of Hiordis he was also inspired by the character of Hallgerd – an illustrious, combative, and honor-driven non-mythological woman in *Njal's Saga.* Thus, Ibsen had already in his mind a model of an inexpugnable and indomitable female character for Hiordis whose craving for emancipated life can't be subdued. Harold Clurman rightly says that "Hiordis has a fiery temperament: daring and vindictive." (46) While discussing early plays of Henrik Ibsen, particularly his *The Vikings of Helgeland* Harald Beyer aptly observed, "In the world of the sagas he recognized his own ideals, the stubborn self-assertion, the vigorous and whole souled personalities, the indomitable will, the absolute demands on love." (P.175) This stubborn character is no other than Hiordis who, as a representative of Ibsen's ideals, shows her adamant will-power in the pursuance of her goal. In the end of the play she is constantly reminded of her child and husband by Sigurd but the humiliation meted out on her haunts her memory. She does what she decided to do.

The Vikings of Helgeland is set in the tenth century (about A.D. 933). Like his first play *Catiline* (1850), it is a blood-and-thunder melodrama, full of killing, implacable vengeance, mortal duels and fierce action and heroic conflict. But unlike his early plays it is written in prose; and the executor of vengeance and heroic deeds are not only men, as has been traditionally held, but also, as G.Wilson Knight rightly says, "a warrior woman Hiordis, armed, strong-souled, and ominous. Strife is her element." (10) Ibsen has infused in her the spirit of a virago, who is not going to take her fate for granted as pre-determined by men or gods. She is "a kind of Scandinavian Lady Macbeth – a proud, vengeful, bitter-tongued lady, who appears to possess precisely (those) qualities of masculine strength... and hardly any of (those) tenderer, more sympathetic attributes..." (Michael Egan: 405) Her defiant attitude is easily discernable in her argument against her foster-father.

She is well-aware of her rights and is not scared of anybody including even her father. Although she is brought up by Ornulf, she is not oblivious of her father who was slain by Ornulf, now her foster-father. The wounds of vengeance are still green in her memory. She is not going to take for granted her fate allotted by the patriarchal system of society. Traditionally ascribed submissive and obedient role of women is abhorrent to her. Very defiantly she says:

> **Hiordis.** "Nay, Ornulf, I know better what is fitting. If I am to be as Gunnar's leman – well and good, then must he be win my honour by his deeds – by deeds so mighty that my shame shall be shame no more! And thou, Ornulf, beware! Here our ways part, and from this day I shall make war upon thee and thine whensoever and wheresoever it may be; thou shall know no safety... Gunnar, we must gird ourselves for the fight. A famous deed didst thou achieve in Iceland, but greater deeds must here be done, if thou wouldst not have thy – thy leman shrink with shame from thee and from herself!" (pp. 13-14)

The family Norse saga presented in *The Vikings of Helgeland* is based on patriarchal norms and values where women are treated just like an inanimate object to be won for marriage. We "find in it abundance of valuable detail about early marriage-by-capture, the etiquette of such unions, the ransom to be paid to parents, and so forth." (Michael Egan: 410) Hiordis has lost her father in a duel with Ornuff who adopts her as a foster-daughter. She is wedded to Gunnar by fraud. The condtion of her marriage was: the man who would possess her had to slaughter a white bear which guarded her virgin bower; Sigurd, the Strong, accomplished the task, but his friend Gunnar took the credit by a private arrangement without Hiordis' knowledge and consequently carried Hiordis as a prize. Sigurd took Ornulf's real daughter Dagny, comparatively weak and docile woman. Thus, for men, like Sigurd and Gunnar, women are material things, just like gifts they win during their adventures in different countries and as soon as they win them, they leave Iceland with their possessions (Hiordis and Dagny). Ornulf happens to meet Sigurd and demands "three hundred pieces of silver" in compensation for taking off his daughter. The matter is settled between them, and peace is restored and thus, Dagny becomes a lawful possession of Sigurd in exchange of money. The women become a thing of bargain for men and have no say in the matter. The following conversation among Ornulf, Sigurd and Dagny reflects that a woman, like other material commodity, can be won or captured and can be exchanged by material value:

> **Ornulf**. "...Five winters ago came Sigurd and Gunnar Headman as Vikings to Iceland; they lay in harbor close under my homestead. Then Gunnar, by force and craft, carried away my foster-daughter, Hiordis; but thou, Sigurd, didst take Dagny, my own child, and sailed with her over the sea. For that thou art now doomed to pay three hundred pieces of silver, and thereby shall thy misdeed be atoned.
>
> **Sigurd**. Fair is thy judgement, Ornulf; the three hundred pieces will I pay, and add thereto a silken cloak fringed with gold. It is a gift from King Ethelstan of England, and better has no lcelander yet borne.
>
> **Dagny.** So be it, my brave husband; and my brave husband; and my father, I thank thee. Now at last is my mind at ease.
>
> *(She presses her father's and brother's hands and talks low to them.)*
>
> **Ornulf.** Then thus stands the treaty between us; and from this day shall Dagny be to the full as honourably regarded as though she had been lawfully betrothed to thee, with the good will of her kin." (6-7)

Women's victimization is ingrained in the conventions of patriarchal social system in which winning of women by fraud or by force is considered to be an honorable undertaking in keeping with manliness. Gunnar's and Sigurd's mission of life became consummated as soon as they won the women of their choice. Ornulf, the father of Hiordis and Dagny, sought Gunnar and Sigurd to bring back his daughters only because he was derided with bitter remarks by 'many honourable men' as Ornulf confesses "the talk fell upon the carrying-away of the women; scornful words they gave me, because I had let that wrong rest unavanged. (p.7) It was just to restore his manly self-respect that Ornulf set out to seek his daughters, not for their own sake. A woman's victimization is multi-facet from which she cannot break loose easily. How ironic it is that a woman forced into a loveless conjugal knot is stigmatized as a 'leman', a derogatory term for worthless creature. As Ornulf syas, "A woman wedded by force is lawfully no more than a leman." (13)

But Hiordis is self-conscious and acrobatic lady, and doesn't give in to live an obsequious life of a stereotypical housewife confined to the four-walls of domestic drudgery. She participates in all kinds of adventurous activities traditionally bestowed on men. She appears to be "*clad in black, wearing a kirtle, cloak, and hood... she herself carries a light spear.*" (11) She desires that her "name shall be heard over every land... in the sword-game will I stand by thy side; I will fare forth among thy warriors on the stormy Viking-raids." (48) She cherishes self-respect even at the cost of life. She says, "Life must take its chance; come what will. I had

levier die than save my life by shameful pacts." (12) Hiordis' father, Jokul "gave his children a wolf's heart to eat, that they might be fierce and fell; and Hiordis has surely had her share, that one can well see" (17) in her audacious actions. She belongs to 'the race of Jutuns' (The giants or Titans of Scandinavian mythology). She is too conscious of her self-respect to endure the humiliation meted out on her when Dagny exposes that it was not Gunnar but Sigurd who slew the bear in her bower and 'by fraud and false-hood' she was handed over by Sigurd to Gunnar into a deceitful marriage. She is not a simpleton type of woman who would sacrifice her life for the sake of man and crush her self-entity. She determines that:

> "Sigurd shall not live long to flout at me and thee (Gunnar)! (*Clenching her hands in convulsive rage*) With her – that simpleton – with her mayhap he is even now sitting alone, dallying, and laughing at us; speaking of the bitter wrong that was done me when in thy stead he bore me away; telling how he laughed over his guile as he stood in my dark bower, and I knew him not!... Sigurd and Dagny must die! I cannot breathe till they are gone!" (41)

In Act II of the play she fully expresses her pent up aspirations to her foster sister, Dagny. In connubial relationship with the passive Gunnar she feels like a caged bird fluttering for freedom as she tells Dagny, "cage an eagle and it will bite at the wires, be they of iron or of gold." (23) She wants to project her ambitions into her son, Egil by infusing in him the spirit of "the freeborn sons of mighty men." She says to Dagny, "I have heard of a queen that took her son and sewed his kirtle fast to his flesh, yet he never blinked an eye. (*With a look of cruelty.*) Dagny, that will I try with Egil!" (23) She desires to play the roles quite different from the ones ascribed to women by men from the time immemorial and thus tries to shatter patriarchal attitude towards women's role and to affect new and revolutionary phase of women's independent choice. She thinks that every role traditionally assigned to men is possible for women but Dagny, representing conventional submissive type of woman who has internalized patriarchal ideology, can't imagine playing the role that has been declared to be anathema to women. But Hiordis boldly asserts, "A woman, a woman, – who knows what a woman may do!" (24)

Unlike traditional women, who are indifferent to heroic actions, she enjoys hearing and participating in heroic exploits. She emerges stronger than any man in the play including the mightiest Sigurd whom she instigates to rise against Erik, the king of Norway and to hold 'the throne of Harfager.' Later she shoots him with the arrows woven of her hair to make him her own for good but Sigurd deceives her once again by converting himself into a 'Christian man' under the influence of King

Aethelstan, thus revealing his cowardice but Hiordis, instead of following him, jumps off the high cliff and swims alone to Valhalla, (Norse mythology) the hall in which the souls of heroes slain in the battle are received by Odin, and proves herself to be more courageous. When she presses her for the heroic death, he is aghast of her:

> **"Sigurd.** (Shrinking back). Hiordis, Hiordis – I fear thee.
>
> **Hiordis.** (not heeding him). Our fate no power can alter now! Oh, 'tis better so than if thou hadst wedded me here in this life – if I had in thy homestead weaving linen and wool for thee and bearing thee children – pah!" (59)

She does not care for her husband and child. When Sigurd tells her about her husband, she says, "What care I! A better husband shall I follow home this night! . . . the old gods are strong no longer; – they sleep, they sit half shadow-high." (60) She is not that type of women who are lost somewhere in bearing and rearing children. She has her own will to follow. This message she directly or indirectly imparts to other people, particularly the female-folk. Like a messiah she teaches them the lesson of free-thinking and independent life. She takes the decision of her life in her own hands, not in the hands of her male counterparts – her father, lover or husband. Ibsen has given this message in his other plays as well. In the play *Hedda Gabler* the eponymous heroine prefers suicide to surrender before the man who tries to manipulate her sexually. Nora Helmer in the play *A Doll's House* leaves her home, children and husband in pursuance of her independent life. Ibsen was a non-conformist and this spirit runs through his plays, particularly in the female characters. Nora Helmer in *A Doll's House*, Ellida Wangel in *The Lady from the Sea* and Hedda Gabler in the play after her name are initially trapped in the intricacies of the male-dominated world but they protested against the patriarchal system of society and finally chose their own way of life because they had messianic consciousness in them. They have at last decided to become responsible and emancipated human beings who are no longer dependent on their male counterparts but on their own. To prove his point Ibsen has depicted both types of female characters – first types who are submissive and obedient, and the second ones who, with a spirit of consciousness, pretested against the status quo and emerged from the quagmire of subjugation. Through the characters of first type Ibsen tries to prove that if a female concedes to their traditional roles of obedience, they will have to undergo the exploitation at the hands of their male counterparts in various forms. The female protagonist of the play ***Ghosts*** Mrs. Alving was brought up as a dutiful and obedient daughter and then she was married against her choice

to a debauch and lecherous Mr. Alving. Being fed up of the ill treatment of her husband, she ran to her former lover Pastor Manders who forced her to follow the sanctity of matrimonial alliance. He forced her to go back, as a dutiful and obedient wife, to her husband forever. Thus, throughout her life Mrs. Alving underwent different kinds of exploitation and humiliation at the hands of her male counterparts, first her father and then her cruel husband and lover. Other examples being of Thea in ***Hedda Gabler,*** a weak and submissive character who has a relation of servitude with her male counterparts, first with Lovborg and then withTesman while Hedda prefers death to the life of servitude to man. Asta and Rita Allmers in ***Little Eyolf*** (1894), Aline and Hilda in ***Master Builder*** (1892) are respectively weak and strong female characters. Women of first category have adjusted themselves with their traditional marginalised situation while those of second category have rebelled against the traditional norms, values and roles normally prescribed for women for centuries. Ibsen's focus was on the second types of women. Like Nora Helmer, Ellida Wangel and Hedda Gabler; Hiordis proved herself to be an independent entity.

Like Aurelia and Furia, a contrasting couple in *Catiline,* one gentle and compassionate while the other (Furia) vindictively fierce, Dagny and Hiordis are similarly contrasting figures portrayed by Ibsen in *The Vikings;* former an embodiment of female virtues of submissiveness, obedience and sacrifice, dependent on men-folk for her existence while Hiordis, like Furia, gives the message of independence and emancipation. She does not treat the beaten path of female virtues and shows that fierce and heroic action is not the prerogative of man alone but also that of a woman who, like any man, can also undertake adventurous life. Ibsen presents realistic picture of the condition of women in society where both types of women are found. Submissive type of women are better appreciated and easily accepted by men but Ibsen, an iconoclast, prefers the women who are conscious of their right and independent existence. Instead of Aurelia and Dagny he highlights the picture of Furia and Hiordis who are the prototypes of women's autonomy and self-sufficiency.

Comparing the play with Milliam Morris' *The Lovers of Gudrun* in *The Earthly Paradise (Vol. III)* Michael Egan says:

> "Subject is much the same, albeit that instead of Gudrun with her two lovers, Kiartan and Bodli, we have as heroine Hiordis in a similar relation to Gunnar and Sigurd. But in either case, the men and women with whom we deal are of the same build. They are those who are wont to carry their lives in their hands, accustomed to danger, quick to anger, bitter in

> revenge, loving fiercely, hating with similar ardour, strong and uncomplaining, passionate, yet full of a certain antique nobility of soul. They accept their fate without demur . . . and are as stormy in their affections as in the existence that they have chosen for themselves." (407)

Sometimes Hiordis seems to be an immitigable and relentless blood sucker who, like Lady Macbeth, instigates Gunnar to slay the young Thorolf, the son of Ornulf, her foster father in revenge for the supposed murder of their only son Egil by Ornulf, and is responsible for so much blood-shed and mortal conflict in the play. But her so called blood-thirsty nature is nurtured in her due to the gender-dichotomy inherent in the social structure of male-dominated society: her father is murdered in a duel by Ornulf and she is deceived by both Sigurd and Gunnar into a loveless and deceitful marriage with Gunnar. The humiliation wrought on her amounted to the violation of her self-hood and mockery of her wishes. For men any woman can replace any other, women are women, alike and interchangeable. Despite this anguish and mortification, she is expected to be submissive; passive and obedient woman and her craving for power is considered to be an anathema for woman. She is baffled with following the patriarchal code of conduct held to be sacred from the ancient time. This is the situation that led J.S. Mill to believe that a female desire for power is a psychic consequence of the domination/submission model of marriage. He notes:

> "An active and energetic mind, if denied liberty, will seek for power: refused the command of itself, it will assert its personality by attempting to control others. To allow to any human being no existence of their own but what depends on others, is giving far too high a premium on others to their purposes. Where liberty cannot be hoped for, and power can, power becomes the grand object of human desire." (578)

Ibsen was an iconoclast who broke a new path and awakened the people of contemporary society to rise against the age-old institutions and irrational ideology that were gnawing into the fabric of society. He was not comfortable with status quo. He had a mission to make healthy changes in the patriarchal structure of society. Harald Beyer made an appropriate analysis of his non-conformist nature:

> "He (Ibsen) felt as if he were at war with the small-town society around him. He wrote epigrams about the local citizens, expressed himself paradoxically and self-confidently about the problems of his time, and irritated his listeners by expressing scorn of the monarchy, of religion, and marriage. He called himself a freethinker and an adherent of Voltaire." (p. 172)

Ibsen has accentuated the portrayal of Hiordis as having ascendant emplacement over and above all male characters in the play in order to usher in an era of women's consciousness towards their independent individualism. He has advocated for their fissiparous entity divorced from parasitical subsistence on men. Hiordis, along with her posterity in Ibsen's subsequent realistic plays, is the drumbeater for women's renaissance who affected a revolutionary transformation in their lives. She superseded the earlier women in asserting audaciously her individual non-parasitic identity. The seed of Ibsen's later emancipated women can be traced back to this venturesome Hiordis. She ignites the flame of messianic consciousness that burns so brightly in his forthcoming social plays.

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HYPERREALITY AND MEDIA PRETENSES IN DIJO JOSE ANTONY'S FILM *JANA GANA MANA*

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Abstract*: Film as a visual art has the propensity to influence a viewer's ideologies. It opens up a new vista for the audience whose mind would spontaneously grasp more than the peripheral level meanings of this visual text. The hitherto notions of a person regarding any of the facets of social, cultural or political spheres may also be thus challenged. Director Dijo Jose Antony's Malayalam movie Jana Gana Mana (2022) is one such film that does the same. The film revolves around the death of a professor named Saba Mariam and details how the real culprits of her murder are brought before justice. Jana Gana Mana pinpoints at the hypocritical stances of media and the double standards employed by those in power.The discourses of media hegemony and hyperreality in this context highlights the role of the media in shaping public consciousness and the fact that the public consciousness can even influence the constitutional systems. The problem of caste and communal based discrimination faced by students in the top-tier Indian universities has also been discussed in this film.The film which is more than the hackneyed whodunnit stories includes threads from real life incidents and thus evokes the need to recognize certain subtle yet polysemic socio-cultural meanings that has been so far unnoticed by the common man.*

Keywords*: Film, Visual text, Hyperreality, Media hegemony, Agenda setting, Double standards, Caste discrimination, Constitutional ideals.*

Introduction

"Film as dream, film as music. No form of art goes beyond ordinary consciousness as film does, straight to our emotions, deep into the twilight room of the soul" (Bergman 41). As a mode of mass communication, the universal appeal of motion pictures is beyond dispute. The wide acclamation received for the film Jana Gana Mana itself illustrates the evocative nature of this medium. The phrase 'Jana Gana Mana' taken from the national anthem of India roughly translates as 'the minds of

the people'. The film talks about certain normalised Machiavellian attitudes and mindsets of the citizens of the Republic of India.

The story opens on 10th August 2019 when the nation awakes to the news of the death of a Professor named Saba Mariam of Central University Ramanagara, Karnataka.The character of Saba is played by Malayalam actress Mamta Mohandas. According to the media reports, she was raped and burnt to death on the night of 9th August. The professor's death sent shock waves across the nation and the event gathered national coverage within a short span of time. Saba was an amiable and dedicated teacher who in once told her mother "My students will be my signature", showing the warmth she shared with her students. Saba's murder brought about public outcries, students protest and social media campaigns demanding justice for her death. Channel debates and newspaper reports cover this sensational topic round-the-clock. It is at this juncture that the Assistant Commissioner of Police Mr.Sajjan Kumar gets appointed as the investigating officer of Ramanagara rape and murder case. The role of Sajjan Kumar ACP is played by the talented actor Suraj Venjaramood. Sajjan is a dutiful police officer who stands with the protestors and Saba's family and assures them of fair justice. He meticulously carries out the investigation which leads him to four men, who are already blacklisted in the police files for petty crimes. Sajjan along with his investigating team carries out an exhaustive operation to hunt them down, successfully arrests and interrogates them. These four men are backed by the political parties and as a result Sajjan gets relieved from the investigation team. Before relieving he is asked to shift the culprits to a different police station for their security. On the way he recollects his investigating days till date and reality sinks in him that even after so much input he could not bring this case to any point. At this point, his conscience comes to the act. In the name of police encounter, he shoots all the four men. Subsequently, police reports were made that the four culprits tried to snatch the guns and escape which caused the police to retaliate and fire at them.

Celebrities, bureaucrats, common people and everyone else is in support of the Ramanagara encounter. Nation-wide there were celebrations for the people found that justice was finally delivered. Some express the legality behind this encounter and National Humans Right Commission files a complaint against Sajjan. Sajjan is asked to present before the court and everyone stands for Sajjan since they think that the 'instant justice' given by him to the four culprits was the most appropriate and deserving one. When the first part ends, we see the entry of advocate Aravind Swaminathan, the defence attorney. It is played by the eminent Malayalam actor

Prithviraj Sukumaran. Advocate Aravind's entry and consequent questioning in the court room makes everyone uncomfortable except Sajjan who sits blank and emotionless. One could see how the case unfolds as the trial proceeds. When Aravind's in-depth questioning of Saba's mother that whether there is any evidence that proves Saba being raped, all she could say was – "It was in the media". Aravind raises several questions to a couple of other people as well and through this brings out some relevant points here. "Why is some news sensational, just because it is in the national headlines? Who made Saba's death a national news and trending?"

Aravind brings in the story of Vidya, a research scholar from the Central University of Ramanagara who had to face discrimination from her thesis advisor Professor Vydarshan. She was subjected to harassment on the basis of her caste and creed. Vidya commits suicide and it is Saba who comes to know all this before Vidya's demise. She moves to the higher authorities for justice and Prof. Vydarshan, who comes to know of this, kills her in a hit and run. Aravind unveils the chief master brain behind the plot of turning a normal hit and run case into a national news. It was Sajjan who advised the chief minister Nageswara Rao who was sure to lose in the next elections to use Saba's death as the trump card as part of gaining public support. The fake encounter just caused the lives of four men who were otherwise unrelated to this case. Sajjan gets arrested and the audience is taken aback to know that it was Sajjan, out of guilt has submitted all the evidence to the defence attorney considering it as a path of atonement. Advocate Aravind too has a background story. He was an IPS officer who had to face tremendous turmoil in his professional life due to the same political system and had lost his career and personal life in the process. He makes a comeback to his legal profession and through this case makes a victorious episode. At the end of this movie, we see Aravind conversing with the minister. As the way Aravind talks, things are sure not to be in the minister's favour anymore. Aravind asks the minister to wait for whatever future has in store for him, thus hinting the audience a possible sequel for this movie.

Methodology and discussion

David L Altheide in his work Media Hegemony: A Failure of Perspective (1984) describes media hegemony as the dominance of a particular state of life and beliefs and to the manner in which that central idea of reality is scattered all over the public as well as private aspects of social life. This form of hegemony is nothing but the buttressing of the capitalist system.In mass media, sensationalism is a devious tactic used by the influential people in media. Jean Baudrillard's

postmodern semiotic notion of hyperreality appears to be appropriate in the context of analysing this work. Baudrillard discusses this concept in his work Simulacra and Simulation (1981). He defined hyperreality as *the creation by replicas of a real without cause or authenticity.*

The perceptions most central to hyperreality are those of simulation and the simulacrum, first theorized by Jean Baudrillard. The two expressions are distinct units having association with Baudrillard's idea of hyperreality. Simulation is typified by the condition in which it is hard to distinguish the boundaries between reality and representation as there is no vivid suggestion of when the former ends and latter commences. Baudrillard proposes that simulation not happens in a physical space anymore, sorted by physical bounds. It takes place within us for example the technological simulations. The simulacrum is often explained as a reproduction of something unreal:

> No more mirror of being and appearances, of the real and its concept; no more imaginary coextensivity: rather, genetic miniaturization is the dimension of simulation. The real is produced from miniaturized units, from matrices, memory banks and command models - and with these it can be reproduced an indefinite number of times. It no longer has to be rational, since it is no longer measured against some ideal or negative instance. It is nothing more than operational. In fact, since it is no longer enveloped by an imaginary, it is no longer real at all. It is a hyperreal: the product of an irradiating synthesis of combinatory models in a hyperspace without atmosphere (Baudrillard, p167).

Baudrillard argues that though a replica, a simulacrum becomes truth in its own right. He formed four phases of reproduction. They are:-"(1) basic reproduction of reality, (2) distortion of reality; (3) fabrication of reality (where there is no original) and (4) simulacrum.

Adverse impacts of this ideology of hyperreality can be seen in the media. The way an individual experiences life and truth is influenced by this. Agenda setting theory, as one of the media effects theory must also be brought in this context. The theory as developed by Dr.Max McCombs and Dr. Donald Shaw(2002), advocates that media to a great extent manipulates its audience by inculcating what they must think about rather than what they should really think. That is, if a news item is covered regularly and notably, the audience will consider the subject matter as significant. The above detailed theories are different yet the same in its principles and therefore becomes pivotal in reading the film based on its premises.

Advocate Aravind Swaminathan's detailed interrogation raises several questions on the viewers' mind. He begins with the concept of 'Instant Justice'. The peculiarity that Aravind found in Saba's case was that the four culprits were shot dead much before they were even produced in the court. The unusual hurry in this encounter directs to certain sly motives of those in power. On the other hand, Saba was murdered on the early morning of 10th August. But much before her post mortem results came, within one hour of her death, newspapers published with conviction that she was raped and killed. When asked for the reality behind this news, if all the people concerned with this case could say was "It was in the media", then Aravind brings forth some questions that gives the audience pretty much to contemplate. Aravind says, "Does the media exist for showing the truth or is what the media shows is the truth? If media gives the verdict, police does the justice then why the law and order should exists"?

The distortion of reality and simulacrum of Saba's death leads multitudes across the nation to devour the news at its face value rather than thinking of "the real".When the four men were chosen for this crime, their identity became the key factor for the politics of discrimination and hate. Those four men were nothing but the scapegoats of a larger political system. One is reminded of 2019 Hyderabad gang rape and murder case of a twenty-six-year-old veterinarian. Four men were arrested and later the culprits were shot in an encounter. The Supreme Court bench on this case, concluded that the police deliberately fired at them without any provocation. This incident takes after the one detailed in the film. The way hegemonic structures functions for the advantage of dominant class is being underlined here. An execrable consequence of such a state of affairs is the prevalence of the cult of violence in campuses. These have been perpetuated by a variety of causes from the most barbarous ragging to instigations such as caste/community hatred, political conflicts as well as unrequited love-which all culminate in fatal wounding and coldblooded murders, as a gnawing ignominy to the very objective of education.

Caste as a concept is nothing but a sense of belonging to a group, offered by one's birth. But even in the 21st century, the atrocities that happen based on this structure is innumerable. Institutional murders like that of the girl Vidya in the film, nowadays happen almost everywhere in India. When students are being discriminated on the basis of their caste and creed, they are being denied their fundamental rights and eventually their individuality gets crushed. They are pushed to a point where they have to quit their dreams and life forever. Suicide cases of Rohit Vemula, Fatima Latheef, Payal Tadvi etc are some of the students who gave

up their life owing to the indignities they had to face. Though Article 15 of the Constitution of India assures the prohibition based on discrimination, one still needs to double check how far it is being implemented especially at the top level centres of education, which are supposed to be the inculcators as well as guardians of all great human values. Again, this kind of a state of affairs may be seen as symptomatic of the post-truth world, where "alternative facts" replace actual facts and feelings have more weight than evidence, as theorized by critics like Lee McIntyre (2018), also in conjunction with postmodernism. It is a condition in which there is the assertion of ideological supremacy by which its practitioners try to compel someone to believe something regardless of the evidence.

Conclusion

As the new media technologies and the media productions develop, so does this impact of hyperreality on a majority of the mass media industry which thrives on this notion of mass impact. The elitist media culture pretends to present the reality, but in fact leads people to a hyperreal world where they either ingest the simulation of reality provided to them or confusingly grope for it. The social relevance of the subject matter in the film makes it inexorable from discussing, as it has crucially to do with the shaping of viewers' ideology. The film thus stimulates an average person to take an alternate perspective on the centers of power and society at large, and the way their interplay is involved in different guises of manipulation. It prompts them to think twice before assimilating everything that is being presented to them which otherwise, overtime, would ultimately lead towards the ruination of one's self and character. The hypocritical stance of the media and the double standards employed by those in power are extremely alarming, especially when viewed against the constitutional ideals, the very bedrock of a body politic, viz. the nation. The film very subtly and quite incisively contextualizes the role of the media in shaping public consciousness, and demonstrates how the discourses of media hegemony and hyperreality contribute to the production of public consciousness in opposition to the constitutional/ political systems as the film's polysemic title amply make out, quite wryly as a bitter comment on the much professed valorizations on democracy. The problem of caste and communal based discrimination faced by students as well as faculty in the top-tier Indian universities has also been projected for a conscientious diagnosis in terms of the rhetoric on justice and equality.

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GENDER AND ECOLOGY: A SELECTED READING OF TEMSULA AO'S *LABURNUM FOR MY HEAD*

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Abstract: *With the increased intersection between ecological and feminist studies in the recent decades, several Northeast writers like Temsula Ao have attempted to trace the biopower politics by localizing femininity to nature and naturalness in women through the nature-women/culture-men binary. In this, women and nature's experience, struggles and oppressions are often linked together to provide a better representation to both the causes of feminism and ecocriticism. However, such a stance has been attacked by several critics for it continues to engage the essential binaries endorsed by patriarchy and anthropocentrism.*

Keeping these ideas in consideration, the article shall explore the politics of gendered nature through the selected writings of Temsula Ao's Laburnum for My Head. For this purpose, the story of "Laburnum for my Head" shall highlight the concept of ecofeminism while the following story titled "Death of a Hunter" shall engage in the idea in the ecomasculinism. With both the narratives providing different undertone to the gendered response to the environment, we shall be able to trace their bio-power politics commissioned by patriarchy and anthropocentrism in the communities of the Northeast in the Anthropocenean; so as to better direct our efforts to the ongoing environmental catastrophes.

Keywords: *Anthropocentrism, Patriarchy, Ecocriticism, Ecofeminism, Northeast, Gender, Ecomasculinism, Anthropocene*

As the Anthropocenean period has witnessed an unprecedented rate of environmental calamities, there has an increased questioning of the social and biopower politics in the construction of nature as a cultural idea and how such a structural manifestation (re)shaped the complex relations of humans and the environment. Such an exercise in academic world has resulted in the 'greening' of literary and theoretical efforts which have consequently paved way for new research areas. To this end, ecocriticism has often been coupled with feminism and gender studies to investigate the reductionism and marginality of women and nature by patriarchy. This power contestation and fixation seems to have been reiterated by the culture/nature and Man-culture/woman-nature binaries which had been formulated by the ideologies of humanism, anthropocentrism, sexism, imperialism and speciesism; all of which have been formulated by the elites white

Man of the West; to strategically misrepresent nature for attaining the singular benefits of Man. Recognizing the drawbacks of such a lopsided interrogation of gendered nature, the 1970s witnessed dialogic intervention between nature and feminism under the approach of ecofeminism; to understand and better direct the ongoing environmental and gender concerns. This collaboration between the two approaches seems to have been a result of the similar grounds of oppressions, discriminations, fixation and abuses; which has made eco-activists and feminists sympathizers of each other. To this end, the year 1991 witnessed a remarkable event in Miami that saw a global congregation of several influential women activists that deliberated over many serious global concerns like ecological destruction, world hunger, development, population and gender abuses. This gathering has often been considered as the turning point of ecofeminism, as the members realized the 'dying' health of the planet which was "at a turning point, and women's efforts are critical at this time" (Gaard 3). In fact, ecofeminists through their constant and continual references between nature and women have attempted to explore the contemporary crisis of the Anthropocene.

Despite the genuinity in their efforts, ecofeminist through their restrictive perspective of categorizing women as nature; had not only limited both their scope for identifications, representations and social mobility but also justified their abuses and oppression. In fact, ecofeminist consider that the misrepresentations and discriminations of women are connected to the misrepresentations and manhandling of the ecosystem. Working within this codification, contemporary ecofeminist not only seek to understand the dynamism of women and nature as fellow-beings but also aims to dismantle the dualism of culture/nature and Man-culture/women-nature which for them; have been a source of socio-environmental tension throughout history. Keeping this in consideration, ecofeminism has grown to have become a ground for resistance and defiance that seeks to spread social and ecological awareness, solidarity, activism and emancipation. To this end, "ecofeminism call[ed] for an end to all oppressions, arguing that no attempt to liberate women (or any other oppressed group) will be successful without an equal attempt to liberate nature" (Gaard 1). In this context, the approach does not simply appear as a singular movement; instead it has become another major reason for mass appeal and application throughout contemporary discourses.

Understanding the growing relevance of this collaborative of feminism and ecocriticism, it becomes imperative to understand the basic conception of the ecofeminism, a term that was first used by Francoise D' Eaubonne in her book, *Le Feminisme ou la Mort* (1974) which gained popular throughout the several social

and ecological protests and activities of the late 1970s and the early 1980s (Mies and Shiva 13). Taking this idea forward, Ynestra King further defined and explored the approach in her famous essay, the "Eco-feminist Imperative" (1983) where she attempted to connect the theory and practice of ecofeminism. In it, ecofeminism had been stationed as an offshoot of the Third wave feminism that was predominately anti-essentialist that furthered resistance and defiance of women towards the structured culture, language and commercial developments that were commissioned by patriarchy. For them, these social mechanisms reflect the contestation of bio-power through patriarchy that not only stereotyped, marginalized and discriminated against women and nature but also generalized and legitimized them into an irrelevant, secondary and passive category that needs to be domesticated, controlled and (ab)used for the singular benefits of men. To this end, ecofeminists consider both 'women' and 'nature' as a cultural discourse of sexism, androcentrism, naturism, anthropocentrism and patriarchy. While agreeing the basic framework of ecofeminism, Carolyn Merchant in her essay, "Female and Nature" (2015) also highlighted that the social structures of mankind have not *always* been patriarchal. To this end, she stated that early societies were predominately matrilineal wherein they regarded nature as a living organism. Such an attitude coupled with the idea of 'Mother Nature', made the matrilineal communities live a social structure that not only made them admire, revere and celebrate nature but also made them stewards of nature as they realized their interconnectedness and interdependence with nature for their survival and sustenance. Such a lifestyle maintained humans' connection and closeness towards nature; which subsequently generated their instincts of conservation of nature. However, it would be misleading to state of a complete absence of anti-environmental practices among these communities as their men engaged in anthropocentric activities such as hunting, sporting, mining, farming and deforestation that subsequently developed an anti-natural instinct among them which accelerated through the periods of Renaissance, Enlightenment and Industrialization that emphasized on the idea of development and modernism which curtailed and alienated humans relationship with nature.

Such a tendency reduced the conception of nature (like women) which now stood both opposite and outside culture. This was because culture; as a social construct has largely been considered as a male territory; an idea that was generated through the dualism of man/women, culture/nature and men-culture/women-nature. In these polarized equations of bio-power politics, women and nature have been reduced as "subordinate and essentially passive [as they] nurture but do not control or exhibit disruptive passion" (Merchant 14). This reduction of nature and women have been

maintained by cultural, literary and theoretical references like 'fertile land', 'Mother Earth', 'virgin lands'; that have subsequently institutionalised the power of patriarchal forces and its cultural agencies and discourses. In fact such implications have not only feminised nature but also naturalised women into a protectress, provider and nurturer. Within this context, both women and nature have been relegated as secondary *presence* with instrumental values; while man and culture are identified as a superior *presence* with intrinsic values; and whose desires, abuses and oppressions are justified towards woman and nature (Clark 117-118).

Following this trend, several Northeast Indian writers have attempted to explore these ecofeminist claims in their culture, literature and tribalism. In this attempt, literatures from the Northeast have often highlighted a nature-centric bifurcation of their culture that were mainly animist, agrarian, egalitarian, totemic, primitive and tribal. Such a social structure advocated for a general sense of tolerance, reverence, co-existence, stewardship and solidarity between the indigenous people and their regional landscape; a cultural stance which stood in stark distinction from the socio-political fabric of the mainstream India. In fact, these attributes attached to the Northeast have added a unique identity to the tribal communities that have been closely knit together with their indigenous traditions, oral narratives and (bio)regionalism. Exploring the uniqueness of the socio-environmental mechanism prevalent in the Northeast, several contemporary writers like Temsula Ao, Easterine Kire, Janice Pariat, Dhruba Hazarika, Jahnavi Barua, Indira Goswami; Homen Borgohain, Lakhinandan Bora, Saurabh Kumar Chaliha, Arupa Patangia Kalita, Desmond Kharmawphlang, Robin S. Ngangom and Mona Zote; have attempted to mobilize the social and literary narratives from this region to the mainstream India.

Keeping these ideas in consideration, the article shall attempt to explore several concerns of sexism and ecocriticism through the application of the concept of ecofeminism and ecomasculinism in the selected writings of Temsula Ao's *Laburnum for my Head* (2009). To this end, the article shall limit its close reading to the first story titled "Laburnum for my Head" which highlights the concept of ecofeminism; along with the following story titled "Death of a Hunter" which; while engaging with the politics of gendered nature hints to the idea of ecomasculinism. In this regard, both the narratives have a different undertone; with each emphasizing on the different interpretation and interaction of nature as shaped by gender politics. In fact, both the narratives also attempted to explore the dualism and bio-power politics that reinforced the mechanism of "feminizing nature and

naturalizing or animalizing women" which thereafter justified "the domination of women, animals, and the earth" by androcentric agencies (Gaard 5). This idea was investigated in the first story of the collection "Laburnum for My Head", where Ao attempted to explore the nature-women association through the central character Lentina and her innate "desire to have some laburnum bushes in her garden" as she associated 'femininity' to them unlike the brazen "gulmohars with their orange and dark pink blossoms". This desire grew within Lentina as she believed that the laburnum "displays nothing that man has improvised", thereby locating the laburnum tree as the "only nature, [which] does not possess any script, abides there: *she* only owns the seasons". In her admiration for the laburnum, Lentina planted its saplings in her residential premises which; when uprooted by the new gardener "along with the weeds growing around them"; made Lentina extremely anxious, helpless and heartbroken (emphasis added) (Ao 2-3). This initial episode in the story, "Laburnum for My Head" highlighted the social negligence of patriarchy towards women and environmental concerns, welfare and consideration. In a similar stance, it has often been noted that the socio-environmental history has largely been uprooted sexist and ecological struggles as well as representations; as it had mainly been recorded and narrated by Man to suit their androcentric purposes.

Following the failure of the first laburnum sapling by Lentina, she again expressed shock, anxiety, hopelessness and sadness; as her second sapling of the laburnum were consumed by the stray cows of her neighbourhood. Adding to sexist rhetoric of the first incident, this episode highlighted how both women and nature have often acted as social agencies to justify the bio-power contestation of culture and man. Such a framework not only reinforced stereotyping, discriminations and oppressions of women and nature by culture and men but also silenced and diminished the liberating efforts of the marginalized women and nature. Following this, Lentina's third attempt of the laburnum sapling was also spoiled by the DDT that was sprayed by the Health Department. In this incident, most of Lentina's garden flowers including her beloved laburnum got "withered and died" (Ao 3). Like the previous failures of the laburnum saplings, Lentina again for and with the laburnum. While this episode devastated Lentina, it also opened pertinent question on how chemical interventions of the environment is drastically altering the 'first nature' into an anthropocentrically scaled 'second nature' which seems to be less stable, regenerative and sustainable. Addressing this ecological concern, several ecofeminists like Rachel Carson, Vandana Shiva, Wangari Maathai, Ynestra King, Judith Plant, Irene Diamond Maria Mies and Gloria Orenstein; have explicitly interrogated the concept of 'second' nature as a by-product of imperialism and

capitalism, scientific and industrial advancements, urbanism and high modernism, development and globalization which had been culturally instilled by patriarchy.

Following this, capitalist-patriarchy have often reduced women and nature outside and opposite the culture-man binary; an idea which could be explored through the unconventional yearning of Lentina for the "strange beauty" of the laburnum, which was seen as an "unhealthy fetish" by her own family (Ao 3). This insensitivity shown towards Lentina highlights the lack of awareness and solidarity by patriarchy towards women's yearning and hopes. Such a structural neglect has frequently mobilized woman to move away from culture and towards nature. While they may seek for seclusion and hope in nature; such an act could also be seen as a feat for resistance and defiance to the oppressions, discrimination and marginalization by women; as against patriarchy and anthropocentrism. In this regard, the laburnum tree could be seen as a miniature representation of the environment which acted as a source of hope, peace and self discovery for Lentina. Such a similar pro-ecological attitude among fictionalized women had also been portrayed by Edna Pontellier in Kate Chopin's *The Awakening* (1899), Nanda Kaul in Anita Desai's *Fire on the Mountain* (1977), Maya in Anuradha Roy's *The Folded Earth* (2011) and Chanda Devi in Shubhangi Swarup's *Latitude of Longing* (2018); all of which reiterates the closeness of women with nature; which they often saw as an agency for their self-cultivation and self-discovery.

Toward this claim, Lentina experienced an "epiphanic sensation" at the funeral of her husband; an act which subsequently resulted in her social defiance to have a cemented headstone over her own graveyard (Ao 4). Instead, she insisted for a laburnum tree as her headstone for her grave. This realization seems significant as she associated her identity, 'story', life and death with nature and not art, culture and literature; which have fundamentally been seen as a male domain to exercise structural power. Following her epiphany, Lentina decided to plant her laburnum tree on the cemetery premise which she had purchased from Khalong as a business investment that provided Lentina; her own space at death that she was denied throughout her social life. Towards this end, she also negotiated with the Town Committee that her donation of the cemetery will be based on the condition that "there will nothing but beautiful trees over my grave" (Ao 9). However, Lentina hid these developments from her family; for she knew that they will not understand, appreciate and accept her decisions. Instead, she took her driver Mapu, who was also her "ever-faithful friend" and confidant to monitor the daily developments of her laburnum; which he does both dutifully and respectfully (Ao 14). This reconfirms Greta Garrad's idea that woman alone cannot protect, save

and regenerate the environment without "the efforts of men" (5). Unlike Mapu, her sons considered this secret plan of Lentina as a "crazy" idea; as they felt upset for not been involved in the decision (Ao 10). This attitude by her sons highlights the innate influence of patriarchy in our society. Unmoved by their accusations, Lentina became more vocal, stable, resilient and public; as she started to manage and make business decisions on her own through professionalism and entrepreneurship. This shift in her personality added a "new spirit" and dimension to her identity (Ao 15). These new personal attributes of Lentina further fuelled her motivation and "will to live where food and medicines seemed to have failed" to treat her illness. In fact, her gradual growth of self-cultivation and self-discovery was largely influenced by her undying passion and hope for the laburnum tree which was eventually realized, acknowledged and respected by her family. Following this, her sons "began to ask for her advice on business and family matters", a situation that never happened while her husband was alive (Ao 15). In her closeness to nature, Lentina not only healed physically, emotionally and spiritually but also attained the economic, social and filial stability. In fact, it was "not only Lentina, but the entire family, [that] was heading towards a healing that was more than physical" through the laburnum that was initially generated by Lentina (Ao 15). This situation was not only followed by a gradual reduction of tension within in the family but also resulted in the shift of power commissioned by patriarchy. Caught in this new situation, the family along with Lentina expressed a new sense of shared responsibility, equality and dignity. Amidst the changing filial relationship and the recovery of Lentina, she was also informed of the initial blooming of one of her laburnum trees in her desired spot in the cemetery. This information further filled Lentina with a sense of rejuvenation and new energy towards life; which intensified as she walked to the tree whose 'splendour' eventually triggered her "into a more somber mood" with heavy sighing for she felt a sense of completeness but also an emotion of sadness for the excitement had ended. This ambivalent dilemma of Lentina was realized by Mapu, who was now

> afraid, because he instinctively knew that as soon as Lentina laid eyes on the blossoms next May, she would conclude that the right moment to leave the world had arrived. Not that she would do anything drastic like taking her own life, but she would let everything slide and simply bow out of life with a contended sigh (Ao 16).

Following the luxuriant sight of the full-blooming laburnum tree, Lentina kept herself in self-isolation, rigorously cleaning her room and herself without any

domestic help and intervention. It looked as if she was self-satisfied and was preparing for her death by detaching herself from all social activities and relationships. Following a week of the enchanting sight, Lentina met with her peaceful death in her sleep; feeling a sense of accomplishment, reverence and inner joy. In fact, her funeral was construed by her family and the Town Committee following a nature-centric style which the dead Lentina had always envisioned. The involvement of the Town Committee in her funeral was due to the donation of the cemetery for the public that Lentina had previously purchased; which was done under the condition "that only flowering trees and not headstones [shall] be erected on the gravesites" of the cemetery (Ao 12). The result of Lentina's defiance to patriarchy in life and death could be seen in the display of natural beauty of the cemetery that often lay abound with innumerable flowers and trees like the laburnums, hibiscus, gardenia, camellia, oleander, banyan and ashoka that all flourished together in "perfect co-existence, in an environment liberated from all human pretensions to immortality" (Ao 20). In addition, the cemetery also became a site of soothing breeze which welcomed future generations to spend time in nature and thereafter establish an eco-centric connection with the environment which Ao considered as a quaint-essential for the survival and sustenance of humankind.

Like her sought for closeness to nature in her living days, Lentina, in her death also merged with nature under the laburnum trees that had been her life-line in her living days and her freedom in her death. In fact, this merger with nature made her feel a sense of self-satisfaction that she probably searched for throughout her life. While Lentina's contact, involvement and merger with the environment provided her a sense of bliss, comfort and fulfillment; Imchanok's encounters with nature in the story "Death of a Hunter", delineated him from his inner peace, wholesomeness and satisfaction. This was because Imchanok, as opposed to the nurturing and protective instincts of Lentina, maintained the relationship and a spirit of a hunter with nature. Such an equation was despite the fact that Imchanok was a Lower Primary School teacher who was also a hunter actively killing wild animals that damaged the community's paddy, livestock, residential settlements and human lives. This not only made him famous among his community but also instilled a sense of pride and bravery which justified his hunting as an act primarily performed for protection, survival and as "a necessary supplement to gathering food for an increasingly large family" (Ao 33). Such an anthropocentric discourse had been noted throughout our socio-environmental history where men had "chosen to set themselves apart, usually 'over and above' nature and women" (Clark 118). This notion was explored by Ao in her story, "Death of a Hunter",

through Imchanok as he was assigned by the Deputy Commission for a seven day task to hunt the "notorious" wild boar that had been damaging lives and properties of the region. This social task soon took the shape of a personal vengeance as Imchanok's harvest was also mercilessly destroyed by the boar; whom now Imchanok considered as his "enemy" that needed to be controlled (Ao 22).

Despite his willingness to hunt the wild boar, Imchanok was not sure of his hunting expenditure as he failed to experience the freedom to make choices; with the mounting official pressure to complete his 'task' as directed by the concerned officials. In addition, Imchanok was also threatened of his hunting license and social reputation which made him feel trapped and extremely anxious. Insinuated to complete his hunt in success, Imchsnok gathered a group of villagers who would report the movements and activities of the beast which were regularly discussed in the 'war council' where the future course of the hunting plan was also deliberated. This episode highlights that the tension between humans and animals have intensified with "men tend[ing] to focus on rights, whereas women tend[ed] to focus on responsibilities" (Gaard 2). While this shows the difference in response of both the genders towards nature and animals, it also addressed the alteration of the regional landscape due to high modernism, industries, urbanism and development penetrating not only the territories of the Northeast but also the degeneration of indigenous culture, the nature-centric lifestyle of the natives and their diverse naturescape. This caused a sense of ambivalence among the hunting group who in wild their adventure witnessed the morning meanderings of an elephant who they silently admired for his prowess and grace. While humans watched the animal with steady-fast attention, the animal sensed danger which made him retreat into the forest cover. Following this, there were several gunshots fired at the wild animal; that Imchanok and the hunting group watched, as for them, the fall of the beast was a sight of "awe and terrified fascination" (Ao 28). Despite the success of his hunt, Imchanok didn't enjoy it. In fact, he experienced a dilemma that he never felt before; for he saw tears on the eyes on the dead animal which got imprinted in the repressed psychic of Imchanok. While this experience haunted Imchanok throughout his life, it also opened his "fellow-feeling" for the beast as he saw pain and fear in the dying animal (Smith 175). This realization also raised the pertinent questions on "the eternal contest between man and animal for domination over the land" (Ao 29). Following this expenditure, Imchanok and his hunting troop were financially rewarded which they had whole-heartedly accepted while Imchanok had refused the gifted gun. This was in reaction to not get pinned to the future dictates of the government; for Imchanok wanted to maintain his freedom for his upcoming hunting expenditures.

While the successful hunt initially gave Imchanok a sense of joy and achievement, it soon ushered in him; a sense of despondence and guilt. Caught in this uncanny emotion, Imchanok recalled another experience from the past where a wild group of monkeys were hunted; for they not only spoiled the villagers' grains but also teased and attacked their women and children. For this purpose, a trap was successfully set to end the menace of the monkeys. While the victory was celebrated by the villagers, it had dampened the spirits of Imchanok for he witnessed the sacrifice of the monkeys' leader; who, to save his fellow beings "raised his arms as though in surrender or supplication, and slowly covered his eyes even as the hunter released the fatal shot to his heart" (Ao 31). Seeing the humanly expression of love, brotherhood and sacrifice in the monkey, Imchanok felt trapped and frustrated to kill the animal; who for him, had now been reduced to a queer and whom Imchanok had mercilessly slapped multiple times, while blurting the words,

> so, you wanted to destroy me by stealing my paddy, did you? Look at you now. You scared and bullied my womenfolk; where are yours now? Another male will take them over while I cut you up and feed my people with your flesh" (Ao 32).

Imchanok emotional dilemma soon dampened the previous merry-making spirits of the villagers. In fact, it gave way to deep silence among the crowd which thereafter engaged in skinning, gutting, cutting and cooking the abundant meat of the monkey. Despite everyone insistences, Imchanok not refused to join the celebration of his hunt but also refused the meat of the monkey inside his house; along with the picking of grains from the hut where he had helplessly killed the monkey, for he didn't want to "contaminate his main barn by bringing in paddy soiled by a pack of monkeys and tainted with the blood of the leader" (Ao 33). This memory triggered his repressed guilt and remorse from his hunts which made him less fearless and agile in his old age.

In fact, the firing of the gunshot at the wild boar was an act of self-defense of Imchanok as he was not scared for his life; but definitely so, for his nephew who had escaped the scene in fear.

Following the spread of news of the dead boar, a search party returned to the scene for the carcasses of the wild boar. However, there was "no sign of that monster, dead or alive, anywhere" which had puzzled everyone (Ao 37). Amidst this, Imchanok, the warrior-hero suddenly experienced bouts of severe and prolonged headaches which made him isolate himself from all social activities and

relationships except his wife, Tangchetla. In addition, he had strange nightmares which left him in tears and loud cries of,

> 'Look at him, he is as big as a barn and as black as charcoal.' Then he would begin to whimper in Tangchetla's arms, 'I am afraid, woman, he is going to come after me.' It took all her cajoling and consoling to coax him into sleep. This strange phenomenon was further complicated by Imchanok's refusal to eat anything (Ao 37).

These developments desperately made the couple perform a ritual of forgiveness to the spirit of the beast, their ancestors and nature. For this purpose, the couple returned to the hunting site where they discovered the boar's tooth that was "shinning like ivory" which Imchanok tied with his own hair and blew towards the haunted forest. In this act, Imchanok merged with nature and the spiritual world; which seemed possible only in company of his wife; on whose embrace he "slept like a baby" that night but soon engaged in excessive ponderings over his past hunting (mis)adventures. Although,

> outwardly he behaved as if nothing extraordinary had happened; but inwardly he began to question the failure of expert trekkers to locate the carcass of such a big animal which had not strayed far from where he was shot. And why was it left for him, the hunter, to discover the remains? (Ao 39)

Caught in his existentialist thoughts and emotional dilemma, Imchanok experienced shame and regret from his hunting adventures which took over his earlier association of pride and bravery to his hunt. Following this shift, he buried his gun which could be seen as an extension to the burial of culture, bio-power and his social identity generated by patriarchy, anthropocentrism and speciesism. In fact, this act of Imchanok could be seen as a conscious decision of a hunter to seek equilibrium with the environment and companionship with the nonhumans; which for Imchanok appeared possible only with the burial of the weapon of death and destruction for both mankind and the nonhumans. Considering the narration of Imchanok, the story of Lentina could be seen as an opposite representation of gendered codifications and how it reinforces the traditional ecofeminist dualism of nature-women and man-culture. While Lentina gained a sense of herself and through her choices for and with nature; Imchanok lost himself along with his peace, self-satisfaction and stability. In this context, he became a social victim of conventional ideologies such as androcentrism, anthropocentrism, imperialism and speciesism that not only played a significant role to disassociating humans from

nature but also devalued nature for humans as Man thought it is "their 'right' to exploit nature, on the one hand, and the use they make of women, on the other" (Birkeland 18). Such a stance was studied by Ao in her narrations in *Laburnum for My Head* which despite their regional situatedness; generated a universal appeal to deconstruct the culture/nature, man/woman and man-culture/woman-nature binaries in the Anthropocene.

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CHOICES DISCERN A PERSON: A PARALLEL READING ON ANTON CHEKHOV'S *THE BET* AND PREETI SHENOY'S *THE SECRET WISH LIST* IN THE LENS OF WILLIAM GLASSER

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Abstract: *Choices determine the life of a person. Every person makes choices in day-to-day life. The present paper attempts to make a parallel study on the eminent Russian playwright and short story writer Anton Chekhov's short story The Bet (1889) and the Contemporary Indian fiction and nonfiction writer Preeti Shenoy's novel The Secret Wish List (2012). In these works, the characters the Lawyer, the Banker and Diksha are analysed based on the choice they make, which almost turns their lives topsy-turvy. The study is based on the theoretical postulations of William Glasser, who has come up with the Choice Theory. The paper stresses the significance of the freedom of choice and the responsibility that the individual owes for his/her own choices. Despite the external stimuli that a person has while making a choice, the person has an option to either accept or reject it and so a person's choice is firmly controlled by oneself.*

Keywords: *Choice, Glasser, Choice Theory, Individual Responsibility, External Stimuli*

Choice refers to a person's act of selecting one thing from two or more alternatives. Though the life of a person is believed to be constructed by various elements, the choice that a person makes plays a vital role in determining one's way of life. In a wide span of life, a person has to necessarily make choices, be it a trivial or a crucial one. From choosing the next meal to choosing a life-time career, a person is expected to pick one from a plenty of options. The choice that a person makes has a guaranteed moral significance.

Michael Allingham, a British economist puts forth his views on choice making in his notable work *Choice Theory: A Very Short Introduction* (2002). He asserts that the choices that a person makes springs from both the person's heart and the person's head, in which the heart nurtures one's passion, while the head fosters the

reasons. Even if a choice is taken considering the most rigorous reasoning ability, it becomes vacuous, if it lacks the ability to appraise one's desire and vice-versa. He illustrates the general phenomena of making choices in a specific situation in which a person chooses an item from a hotel menu. There is a probability of changing one's choices in the case when the menu gets enlarged. In a similar way, even a person's most crucial choice tends to change, when the alternatives get increased. According to Allingham, choice can be explored and analysed in four contexts- Certainty, Uncertainty, Strategy and Group choice. Further, he illustrates a family tree for choice theory, in which he subdivides choice into Individual choice and Group choice. The choice made by an individual may be either certain or uncertain. That is, an individual may be aware of its consequences or may be unaware of the consequences of a choice, which may have pros or cons. Most of the time, a person makes a decision in imperfect conditions, where a person's rational thinking may get blocked. However, a decision must emerge from a multidimensional matrix, considering which alternative would be more appropriate emotionally, morally and financially.

In Russian literature, though there are many works related to making choices, Anton Chekhov's short story *The Bet* (1889) stands as a classic example. This story suggests how the choices made during a casual conversation has the power to turn one's mental, physical, moral and financial conditions. The storyline describes a chat between a young Lawyer and a wealthy Banker on the most tragic legal punishment. While the Banker asserts that capital punishment is worse than life-time imprisonment, the Lawyer opines the other way. The Lawyer believes that any life is better than no life, as he says "The death sentence and the life sentence are equally immoral, but if I had to choose between the death penalty and imprisonment for life, I would certainly choose the second. To live anyhow is better than not at all" (Chekhov 1). In order to prove their viewpoints, both of them agrees to a bet, in which the Banker agrees to pay two million rubles to the Lawyer, if he accepts to stay in confinement for fifteen years. The Lawyer agrees to the bet. At that time, neither the Banker nor the Lawyer realise the intensity and the effect of the choice they have made.

This study makes a parallel reading on the Indian novelist Preeti Shenoy's *The Secret Wish List* (2012). The novel projects the life of a typical Indian housewife Diksha, who sacrifices all her desires in order to take care of her family. She has endured fifteen years of suppressive marital life with her insensitive husband, Sandeep. As Rao comments, "It (Marriage) involves emotional and legal commitment that is quite important in any adult life" (34), which Diksha has never

observed with Sandeep. In that situation, when her past boyfriend Ankit resurfaces into her life full of love and care towards her and her nine-year-old son Abhay, Diksha makes a bold choice to break away from her marital bond(age) to lead a happy life with Ankit. As the American radical feminist writer Andrea Dworkin asserts, "In order to change convention, women had to violate it. . .. There have also been, always, individual feminists- women who violated the strictures of the female role, who challenged male supremacy, who fought for the right to work, or sexual freedom, or release from the bondage of the marriage contract" (19). Diksha changes the convention and makes a choice to make a better life for herself and her son Abhay.

This paper attempts to study the choices made by the Banker, the Lawyer and Diksha in the selected stories, in the lens of the choice theory framed by the American psychiatrist William Glasser. He became prominent for his contributions towards reality therapy and choice theory. Glasser had a wide-ranging clinical experience and thus applied his theories to a great variety of social issues. Glasser strongly believes that a person's behaviour is the outcome of the choices that one makes. Every person is in control of the choices and is responsible for the choices that one makes. According to Glasser, any form of external stimuli is inexistent, as another person cannot make a person act or feel anything. According to Glasser, "Choice theory is an internal control psychology; it explains why and how we make the choices that determine the course of our lives" (M.D. 7).

Glasser's Choice theory extends to the five basic needs of the humans. Every choice made by the humans is intended to satisfy one of the basic needs. Glasser propounds the five basic needs as Freedom, Power, Fun, Love and Belonging and Security. The theorist proposes that though the preferences differ due to variables such as individual difference, age, gender, etc., the needs remain constant for every person. Glasser contrives the term 'Quality World' to indicate the things or relationship or people that a person considers significant for oneself. The things in the 'Quality World' are in close approximation with one of the basic needs. In this regard, the characters in both the stories which includes the Banker, the Lawyer and Diksha make choices to satisfy one of the basic needs. the Banker is on the side of Fun and Power when he chooses to bet two million rubles. The Banker's act discloses his need of Fun, as he asserts to prove his point in a fleeting conversation. It also denotes his Power of wealth, as he wagers a huge sum of money. On the other hand, the lawyer too prefers Fun and in addition to it, he bets his fifteen years of life for the sake of money, which he hopes as a need of Security in later years. In the case of Diksha, she prefers her need of Love, Freedom, Belonging and Security

when she chooses to break away from Sandeep and to reunite with Ankit. Though these characters are uncertain about the ramifications of their life-changing choices, it has brought pleasing effect in their lives. The lawyer leaves the confinement five hours before the stipulated time, as he gets satisfied with the knowledge he gained by learning a variety of books, all these years and so his interest towards material pleasure fades away; the Banker, who is in debt at the end of fifteen years realises the inconsistency of wealth and felt relieved that he no longer bounds to reimburse money to the lawyer; Diksha is gifted with a lovely, unconfined and fulfilled life, not only for herself but also for her son Abhay.

As Glasser propounds, "Choice theory explains that stimuli, in the sense that they can consistently control a human being to make a specific choice, do not exist" (M.D. 17). Though there are certain external stimuli to baffle when one decides to make a choice, it is up to the individuals to resist or accept it. Among the characters analysed in this paper, the external stimuli of the Lawyer and the Banker is whether the choice they make is wise, as there were many guests, who put forward contradictory opinions. However, Diksha's external stimuli is the societal perspective towards her. Especially in the Indian scenario, for an ordinary housewife like Diksha, breaking the marital bond and reuniting with her boyfriend would be portrayed as the greatest sin by the society. As Khanna and Khatri comment, "She (Indian Housewife) keeps suppressing her wishes, her choices, her happiness to make everyone else happy and satisfied. She mostly abides by the family rules, and keeps everyone together, by keeping aside her individual identity" (259). In a way, Diksha seems to be a revolutionist, who stands against the hostility of her society, as Sandeep is selfish and "as far as he is concerned, his needs must always come first" (Shenoy 148). All the three characters have successfully resisted the external stimuli and made choices which they desired.

The period of fifteen years became crucial in both the selected works. In the short story *The Bet,* the Banker bets the Lawyer with fifteen years of solitary confinement in exchange for two million rubles. In the novel *The Secret Wish List*, Diksha decides to break her fifteen years of marital life. During the period of fifteen years, there is a drastic change in their psyche. During the beginning of fifteen years, the author conveys the Lawyer's avidity to material pleasures, as he risks his fifteen years of youth to procure a huge sum of money. Similarly, Chekhov presents the haughty attitude of the Banker owing to his wealth, for whom two million rubles is a trivial amount. In the novel *The Secret Wish List*, though Diksha is slightly hesitant about getting married during the second year of her college, she hopes to have a happy and liberal marital life when she enters into

it. She regards marriage as a tool to escape from her relatives, who constantly monitor her. However, the characters do not carry the same temperament at the end of fifteen years. The Lawyer's sagaciousness can be comprehended in his decision to leave the confinement five hours before the specified time, as he is contended with the knowledge and has no concern for wealth; the Banker who was generous enough to bet a huge sum of money, has planned the mean act of killing the Lawyer to escape from his situation. The irony is that the Banker, who was against capital punishment, himself debased to commit an act of murder. Later, when he comes to know about the run away of the Lawyer, the Banker gets struck with a diversification of emotions; Diksha, who was submissive, has made an unconventional and valiant decision only to get a satisfactory life for her.

Human beings often tend to blame others for their adverse conditions. In these situations, people forget the fact that no one has the power to harm a person without one's concern. As Glasser explains, "Choice theory explains that, for all practical purposes, we choose everything we do, including the misery we feel. Other people can neither make us miserable nor make us happy. All we can get from them is information. But by itself, information cannot make us do or feel anything. It goes into our brains, where we process it and then decide what to do" (M.D. 3-4). Though another person may try to intervene in one's emotions, the entire emotions of a person can be controlled by oneself. Even if another person tries to dispirit one, if the person has a strong will, it would never affect the person. The civil rights activist Maya Angelou asserts that she has the courage to rise against all the pessimistic criticisms in her poem, "Still I Rise":

> You may write me down in history
>
> With your bitter, twisted lies,
>
> You may trod me in the very dirt
>
> But still, like dust, I'll rise (1-4)

As T.M. Scanlon, Professor of Philosophy at Harvard University affirms in a lecture, "Choice has obvious and immediate moral significance" (Scanlon). A person has many options, with regard to any stream, from which the person has to choose one. The choice moulds the behaviour of a person, which forms the basis of one's character. The emphasis lays in the fact that an individual bears the complete responsibility for the choice one makes and should accept the consequences too. Fortunately, the choices made by the characters analysed in the present study yield fine effects on them. Even if the things go the other way, people should accept the results and focus on getting a way out of it, instead of blaming others.

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POLEMICS OF FACT AND FICTION: PORTRAYAL OF FYODOR DOSTOEVSKY IN J. M. COETZEE'S *THE MASTER OF PETERSBURG*

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Abstract: *"The Master of Petersburg" (1994) is a fictional work by the South African author J.M. Coetzee which depicts the renowned Russian novelist Dostoevsky as the protagonist. The year 2021 was the 200th birth anniversary of Dostoevsky, who had an astounding influence and a lasting impact on 20th century world literature. Coetzee distorts historical facts to create an imaginative and intense tale that basically explores a traumatic father-son relationship, that perhaps inspired Dostoevsky to write "The Devils." This dark psychological fantasy focusses on the grief-stricken Dostoevsky's frustrating attempts to find out the real cause that led to the death of his stepson, Pavel. It has autobiographical elements too as critics observe that Coetzee had lost his son in 1989. This article analyses the complicated plot of the novel by deconstructing the power and process of writing, and the validity of how Coetzee interlaces excerpts of Dostoyevsky's fictional trauma with his own experiences.*

Key words: *Dostoevsky, history, facts, death, trauma, memory, suffering*

The Master of Petersburg by the internationally acclaimed South African novelist, John Maxwell Coetzee, is an intriguing blend of fact and fiction. Coetzee began writing fiction in 1969 and is also a critic, an academician, and a translator of Dutch and Afrikaans literature. It was the novel, *Life & Times of Michael K* (1983), which won the Booker Prize that established his reputation as an international author. Other celebrated fictional works include *Foe* (1986), *Age of Iron* (1990), *The Master of Petersburg* (1994) and *Disgrace* (1999), which won him the second Booker Prize. In 2002 Coetzee emigrated to Australia and was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 2003. Coetzee is "rigorously engaged in exploring the ontological and other issues crucial to the fictional discourse. This engagement is primarily for marking his 'authorial position' and choosing his own voice of articulation" (Baral 11-12). A recurrent theme in Coetzee's novels is a critical situation, where right and wrong are put to the test and where the characters' weaknesses and downfall become central to the evolution of the plot of the story. His prose is rigorous and analytical (www.nobelprize.org/prizes /literature/2003/coetzee).

> He (Coetzee) is not for the radiance of fiction but for its starkness; not to protect the *being* but to ensure *becoming*; not to make writing of fiction an end in itself but a means to explore the unexplored; going beyond the real to have the grasp of the unreal in representing the unrepresentable. (Baral 12)

The central protagonist of Coetzee's *The Master of Petersburg*, is the renowned Russian novelist Fyodor Mikhailovich Dostoevsky (1821-1881) who had an astounding influence and a lasting impact on 20th century world literature. The 200th birth anniversary of this talented author who offered realistic mirages of Russian life and culture, and well-known for the timelessness of his themes, was observed worldwide in 2021. Dostoevsky who is "an icon for 20th century consciousness" (Jackson 1), has been praised by admirers as the Russian Shakespeare. He was attracted to literature from a young age and was drawn to Romantic and Gothic fiction, especially the works of Sir Walter Scott, Ann Radcliffe, Nikolay Karamzin, Friedrich Schiller, and Aleksander Pushkin. Though his novels often narrate very dark, morbid, and depressing stories and "encompass antagonistic philosophies and value systems" (Terras 6), they are also inspiring as they highlight the importance of living a good life despite all the trials and tribulations. "Due to their polyphonic nature, his dramas deal with varying issues at once, but the problem of suffering is a theme that Dostoevsky consistently tackled" (Ewald 4).

Dostoyevsky's professional activities "spanned fiction writing, criticism, journalism, editing, publishing, and a responsible post in Russia's first association of writers" (Todd III 66). His famous works include the novella *Notes from the Underground* (1864) and the four long novels, *Crime and Punishment* (1866)*, The Idiot* (1868-69)*, The Possessed* (1872) (also known as *The Demons* and *The Devils*), and *The Brothers Karamazov* (1879-80). Each work is unique for its psychological perceptiveness, and philosophical and ethical debates, that made Dostoyevsky to be considered as one of the greatest psychological novelists in world literature. "The fascinating paradoxes of his life and character: an epileptic, an invalid, a man condemned to execution, a convict, a gambler, a brilliant journalist, a political turncoat, a passionate orator, an apostle of love and an anti-Semite, a heart torn between sacred and profane love, a devoted father, a soul rent between faith and doubt, all this is reflected in his heroes who are assumed to be concentric mirrors of their creator" (Catteau 1-2). He focussed on the analysis of pathological mental states that led human beings to madness, murder, and suicide. He also explored emotions such as loss of self-esteem, disgrace, self-destruction,

oppressive dominion, and deadly fury. These major works are renowned as great "novels of ideas" that treat timeless and timely issues in philosophy and politics (https://www.britannica.com/biography/Fyodor-Dostoyevsky).

> "Dostoevsky's entire oeuvre is an attempt to come to terms artistically, spiritually, and philosophically with a reality striving towards fragmentation- an attempt to give creative meaning to open-ended conflict" (Jackson 16).

Coetzee's *The Master of Petersburg* that begins in October 1869, is primarily a dark, but moving account that depicts Dostoevsky as a grieving father who is extremely remorseful for not having maintained an affectionate and intimate relationship with his stepson. The dense plot of the novel is divided into twenty brief chapters. The setting is the Haymarket district of St. Petersburg in late 1869. Dostoevsky arrives from Dresden when he learns of his stepson's suicide. The author portrays a "depressive Dostoyevsky who tramps and glooms through the pages of *The Master of Petersburg*, adrift in the perilous political currents of late-czarist St. Petersburg" (McGrath www.nytimes.com). The murder is based on a real incident, that of a young student, Ivanov. The police believed that the brutal crime was committed by nihilists led by Nechaev. The real Dostoevsky had a stepson but he was not involved in political activities and survived his stepfather. In the novel, the author deviates from historical facts and portrays the dead student as Dostoevsky's stepson, Pavel Alexandrovich Isaev. Coetzee had lost his twenty-three year old son in an accident in 1989. Critics believe that through this novel, he has probably dealt with his relationship with his son and related issues that could have been disturbing him.

The fictional Dostoyevsky is obsessed with thoughts of finding out the real cause of the death of his stepson. He feels guilty that he had never been close to Pavel who lost his mother at a very young age. In Petersburg he rents the same room where Pavel had stayed, in the home of a widow named Anna Sergeyevna Kolenkina, who lived with her young daughter Matryona. It seemed as if he was trying hard to connect in some way with the spirit of his dead stepson by staying in his room and going through his clothes, letters, and diary. In a letter to his wife, which he tears up immediately afterwards, he reveals his grief and longing to see his stepson returned to life.

> He is still here in his room. He is frightened. He has lost his right to stay in this world, but the next world is cold, as cold as the spaces between the stars, and without welcome. (Coetzee 52)

He opens his son's suitcase and dons the white suit as "a gesture to the dead boy, a gesture of defiance and love" (Coetzee 71). He narrates the history of Pavel's white suit to the grief stricken Matryona, to show how chivalric and kind hearted Pavel had been as a young man.

In the novel, the married Dostoevsky has a very brief but tumultuous affair with Anna as he believes that she holds the key to unravelling the mystery surrounding Pavel's life and activities in St. Petersburg that probably led to his death later. Dostoevsky visits Pavel's grave in Yelagin island with Anna and Matryona. He lies flat upon the mound of earth and cries freely. Anna tells him that Pavel was very close with Matryona who persuaded him to make a small shrine for Pavel in a corner of the room. Dostoevsky is questioned by Councillor Maximov, a sly judicial investigator in Pavel's case, who asserts that Pavel was affected by an epidemic, Nechaevism. According to him, Pavel was a follower of Nechaev and was later murdered by his own accomplices violently for being a traitor. At first, he refuses to hand over Pavel's papers to Dostoevsky. Instead, he shows Dostoevsky a story written by Pavel which he considers as evidence against Pavel.

> I read you his fantasy, as you like to call it, simply to indicate how deeply he had fallen under the influence of the Nechaevites, who have led astray heaven knows how many of our more impressionable and volatile young people,…Quite an epidemic, I would say, Nechaevism. An epidemic, or perhaps just a fashion. (Coetzee 42).

Dostoevsky tries to explain to Maximov that Nechaevism is a spirit, that he names as Baal. The reference to Baal is rather ambiguous, as in The Holy Bible, Baal is portrayed as a demonic god worshipped by the heathens. Dostoevsky also clarifies that he has never supported ideals like Nechaevism because he considers "Nechaevism as Russian as brigandage" (Coetzee 42). Maximov's real intention, however, was to provoke Dostoevsky's guilty conscience, and thereby persuade him to help the police track down his stepson's "child conspirators" (Coetzee 43).

Dostoevsky is also approached by Sergei Gennadevich Nechaev, the dynamic young leader of a clandestine organisation called the People's Vengeance. Maximov had disclosed to Dostoevsky earlier that Pavel had had in his possession a list of names of people to be assassinated by the People's Vengeance. Nechaev claims that Pavel was murdered by the police and attempts to involve the author in the revolution. Nechaev reminds Dostoevsky of Christ in his wrath, the "Christ of the Old Testament, the Christ who scourged the usurers out of the temple" (Coetzee 103). Nechaev's outbursts disgusts Dostoevsky who is appalled that Pavel had been friends with such extremists, "people ever-eager to whip themselves into

frenzies of self-righteousness…sensualists hungering for the ecstasy of death-killing, dying, no matter which" (Coetzee 104-105). After the heated discussion with Nechaev, Dostoevsky wonders wearily,

> And is that the true reason why he is bereft: because the ground of his life, the contest with his son, is gone, and his days are left empty? Not the People's Vengeance but the Vengeance of the Sons: is that what underlies revolution. (Coetzee 108)

Nechaev tries his best to provoke Dostoevsky to retaliate by reminding him of the revolutionary ideals he had upheld during his youth. The interactions with the hot blooded Nechaev show Dostoevsky not as a nihilist-antagonist who seeks revenge for his stepson's death, but as a mature and humane individual who has accepted whatever life offers on his own terms. According to Jackson, Dostoevsky recoils from violence in man.

> The power of his exploration of violence in his work, however comes not from a deeply felt dissociation with the act of violence and rejection of complicity, but from a psychological and, ultimately, metaphysical recognition and acceptance of complicity and guilt. We are all guilty because in one way or another we are making other people suffer and enjoying that suffering; we are guilty because in each of us lies the propensity for violence and evil. (Jackson 5)

Dostoevsky climbs to the top of the old shot tower along Stolyarny Quay where Nechaev showed him the spot from which Pavel was assumed to have jumped and committed suicide, accidentally fell, or was pushed to his death. Then he feels he should not have gone to see that place. The height makes him dizzy and many thoughts flood his mind. It is evident that he is still reluctant to acknowledge the fact that the twenty-one year old Pavel is dead.

> A metaphor, he tells himself, that is all it is – another word for lapse of consciousness, a not-being here, an absence. Nothing new. The epileptic knows it all, the approach to the edge, the glance downward, the lurch of the soul, the thinking that thinks itself crazily over and over like a bell pealing in the head: *Time shall have an end, there shall be no death*.
>
> …Metaphors - what nonsense! There is death, only death. Death is a metaphor for nothing, Death is death. (Coetzee 118)

In the fifteenth chapter, Nechaev reveals the real reason why he needs Dostoevsky, so that Pavel's death will not be in vain. He shows the author an illegal printing

press – a hand press, in a hidden cellar and demands that the story of Pavel's death should be written with his name, and then printed and published widely to incite students to rise and protest. When Dostoevsky refuses adamantly, the enraged Nechaev insults him by calling him "an old, blinkered horse" who is "nothing but a dry old man, a dry old work-horse near the end of its life." He also shouts in disgust, "Isn't it time you tried to share the existence of the oppressed instead of sitting at home and writing about them and counting your money?" (Coetzee 186). Dostoevsky realises that "Pavel's death was merely the bait to lure him from Dresden to Petersburg. He has been the quarry all the time" (Coetzee 203). There are various snippets of Dostoevsky's life interwoven into the narrative to make it seem more plausible. Incidents like the violent murder of Dostoevsky's father, references to his older brother Mikhail, his epileptic seizures, financial difficulties, addiction for gambling, the relationships with his stepson and other women, revolutionary activities that led to his Siberian exile, his religious views, political inclinations and so on have been liberally employed by Coetzee to paint his fictional Dostoevsky with realistic hues.

The bleak novel ends with Dostoevsky endeavouring to overcome his pessimistic thoughts and loss of inspiration. He understands how Pavel had suffered a lot because of his stepfather's neglect and indifference. The "surreal clash between the dead past and the living present" makes Dostoevsky realise that he has been an utter failure as a father to Pavel (Chatterji 118). According to Chatterji, Nechaev and his peer group helped Pavel towards identity formation and provided him with a home that the seven-year old Pavel had lost the day Dostoevsky became his stepfather. The father-son debate in the novel reflects the spirit that inhabits in Nechaev which is the spirit of all sons to overthrow their fathers (Chatterji 125).

The real Dostoevsky's characters undergo some type of transformation towards the end. In the same way Coetzee's Dostoevsky also is transformed. Finally, the writer in him prevails and Dostoevsky begins to write a new novel in Pavel's diary. He had been trying to humanize and resurrect Pavel. Now he feels that he has been miraculously transformed into the youthful version of Pavel.

> In the blood of this young man, this version of Pavel, is a sense of triumph. He has passed through the gates of death and returned; nothing can touch him any more. He is not a god but he is no longer human either. He is, in some sense, beyond the human, beyond man. There is nothing he is not capable of.

> Through this young man the building, with its stale-smelling corridors and blind corners, begins to write itself, this building in Petersburg, in Russia. (Coetzee 242)

Coetzee's fictional protagonist is "an immensely complex Dostoevskian personage in his constant spiritual torment and searching, his psychological and ideological oscillations" (Jackson 11). Dostoevsky had mostly portrayed his characters as people with some physical handicap or disease, constantly struggling to unravel the mystery behind human suffering. Prince Myshkin (*The Idiot*) is an epileptic, Ippolit (*The Idiot*) and Katerina Ivanovna (*Crime and Punishment*) are plagued by tuberculosis, and Marya Timofeyevna (*The Devils*) is physically crippled. "His heroes may be perceived as ideas incarnate and his plots as conflicts of ideas" (Terras 6) His protagonists, who suffer consciously like Christ for the sake of saving another individual or to purify another person's heart, are respected. Ewald says that Dostoevsky "accepted suffering as a metaphysical truth" and that his characters "are so consumed with their respective ideas, and their inability to resolve them, that their entire psyches break down" (Ewald 45-46).

> Dostoevsky's ideology concerning suffering, as voiced through the characters of his novels, was multifaceted. It was a social, temporal, emotional and moral issue, which could not be dealt in a manner of pure faith or of pure rationality. He advised that man look to Christ as a model for self-transfiguration, but did not necessarily believe that man could achieve it. He prescribed boundless love for man's fellow man here on earth, but did not necessarily trust that man could provide it. He embodied an attitude of the highest hope, tempered with unyielding, grounded expectations. His paradoxical attitude accentuated the mystery of suffering. (Ewald 46)

Dostoevsky in *The Master of Petersburg* tries to look to God for answers, at various times. When Matryona questions him why Pavel took his life, he answers that Pavel "put himself at risk to see whether God loves him enough to save him" (Coetzee 75). During the heated debates with Nechaev there are numerous references to God, Christ and the Mother of God. Coetzee imitates the real Dostoevsky - "a world that God has forgotten is so alien to Dostoevsky that God will appear in his works, at least by virtue of the denial of His existence, even in moments of doubt and rebellion" (Terras 20). Dostoevsky even warns Nechaev not to tempt God, or gamble on God's mercy under the assumption that all sins will be forgiven if it is for a good cause. Terras observes, "despite his efforts to discredit atheistic humanism, Dostoevsky became a prophet of the 'death of God' "(11).

Coetzee's Dostoevsky seems to have given up on God. Hence, he becomes "a symptom of the total moral breakdown of individual, the loss of spiritual equilibrium in society, and its consequent plunge into an underground of destruction and self-destruction" (Jackson 12).

The novel reveals Coetzee's efforts to fuse fiction and authorial polemics. A key feature in Coetzee's *The Master of Petersburg* is "its thematization of the inevitable implication of literature in the relations of power which determine the social context in which it is produced" (Marais 102). Marais observes that the same historical incident of the student's murder had inspired Dostoevsky to write *The Devils*. "Coetzee's decision to focus on the above-mentioned incident suggests that he too, like Dostoevsky, wishes to examine the ethical ramifications of political nihilism in his novel" (Marais 103). The indomitable vigour of Coetzee's novel lies in the indisputable fact that is that it is set against an ambience of agony and morbidity.

> The complicity of conventional Western morality in the state's power structures is made especially clear at the end of *The Master of Petersburg* when the fictional Dostoevsky starts writing *The Devils*. By presenting his novel as the pre-text of *The Devils*, Coetzee contrives to make his reader evaluate the historical Dostoevsky's novel in terms of the fictional Dostoevsky's relationship with the nihilists in *The Master of Petersburg*. (Marais 107)

Interestingly, the final chapter of the novel in which Dostoevsky decides to "follow the dance of the pen" (Coetzee 236), is titled "Stavrogin," who is the protagonist of Dostoevsky's renowned novel *The Devils* (also called *The Possessed* or *Demons*). The part that the fictional Dostoevsky writes in Coetzee's novel closely resembles Stavrogin's confession in *The Devils*, both in content and context. Thus, the novel ends by suggesting that "Dostoevsky- who at the beginning returns to Petersburg to establish, among other details, whether it was the police or the revolutionaries who pushed his son from the tower – sired the 'devils' who were responsible for this act" (Marais 114). It can be said that in Coetzee's novel – an "Odyssey of the human spirit"- fact and fiction undergo a transition to become "figures of fact" and "figures of fiction" where "every figure of fiction contains a figure of fact and every figure of fact contains a figure of fiction" (Terras 36-37).

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THE CARNIVALIZED SPECTACLE OF POLITICS IN THE NOVELS OF V.K.N

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Abstract: *V.K.N's works penetrate the domains of politics and society to reveal a fundamental crisis etched beneath the surface in a post-colonial society. This chapter will analyse two of his novels; Arohanam, 1969 (translated into English as Bovine Bugles, 1978) and The Syndicate (1971) as works that present satirically the power play of politics and its contingent power in India after Independence. It will be argued here that V.K.N attempts to expose the inherent contradictions in post-colonial Indian society by carnivalizing the realpolitik. Mikhail Bakhtin's theories of Carnival and Carnivalesque are key frameworks to the readings presented here. Focusing on the central character Payyan, this paper forms a critical outlook on the social and political life of India where the countenance looks pretty from the outside but the underlying chaos is often concealed. V.K.N offers a critique of the hollow interiors of post-colonial Indian society. This article is part of the Doctoral Dissertation submitted by the author under the supervision of Prof. E.V Ramakrishnan to the Central University of Gujarat, Gandhinagar.*

Key Words: *Carnival, Realpolitik, Postcoloniality*

V.K.N (V.K. Narayanankutty Nair, 1929-2004) uses satire to penetrate a deep-seated insincerity contained in India's socio-political life through his novels. They are suggestive of the moral decay grappling with Indian society and politics in the post-independent era. His works illustrate India's post-colonial state and politics as enterprises in the hands of a few wealthy people. "V.K.N was exposed to two solid 'leisurely' classes in the twentieth century—the rural feudal lords and the metropolitan bourgeois. He was quick to discover that our ruling elites came from these social strata" (Ramakrishnan 8). The argument in this paper is pitched on certain premises that are outside the world of fiction. A summarized understanding of such premises would read thus; colonial structures of power never encouraged reformist ideas and they maintained caste hierarchy as it is, the modern nation-state uses the rhetoric of socialism and social justice to mobilize the underprivileged, and the nation-state safeguards only the self-interests of the upper class at the

expense of the underprivileged sections. In post-colonial societies, there is a deepening contradiction between appearance and reality. Using a forked tongue, ironical idiom and satirical language V.K.N exposes these contradictions. V.K.N fictionalizes a world he witnessed from close quarters for about a decade in Delhi.

Mikhail Bakhtin puts forth a theory of 'carnival' in his book *Rabelais and His World* (1984). Studying the Renaissance European societies where the folk culture merged with high culture, Bakhtin argues that carnival is a festival of emancipation from the ossifying role of official life. The serious nature of the official rigidity is challenged through laughter as a form of celebration. For Bakhtin, the idea of carnival comes from medieval European festivals in Europe. During a carnival, the official roles are erased and people are free to behave without the restraints of their official life. Though carnival proper disappeared from culture, its basic features continue to exist in language, literature, and culture of which Bakhtin uses the term 'carnivalesque'. Carnivalisation is "…writing which has taken the carnival spirit into itself and thus reproduces, within its structures and by its own practice, the characteristic inversions, parodies and discrownings of carnival proper" (Dentith 63). Literature is carnivalesque when they use parody, satire, subversive language, comic figures, grotesque bodies etc. V.K.N uses satire as a technique of mocking the official view of politics and society. *Bovine Bugles,* for example, have excessive use of food, sex, irony, and innuendos. Contrary to the popular idea of virtue related to the elite social and political life, V.K.N presents the world of politics as a competition between various people/parties to gain access to power.

Carnival is a vital part of Bakhtin's theory on art. He draws the idea of carnival and carnivalesque from folk culture. Social hierarchies and official ranks are overturned in a carnival so that people become equal in the streets outside their official life. Laughter is an important feature of carnival as it is a powerful tool to destabilize forms of power. For example, the high officials of the cathedral would be subjects to laughter in a carnival that "builds its own world in opposition to the official world, its own church versus the official church, its own state versus the official state" (Bakhtin 88). Bakhtin writes, "In spite of their variety, folk festivities of the carnival type, the comic rites and cults, the clowns and fools, giants, dwarfs, and jugglers, the vast and manifold literature of parody-all these forms have one style in common: they belong to one culture of folk carnival humour" (Bakhtin 4). Carnival suspends the official life by enabling a 'second life' where everyday reality is disregarded and ridiculed. As Krystyna Pomorska puts it "One of the essential aspects of this relation is the "unmasking" and disclosing of the unvarnished truth under the veil of false claims and arbitrary ranks" (x). Through wit, humour, and a

tongue-in-cheek language Payyan could carnivalise the world he lives in and presents it beyond the curtains of generally perceived reality and common sense.

Bovine Bugles is set in 1960's Delhi. V.K.N shows Delhi as the central stage for national politics flooded with a class of opportunists looking for power. The novel's characters are politicians, bureaucrats, press barons, socialites, journalists etc who are all part of the same political landscape. Payyan is the central character in the novel. *The Syndicate* is to be seen as a sequel to *Bovine Bugles* set in a different time frame during a different political regime. Taken together, these novels tell stories about the hypocrisy of politics in India and how it uses power to rob the larger section of unprivileged people. It can be observed from these novels that politics does not exist on its own as it tends to share its power between social elites and other prominent stakeholders.

Arohanam means 'the ascent' in English. However, the author himself translated it into English as *Bovine Bugles*. Bovine means 'relating to cow'. The questions concerning cow slaughter and religious beliefs have implications for contemporary India. The title is a reference to the expressions of religion, politics, and public life in complex schemes gaining strength in post-colonial India. *The Syndicate* sketches the lobbying and power play happening around the nationalization of private banks during Indira Gandhi's term as the Prime Minister. Split in Indian National Congress along with the events that saw V.V Giri elected as the President of India also add to the novel's setting.

V.K. N's life in Delhi as a journalist coincided with one of the most influential political changes in the country's leadership. He was in Delhi in the 1960s, a decade that saw the death of Jawaharlal Nehru and the subsequent rapid changes in political leadership. As Ramachandra Guha puts it, "the undisputed rule of a great man would now be replaced by a form of collective leadership" (388). Gulzarilal Nanda became the acting Prime Minister soon after Nehru's death. He was soon replaced by Lal Bahadur Shastri in the same year. There were a couple of more short-term Prime Ministers in the same decade. Such rapid changes would occur along with a lot of behind-the-stage play for power. A first-hand experience of the state of politics with its decaying ethical and moral values among the bourgeois elites who are in power must have been an influence on V.K.N's view on the larger politics in the country. However, *Bovine Bugles* and *The Syndicate* are fictional accounts of post-colonial India caricaturing the political scene with larger-than-life figures of politicians, bureaucrats, and various men and women around them, notably influential ones such as contractors and social workers.

Payyan, the central character, is a mirror of the political society revealing the dark underside of economic and moral corruption involved in the world of politics. Through Payyan's journey, the novels also reveal the feudal capitalist axis at work in the nation. By his profession, Payyan represents the press in India controlled by social elites who go hand in hand with prominent political parties and their politicians. As a result, the newspaper is often used not to report certain news involving the elites and the rich. The author also hints at an alternative view of the world through his central character Payyan.

Payyan is a correspondent for the English newspaper, 'Aryavarta Times'. The novels evolve through the dark hallways of power politics as witnessed by Payyan. He is performed largely in conversations. It is noted here that the word 'payyan' means 'a lad' or 'a guy' in English. He is a recurring character in many of V.K. N's fictional works.

Payyan is not a character in the real sense but a mode of visualizing reality. Payyan is the feudal arrogance superimposed on the metropolitan extravagance. In other words, Payyan is a transaction between two structures of power and can be revealed only in situations of combat or contest (Ramakrishnan 10).

The novels have a veil of corruption through which Payyan and other characters strive to 'ascend'. Payyan is a critical outsider who takes part in the events yet remains outside them consciously.

Being a journalist Payyan is also a representative of the role of journalism in India as well as the institution of the press. The newspaper has a large role in upholding the values of democracy by reporting the news without bias. But in V.K.N we see a press, especially India's English press, working hand in hand with the rich and powerful sections to protect their various political and business interests.

Payyan is the means of unleashing humour in the novels. He is a tricky character who uses his prowess in dialogue to create humour thus subverting the corrupt fields of politics and power. It is an effort to make them subjects for laughter. Payyan manoeuvres through the thick of politics in all its dishonesty using his language with irony and sarcasm. Being a character with unparalleled wit and a keen eye for humour, he could very well shine in every situation. The rich class of immense influence and power is depicted as less sensible and they fail in front of Payyan's intellect and sensibility.

Politics as Carnivalized Spectacle

V.K.N unmasks politics through Payyan who captures it as a world of the spectacle. The spectacle travels from the narrow and closed places of office chambers and dinner tables to the outside world in its full display. V.K.N tries to project the world of politics as a world of deception covered in the massive performance of itself. All the characters are portrayed as people with insecurity in their life. They are all performers in the game of politics for power. Payyan catches this world in its hilarity.

The lavish lifestyle and arrogance of the elite politicians and bureaucrats are caught through the sarcastic eyes of Payyan. The luxury and arrogance of the government servants are a part of the show that is akin to the spectacle. The lavishness of money and power is exhibited wherever possible. Riding with Sunanda and Bhandari to the slums Payyan notices the rich homes of the secretaries and the ministers stand as a symbol of their position in society. "They skirted the central secretariat and drove on through the avenues, where the neo-Moghuls, the Secretaries to the government of India lived in arrogant isolation in bungalows of colonial architecture built by the British, deep from the road amidst acres of gardens" (V.K.N *Bovine* 41). The slum is posited as the opposite of it. Basic living conditions are barely given in the slums. The slums are controlled by the class who live in the aristocratic areas of the city. The ministers have bungalows bigger than that of the Secretaries and they live in total extravagance. Such a life is part of the spectacle that conveys one's worth and power. Humour is an effective way of bringing such high-fashioned life down.

> The avenues where the tin gods had their abodes were called Nyaya Marg, Bhakti Marg and Mukti Marg but Payyan thought it would have been more becoming of the state of the nation if they were to be renamed as Avenues of Opportunism, Democracy, Compulsory Socialism and so on (V.K.N *Bovine* 42).

There is a decay of moral and ethical standards ingrained into the life of the high-class politicians and other affluent classes who are always in and around the centres of power. The novel gives a picture of the actual condition of the slums maintained by political parties.

> Power lines had not been pulled into the slums nor was there a system of protected water supply in them. Nature took care of whatever problem in sanitation there was with Yamuna flowing close by. The yearly floods burst the banks of the river surged into

> the slums and gave it a wholesome, holy wash before receding back into stream" (V.K.N *Bovine* 46).

The poor and the middle class are on the other side of this spectacle and they only watch or take minimum part in the show. They largely witness the show. The following passage shows their role as spectators of the power game.

> Payyan drove into the city at half past five in the evening. Offices had closed after another day of non-work and the white collar crowd had jam packed the streets, footpath, tea stalls and bus stops, reading the eveningers and getting curioser as to who was outsmarting whom in the power game (VKN *The Syndicate* 148).

Power seems to be properties reserved for the affluent sections and the middle class largely does not feature in the picture. This world is of only the rich and the poor. The middle class has their role reduced to taking part in elections as voters. They watch the daily show of politics staged in front of them in perplexity.

> The middle class intellectuals were in a fix. Which ring were they to throw their towel in without knowing who was going to win. For a quarter century after Independence, they had each time staked on the right horse, spending half their life at bus stops and office canteens (V.K.N *The Syndicate* 149).

Delhi is a perfect stage for such spectacles. The city has an ample population of politicians, socialites, bureaucrats, government servants etc. Political rallies are another form of the spectacle of politics. The two major political parties in the novels are; 'The Revolutionary Party' and the non-violent 'Party of All the People of India' also known by its acronym, 'PAPI'. One day Payyan is stopped by a traffic constable because the road is closed for a procession. He observes the march and realizes that the march is by a faction of the revolutionary party supporting the Prime Minister. Payyan knows it because PAPI's crowd would be loud and unruly. There are a lot of rallies happening in the capital for various demands. "Payyan went ahead after the road was cleared of socialism" (V.K.N *The Syndicate* 172).

The extravagant life of the affluent society is a frequent subject of mockery in the novels. Descriptions of the houses, offices, lunch etc. are made in great detail with a flavour of humour. For example, visiting a minister in his office, Payyan observes the luxury of the place. "The ministerial chamber was a miniature world in desi, with the window curtains, carpets, tables, chairs, telephones, foreign economic journals, and the air conditioner all homespun" (V.K.N *The Syndicate* 166).

There are great details about feasts in the novel as they frequently happen at the rich houses of politicians and socialites. These feasts are stages for talks about manipulations and conspiracies. The author finds it a point to describe in detail the items served at each such occasion. Feasts are also occasions to share information. In a world where nobody trusts anybody, the sharing of information has multiple tasks to carry. Once, the Chief Minister of Poorva Pradesh throws a party for a group of journalists. After a few rounds of beers, the minister starts talking about the crisis in his state, of which the president of the party had spoken a few 'monosyllables' asserting that everything was fine in the state. But as it comes from the Chief Minister himself, we are informed that there is a fallout between the chief and the minister for heavy industries. The reason for the breach between these two men in power is particularly interesting. The minister says, "I refused some licenses for bus routes his relatives had applied for. No one can corrupt me, mind you!" (VKN *Bovine* 64). Obtaining a license is no easy task as it had to go through several offices of bureaucracy. This event is a press meet done unofficially. The accompanying liquor and dinner are to keep the meeting informal and turn the pressmen in favour of the host. The chief minister reminds his journalist guests not to quote him. He talks about the split in the party giving away lots of inside information. The journalists enjoy the beer filled again and again as soon as the glasses were emptied.

In contrast to the fashionable lavish feasts of the riches, there is a description of cheap lunches that satisfied the lower middle class:

> Vendors of instant lunch, their trolleys full of eatables, were doing a brisk business on the sidewalk to the white collar crowd who milled around them. Roti or *pathura*, mixed with chana and slices of onion and green chillies was the standard menu and it cost only fifty paise a helping. That was enough for the simple-living high-thinking tribe to quieten their souls in their cages till dinner time. Two rounds were a chokeful. The water trolleys nearby provided the cold drink after the snack lunch at five paise a glass. After a quick roti or two and a glass of water if one was still fastidious enough to have something for dessert—for among them were those who wanted to keep up with the Joneses—there were the bicycle men who sold cut fruits and bananas with sprinkling of *garam masala*. Here was the compassionate part of a city that provided cheap lunch to its middle and lower middle class devotees (V.K.N *Bovine* 39).

V.K.N brings in a lot of encounters between the rich and the poor. It is understood from the novel that the great divide between the people at the two extremes of wealth is created and maintained as such by politics itself. The rich, like Sunanda, have a cold-hearted attitude towards the poor folks living in the slums and villages. Maintenance of the slums for the party is a means for her to keep in touch with power. It reveals the inner motivations to keep up her power through her influence in politics. The novel has a plethora of situations which unfold the great divide between the powerful and the powerless. Walking to Sunanda's house in one of the richest areas of the city, Payyan wonders,

> ...whoever could guess that a humanist who rubbed shoulders with the scum of the slum lurked behind the red bricked marvel of a house in front of him. Here was a copybook case of plenty amidst poverty, unity in diversity, the Indian cart track to socialism and every other cliché those in the Establishment mouthed in refrain after His Master's voice (VKN *Bovine* 11).

Payyan's first meeting with Anasuya reveals this point again. Anasuya is another socialite looking after slums. "He went in after her. Everything looked king size inside the king size house. A king size sitting room, king size sofas and chairs and a king size Anasuya to match. Only the cat was mini. It looked as if the regulars, the common people, had no place about the place" (VKN *Bovine* 32).

Look at an instance of encounter between the powerful and the powerless. Annoyed by the villagers who came to see him, Raghbir says, "People, people all the time, I am tired of them. As if I too was not one of them" (VKN *Bovine* 66). Payyan with his keen eye for not missing a chance for a humorous comment immediately responds, "Maxim Gorky committed the folly of his life when he said man was a beautiful word. Of course, he had not had the occasion to meet some of us" (VKN *Bovine* 66). The people have come to him to complain about the previous night's police crackdown on their village targeting one young man in particular because he tried to drink water from a common well. The Brahmins beat him there itself and in addition to that, they came with the police and beat him again until he fell unconscious.

Modernity in India is imposed on the feudal structures. It may be noted here that India became a modern nation through the colonial experience. There is a lack of social revolution at the root of social practices in India. The feudal structure is not altered by modernity significantly and as a result, caste violence continues to happen. The question is of lack of social reform, despite the tireless efforts in that

direction. Ramachandra Guha writes referring to a Scheduled Caste member of the Constituent Assembly:

> Not an inch of untouchability has been removed by these laws . . . If at all the ghost of untouchability or the stigma of untouchability from India should go the minds of these crores and crores of Hindu folks should be changed and unless their hearts are changed, I do not hope, Sir, that untouchability will be removed. It is now up to the Hindu society not to observe untouchability in any shape or form (382).

The issue here is of serious proposition for the villagers. A young man is beaten brutally by the upper caste men for drinking water from a well. In addition to it, the police ride in the village caused more attacks on him and his family. Raghbir couldn't care less because he was busy preparing himself for the meeting with the party president when the villagers appeared in his office. Raghbir sends the villagers out of his office to think about how to solve the issue. He can't telephone the police because if the 'Harijans' are 'wrong' in their claims, he fears, the caste Hindus will turn into his enemy. So he decides to ask the president of the Mandal party of the area, Mr. Ram Kishen Yadav, a caste Hindu, to study the problem.

> Payyan could well imagine Yadav going about the business. He might in all probability be an enemy of the Hindu alphabet and the Harijans. He might destroy the latter and harangue the humiliated ones on the efficacy of weapons like non-violence, self-restraint and hunger strike in overcoming caste Hindu antagonism. Or if he is out for his cut in the business, he might join hands with the caste Hindus and dig for share of the gold (VKN *Bovine* 68).

Payyan wonders if the work carried out by mister Yadav can solve the problem. He is sure that Raghbir's party will not help the villagers. So, he decides to help them in his way. He is the only one in the room to have a real concern for the old villager and his son. His concern is rather genuine and truly humanitarian. "Payyan thought, I owe it to the poor old man that the police don't beat up his people anymore" (VKN *Bovine* 68). Thus, he sends an editor and a group of reporters to the village through his friend, Raman. Payyan thought it was a good thing that the "Harijans will be safe for a time from the friends of the Party of all the People of India" (VKN *Bovine* 69). Anasuya with a heightened sympathy for the villagers suddenly said that if Yadav was not good, she would visit the next day. Payyan says, "Don't be in a hurry, wait for some more time to make sure that the Harijans are still alive

after Yadav handles the case. You can save a trip to the village if they become martyrs in the cause of caste Hinduism in the meantime" (VKN *Bovine* 69).

V.K.N uses humour as a tool for criticizing the socially and politically wealthy classes in India who control the government and its surrounding power mobilizations. As emphasized by his critics the humour comes from the life around where awful and shameless transactions of political power are staged under the disguise of decency and diplomacy. The newspapers that are supposedly working for the betterment of democracy and public knowledge do not always bring backstage scenes to their readers, especially when they are benefitting from the power play of politics.

Conclusion: *Bovine Bugles* and *The Syndicate* create humour through social and political critique. The language used and the characters depicted have elements of humour and laughter in plenty. Larger-than-life figures of politicians and other civil elites here do represent a class of Indian people beyond their pretentious selves. Thus, the subject of the novels is the secret conversations between various people connected through politics and power. Payyan is the epitome of humour in the novels. His character is antithetical to a general sensibility of moral corruption and greed for greater power that covers most of the other characters in the novels. All the high-class men and women belong to the said category. The slum dwellers, villagers, and some journalists are the opposite class. The slum dwellers and villagers are exactly the opposite of power because of their position in the socio-economic and political world. There is little information on the journalists' tribe except for Raman on what forms their worldview apart from their profession. Payyan is the only character in these novels whose moral and ethical vision is fully exposed. His vision is in contrast with that of the political and social elites. Therefore, Payyan stands as an opposite pole to their life and provides a counter-world view in the process. The character can be seen as an alternative vision espoused by the author. Payyan opens up the possibilities of a dialogic vision of the world. While the spectacle of politics works in a monologic way creating a myth of welfare and democracy, Payyan brings in the hollow underside carnivalising the whole event.

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ROLE OF HAIR, SKIN, AND COLOUR: EXPERIENCE IN THE FOREIGN LAND IN ADICHIE'S *AMERICANAH*

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Abstract: *Adichie's 2013 novel, Americanah is a quintessential, contemporary African novel which emphasizes on the issues of race and identity. It is a story of a young Nigerian girl Ifemelu and her lover Obinze, who immigrate to America and England respectively to get better education and a promising life. This novel explicates the trauma felt by the Nigerian expatriates in the U.S.A. and England, where they go to find better prospects of life. It has set off certain discussions among critics on the current circumstances of race and identity in American culture. The present paper shows the discrimination based on race, hair and color, faced by Ifemelu, the protagonist of the novel, while her stay in America. It is here, in America only, that she realizes her identity of belonging to a different race. This paper deals with the argument on Race through Adichie's novel, Americanah. It appropriately justifies the plight of the migrants in foreign lands. It explains the issues of racism and identity in a very decent manner.*

Key Words: *Racism, inequality, identity, discrimination*

Introduction: Adichie, in her novel *Americanah,* quotes a famous lyric by Big Bill Broonzy, a singer, lyricist and guitarist: *If you're white, you're all right; if you're brown, stick around; if you're black, get back!* (p.184)

The above line is presenting a ladder of racial hierarchy in America, in which White people are ruling from the top and the Blacks are tumbling at the bottom. "…because you know black is at the bottom of America's race ladder." (p.220). This line illustrates the 'American tribalism', a discriminatory behaviour and arrogance of American White people for the Black people of out-groups, based on race and identity.

Racism differentiates the groups of people on the basis of their distinctive physical and behavioral traits, and marks the superiority of one race over the other. The identity and social background of the groups or races are determined by their hair, skin and colour. Racism is based on social perceptions in which various races are positioned as distinctively better or substandard than one another, in view of their

abilities, qualities, and inherited traits. So, racism refers to the biasness, separation, or opposition against each-other, since the other belongs to a different race or nationality. Racism in America refers to disapproving attitudes of white Americans for different racial or ethnic groups. African people were made slaves, oppressed and were devoid of all the rights. Even after the abolition of the slave trade in 1865, African people have confronted the inequalities and injustices in the political, social, and economic arenas.

Hair, skin, and colour symbolically brings forth the issues of blacks in the foreign land and the discriminatory behaviour of the white people towards them, just because of their appearance. In America, the deep-seated racist discernment can be seen in the importance that is given to a woman with straight hair in comparison with a woman having kinky hair. The story of this novel is based on a young, ambitious Nigerian woman, Ifemelu, who, on her lover's advice, moves to the United States for getting higher education and a bright future. The novel explains Ifemelu's life in two nations, Nigeria and America. Ifemelu, the protagonist of the novel, is a bold, intelligent and candid Nigerian young woman. The corruption and poor economy of Nigeria compel the two lovers to depart as Ifemelu moves to America and her lover, Obinze, having not been able to get visa to America, moves to England. The harsh reality of her black identity remains dominant through all the years of her stay in America.

In *Americanah,* 'hair' especially presents a substantial meaning in the discussion about black race and identity. *Americanah* begins with Adichie's anxiety with hair in America, when the protagonist, Ifemelu expresses her disliking to travel from Princeton to Trenton to get her hair braided because in Princeton, a posh area of America, hair braiding salon cannot be found. Ifemelu's disillusionment with the country and its cruel racial practices has made her to take the decision of moving back to her roots in Nigeria. That is why, after spending so many years in America, Ifemelu has decided to return to her own country with her braided hair, that she had at the time, when she landed in America. So, she takes this journey to Trenton's braiding salon where she sees the struggles of black women, especially migrants, on account of race differences in America. She has come from a background, where she has never encountered racial discrimination, and has arrived in America, where race matters a lot. It is here that Ifemelu needs to discover means of managing these divisions, mainly when she realizes that her natural dark kinky hair is not lovely and not professional. To meet the requirements of the dominant culture, Ifemelu replaces her kinky hair with relaxed hair and turns into a symbolic transfer from her natural self to a professional self. This transformation is not only

giving her much pain with the "needles of stinging pain shot up from different parts of her scalp" (p. 203), but also damages her emotionally, as it "made her feel a sense of loss" (p. 203). Her receding hairline is a symbol of her altered identity; "her hairline shifted further backwards each day." (p.208). The narrator describes her poignant psychological state when she gets her hair flattened:

> Her hair was hanging down rather than standing up, straight and sleek, parted at the side and curving to a slight bob at her chin. The verve was gone. She did not recognize herself. She left the salon almost mournfully; while the hairdresser had flat-ironed the ends, the smell of burning, of something organic dying which should not have died, had made her feel a sense of loss. (p. 203).

This crossing point of race and beauty gives birth to the issues of identity crisis and adaptation of black women in American culture. Fanon in 1967 writes:

> When the black man comes into contact with the white world, he goes through an experience of sensitisation; his ego collapses, his self-esteem evaporates…the entire purpose of his behavior is to emulate the white man…and thus, hope to be accepted as a man. (Fanon, 80).

The competition for high professionalism and achieving excellence has compelled the black women to search devices of straightening their hair by utilizing relaxers and hot combs to suit Anglo American beauty standards. The media have also supported these racial overviews and so-called reasoned agendas. One of Ifemelu's blog posts about racism in America strikingly represents this reality by referring to a TV show which presents a black woman with natural hair as ugly before, and pretty after her hair is straightened.

> Ever notice makeover shows on TV, how the black woman has natural hair (coarse, coily, kinky, or curly) in the ugly "before" picture, and in the pretty "after" picture, somebody's taken a hot piece of metal and singed her hair straight? (p.297)

This pressure is felt by Ifemelu's Aunt Uju, when she succeeds in the United States Medical Licensing Examination and is expected to relax her hair to look more perfect and professional for the job. Aunt Uju expresses the compulsion of having straight hair for her interview:

> I have to take my braids out for my interviews and relax my hair. Kemi told me that I shouldn't wear braids to the interview. If you have braids, they will think you are unprofessional. (p.119)

Straight and smooth hair is seen as excellent and professional hair. So, in *Americanah,* Adichie presents a narrative of racial and social inquisitions that African immigrants need to grapple with in the society of white people.

At the same time, the support and correspondence of a black with the other blacks in America becomes an aide to negotiate with the standards of American society. Wambui, a Kenyan woman studying in Philadelphia on a student visa, introduces Ifemelu to the African Students Union, and inspires her to keep in touch with the Africans. '…remain friends with fellow Africans, as this will help you keep your perspective' (p. 140) is a substantial psychological support that helps Ifemelu as well as other Africans like her, who are confronted with the ordeals of consenting to the standards of American culture. It is Wambui, who later encourages Ifemelu to wear her natural hair with dignity. The 'gentle, swaying sense of renewal' (p. 139) that Ifemelu feels among other members of this union, is a move towards her self-declaration and psychological stability. When Ifemelu gets burns and hair fall due to the hot combs and hair relaxers, it is Wambui, who encourages Ifemelu to leave them and be herself. "It's the chemicals," Wambui told her. "Do you know what's in a relaxer? That stuff can kill you. You need to cut your hair and go natural." (p.208). She further warns Ifemelu about the psychological implication of straightening of kinky hair: "Relaxing your hair is like being in prison. You're caged in. Your hair rules you." (p.208). Later, on the suggestion of Wambui, Ifemelu joins an online natural hair community: "HappilyKinkyNappy.com. It's this natural hair community. You'll find inspiration." (p.209).

The need for money takes Ifemelu to work for a dark-skinned lecherous tennis coach as his assistant, who uses her to take sexual favours from her. This incident pushes her into depression and disgust, and she leaves her job of assistant to that coach. She is left disgraced and distorted, and breaks her ties with Obinze by not replying to his messages and emails. During her job of a babysitter in America, she starts dating a white man, Curt. But she fails to withstand her relationship with Curt, and puts an end to it, as she has realized that in her efforts to integrate the White and Black cultures, her own identity will be lost. On the recommendations of Wambui, Ifemelu begins writing blogs about race in America namely 'Raceteenth or Various Observations About American Blacks (Those Formerly Known as Negroes) by a Non-American Black.' Ifemelu writes her blogs on race as per the perceptions of a non-American black woman, which makes her very much popular in America. A love affair starts between Ifemelu and Blaine, a dark American educator at Yale, and she moves in with him. But this also becomes troublesome, as Ifemelu and Blaine have distinctive identities. Both are Africans, but their national identities and

interests are not the same. Their disagreement leads them to indulge in a fight, subsequently Ifemelu decides to leave Blaine forever.

In America, Ifemelu's blog writing not only helps her in earning a living, but also serves to shape her as a self-centered and discerning individual who remarks fairly on people and social happenings around her. Ifemelu impeccably sums up her tendency over the racial divisions she perceives in the USA, in these regularly posted blogs:

> Dear Non-American black, when you make the choice to come to America, you become black. Stop arguing. Stop saying I'm Jamaican or I'm Ghanaian. America doesn't care. So what if you weren't "black" in your country? You're in America now. We all have our moments of initiation into the Society of former Negroes. (p.220)

Through one of such blogs of Ifemelu, Adichie has succeeded to depict the intolerance of white people for the blacks in America:

> When a crime is reported, pray that it was not committed by a black person, and if it turns out to have been committed by a black person, stay well away from the crime area for weeks, or you might be stopped for fitting the profile. If a black cashier gives poor service to the non-black person in front of you, compliment that person's shoes or something, to make up for the bad service, because you're just as guilty for the cashier's crimes. (p.221)

This paper shows that how atrociously Ifemelu has to suffer for the reasons of being a woman and more so of being a black woman. She is doubly discriminated in the foreign land where the pangs of migration, suppression, alienation, frustration and loneliness make her lose her identity. This paper describes the racial fragmentation in Nigeria and abroad by citing the story of Obinze also. In search of a better future, he goes to England, struggles for his existence there, but is deported back to Nigeria after being bitterly treated. It explains the challenges of the post-colonial era, faced by the Nigerians in their own country, in America and in Europe.

Critical Analysis: The themes of racism in America and Americanization are very prominent in *Americanah*. In America, Ifemelu discovers that the American Dream is completely a mirage and that the reimbursements she gains here regularly come at a very high cost. Her Americanization is restrained however, and she step by step gets the American slang, changes to the new environmental elements, and embraces American styles. Migration and loss of identity also serve as the main

themes of the novel. Adichie brings out the fact that immigration causes separation, pain and annihilation of identity.

Climax comes when the protagonist comes back to Nigeria. She again retrieves the old frequency with Obinze and Obinze responds with obvious love and acknowledgment. The strength and genuineness of their deep-rooted relationship help them reunite, even after experiencing conjugal bond with other partners as well, whom they happen to meet during the time of their separation. The last section provides a twist in the story of the novel, when Obinze leaves the superficial relationship with his wife Kosi for his beloved, Ifemelu.

Adichie's novel *Americanah* has left long-lasting impression over her selected readers. Expectedly, the story has been a subject of different understandings inside the literary, historical and sociological academic spaces. This paper exposes how the Africans are required to accept the American culture and tradition to look like them and at the end become 'Americanah,' a sarcastic word, mockingly used to refer to Nigerian returnees from America, who are so encouraged by American culture that it makes them incapable to fit wholly again into the way of life they once used to have. Later, these immigrants fail to justify themselves for who they are and who they have become. They receive only frustration that leads them towards the loss of identity in the either space. The most crucial aspect is that these immigrants are accepted neither by the Americans and nor by the native country people. The equivalent status for the blacks, even in the modern American societies, has become a significant issue to be examined and carried out. The solution lies in social awareness among the people of both the cultures to join hand together for a better society that would be based on brotherhood and harmony instead of racial prejudice, harassment and discrimination. Diversity of culture should be accepted undeniably and every human being should be treated equally irrespective of color, race, ethnicity, and nationality.

Conclusion: This paper shows that how the females express their firmness, freedom, identity and satisfaction in the society. Adichie's experiences and her personal struggles as a black in America seem to enliven this novel. Through her woman protagonist in this novel, she has well explored the entire struggle of a woman and a black migrant.

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SOCIOLINGUISTIC PERSPECTIVES ON ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING IN INDIA

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Abstract: *Since the nineteenth century, language experts have dared to enhance the standard of language education by pointing to broad concepts and principles that govern the mode of learning, expressing, organising, and constructing a language. Because of a variety of political and socioeconomic variables, we see a wide range of efforts to teach English at various levels, as well as anextensivedivergence in the level of expertise accomplished by diverse educators. The teaching scenario, at the tertiary level too, does not provide a good overview of what we're up to and what we intend to do in the long run. A critical analysis of the relevance of the sociolinguistic approach in ELT classrooms is worth it at this juncture. Sociolinguists look into the interaction of language and society and place an emphasis on communicative competence. They advocate for a gradual shift in the proportion of class time to activities that encourage fluency. The paper throws light on some aspects of sociolinguistics that are relevant to ensuring better outcomes in the ELT classroom.*

Keywords:*Communicative Competence, ELT, Ethnography of Communication, Fluency, Sociolinguistics*

Sociolinguistics is indeed the analysis of the character traits of linguistic forms, the qualities of their features, and the attributes of their speakers in the context of their speech community (Fishman, 1972:4).The structural approach to teaching English in ESL classrooms was initiatedin the 1950s and remained prevalent in the 1960s. And yet, as new breakthroughs in linguistics as pertained to language instruction emerged, the usefulness of the structural approach remained into doubt, then emphasis was shifted towards the significance of linguistic creativity. As a result of this noveladvance, “the transformational generative approach” arose, and then several institutions altered their previous curricula. As a result, the situation has improved somewhat. However, the experience quickly showed significant flaws in this strategy, prompting an active quest for a more relevant and worthwhile alternative.A notable advancement in the field of 'language as communication' occurred around the onset of the 1970s. A new approach known as the functional

approach arose, which resulted in the creation of new syllabuses and instructional materials.

The concern in the Indian context is whether this recent advancement wholly accounts for the cultural and social variables that had a massive effect on English language teaching, learning, and so on. Language innovation, application, instruction and learning in the academic context seem to be challenging in our multilingual culture.It has already been clearly indicated that "the sociolinguistic" scenario in India is distinguished by an extreme extent of linguistic assortment, that mirrors the general societal ethnic and religious pluralism (Kachru, 1965). In a research conducted in 1984, Parasher (1977) and Das (1977) demonstrated the relevance of educated Indians using English in official realms,for example, curriculum, administration, and occupation.It is then inferred that there is a disparity between the requirement and the implementation.Over the last three decades, there is an increasing interest in examining the social implications of language, or rather initiatives have been taken to incorporate perceptions on linguistics and society.Such a consideration has prompted the creation of a novel field of study known as "sociolinguistics". It used to be presumed only as a linguistics discipline, however, it is now recognised a distinct discipline. This interdisciplinary topic studies the relationship of language and society.

The term sociolinguistics first appeared in the “International Linguistic Bibliography” in 1967. Despite the fact that voluminouswriters, primarily linguists as well as sociologists and psychologists, acknowledged the significance of linguistic analysis in its social settings at the turn of the century, the term was devised by Haver C. Currie, an English instructorof Houston University, Texas, in 1952. He aimed en route for inspiring research on the relationship amidcommunication, behaviour, and societal standing. It was first presented to American linguists in 1962 by Ramanujan and William Bright at the “Eighth International Congress of Linguistics” in Cambridge, Massachusetts (published in 1964). Sociolinguistics expanded primarily during the late 1960s and the early 1970s. This is not to say that studying language with regard to society is a 1960s advance. On the other hand, dialectology and the general investigation of the link among word meaning and culture, that are both core components of sociolinguistics, have a long history. Linguists from earlier in the century, like Sapir (1921), Firth (1937), Haugen (1956), etc. contributed to prepare the path for the birth of theinnovative area. These previous publications, though, could not have anticipated the meteoric rise of “sociolinguistics”.

Dell Hymes, an American social anthropologist and linguist, used the term "ethnography of speech" to define language research in its sociocultural settings (1962). Sociolinguistics, according to Hymes, is an interdisciplinary field that encompasses sociology,education, linguistics, social anthropology, psychology, folklore and poetics. He expressed a stimulatingremark that there is a long tradition of integrating linguistics with the social sciences, particularly anthropology. Since the eighteenth century, terms like ethnography, philological ethnology and linguistic anthropology have been applied. Because several disciplines' interests overlap in sociolinguistics, it appears appropriate to categorise that as an interdisciplinary area. It raises the question of whether sociolinguistics is a distinct branch of linguistics or merely an eclectic mash-up of concepts and processes from diverse fields. A common understanding of a specific area should exist among specialists. In a nutshell, linguistics is concerned with the description of language, while anthropology is concerned with the description of human civilizations. However, whether sociolinguistics has attained such definite autonomy is debatable.

Sociolinguistics has benefited greatly from sociological research methodologies. Fishman advocated for the adoption of the phrase "sociology of language," which nearly encompasses the entire discipline of sociolinguistics. "....the sociology of language focuses on the entire gamut of topics linked to the social institution of language behaviour, not only of the language usage per se but also language sentiments and behaviour toward language and language users," Fishman explicitly says (Fishman1972, 45). One facet of sociolinguistics is the variance of communication in diversesocietal circumstances as well as the use of numerous norms to organise communication. Several recent studies have been conducted on linguisticusage in specific circumstances, for examplein classroom situations (Sinclair and Coulthard 1975). Such investigations highlight the tremendous complexity of ordinary language use in which words serve multiple tasks at the same time.

It is often assumed that social reality cannot be grasped by a set of data but must be formed through interaction. Sociolinguistic studies embrace the study of traditions, tales, and customs concerning the community where it is generated. As a result, it is evident that the primary emphasis of sociolinguistics is on the language in use.One of the most notable aspects of learner-centered sociolinguistics is the emphasis on communicative competence in addition to linguistic ability. Communicative competence refers to the capacity to utilise language in a discourse. According to Richards, Platt, and Weber (1985:49), communicative

competence encompasses understanding of syntax and lexicon, knowledge of speech rules, and realising how to execute and respond to numerous kinds of speech acts like pleas, invitations, and so on (49).

The study of speech acts is also a focus of sociolinguistics. In the interpersonal functions of communication, the speech act emphasises the link among language structures and cultural significance. The speaking act is regarded as the most significant when considering language in use. Aside from the study of speech acts, another aspect of sociolinguistics is the investigation of a person's communication process in its social milieu, known as the ethnography of interaction (Sherzer, 1977). It is the study of the role of linguistics in both society and culture. Dell Hymes advocated the concept of ethnography of communication. He has claimed that language and speech have a unique patterning that is socially determined and cannot be assumed to be given any uniformity everywhere. The scientific focus on components involved in speech behaviour, such as circumstances, participants, their goals, the sequencing of their acts and how they deliver them, interaction norms, and the linguistic variety used, will lead to a fuller understanding of the cultural dimensions of communication.

This component of 'sociolinguistics' broadens the scope of linguistics beyond the erudition of formal communicative features. As a result, there is less emphasis in the speech act is placed on the formal aspects of linguistics (structural linguistics) and the cognitive states of language practice (psycholinguistics), with further importance put on the interactive roles of speech performances and the correlation between language structures and cultural significance. Thus, communication is viewed as a culturally relevant event in which linguistic use, social conventions and social surroundings carry out important roles. Consequently, the sequence of interpersonal occurrences in a specific setting offers the context for the message.

According to Stern, this interest in the social function of speech infers that the model for linguistic analysis is fluctuating away from the pronouncement in solitude and the analysis of the context into which this pronouncement must be positioned, to an attempt to assess the interpersonal interactions as the prime event and speech structures as ancillary (1983: 220). The emphasis is now on the functions of language, the relationships between participants, the medium used, and the setting in which the speech act is performed.

Sociolinguists place an emphasis on syntax of functions over syntax of forms. A syntax of forms acquaints one with the syntacticedifices and guidelinespremeditated to exhibitin what manner language functions. A syntax of functions assembles a language's syntacticedifices and how they can be employed by anassortment of persons in a range of settings for interactiveutterances. Persons who understand and employ a language are essentially focused on the ways they can employ the speech to carry out various tasks, generate meaning, call attention

to their concerns, empower their group mates, and construct a wholesome social circle for themselves. In a nutshell, they are eager to complete specific tasks.

The distinctions drawn amid the ideas of “accuracy” and “fluency” in the usage of language are the result of a focus on use vs. usage, on connotation rather than on formal expressions. Accuracy relates to the capacity to compose grammatically correct phrases, although, it does not necessarily imply the ability to talk or write fluently. Whereas fluency entails a level of proficiency that considers the capacity to deliver verbal and written language with minimal effort, the capacity to express message correctly, the ability to produce speech without communication breakdown, and the ability to utter with effective but not necessarily ideal command of tonality, diction, and syntax. Communicative methods are essential from the outset of any study or learning.

According to Brumfit (1984:53), language learners go through accuracy and fluency enhancing activities in the classroom on a regular basis. Extensive reading, for example, is directed at fluency, whereas copiousrigorous reading activitiesaredirected at accuracy; contextual writing exercises are targeted at fluency, whereas guided writing tasks aretargeted at accuracy; and listening drills are pointed at accuracy, whereas casual listening plays an imperative role as a fluency enriching activity. The goal of Brumfit's fluency-focussed teaching paradigm envisages for pupils to be able to utilise the language they have learned for whatever reason they want and to be competent to stretch as extreme as they want (1984:123). This methodology allows a student to perform everything fluently in the target language—reading, speaking, listening, or writing—in a way that progresses from being clearly non-native to an acceptable quality. Fluency-based activities should be included in language classes. They can only be used in task-oriented language instruction.

Language teaching encompasses the development of a language structure and the capability to practise it as a learning mechanism in a variety of contexts."Sociolinguistics" has had a significant effect on language education.It can be considered as an architect of societal identity. The prominent purpose of sociolinguistics in teaching English is to equip educators with a set of rules and functions to enhance the productive skills of language such as speaking and writing, as well as to boost their intercultural communication consciousness through its emphasis on pragmatism. For genuine communication, the meaningful communicative setting with its focus on both linguistic and communicative competence must be established. In a recent study, it is stated that learnersbe able toobtainlanguage eloquenceviapartaking in linguistic interaction with the extraproficientindividuals of the culture while comprehending the context in which the interactionoccur (Shu, 2019). It takes into account the “real-life” usage of language in the proper social context.*In general, sociolinguists are interested in the*

social effects of language usage and perception. "Sociolinguistic competence" can be explored in language classrooms through the process-oriented approach to education, which focuses on the process a person undertakes to construct meaning. A process-oriented speaking lesson can be utilised by the teacher to assist the students to improve their communication skills by focusing on how to communicate in different contexts to perform tasks or accomplish goals. It necessitates adapting one's grammatical constructions and speech to the context of the communication.

To summarise, incorporating cultural components into the foreign language curriculum aids learners in understanding new language concepts and offers context for their application. The essential theoretical aspects of sociolinguistics, as well as the context in which it is practised, contribute to the rich social content of English language instruction. When considering language instruction in anacademic context, taking into account student-teacher relationships as well as educational components of teaching and learning, the importance of social interactions is definitely apparent. In terms of communicational functions, the use of sociolinguistics in the classroom can significantly contribute to the advancement of English language teaching methodologies.

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DEGRADATION OF WOMEN: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF FEMALE PROTAGONISTS IN LU XUN'S REGRET FOR PAST AND SHENG KEYI'S THE LOW-FLYING BAT

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***Abstract**: The paper compares and contrasts two pieces of fiction: Lu Xun's Regret for the Past and Sheng Keyi's The Low Flying Bat. The paper compares and contrasts the two women protagonists in the works and tries to trace the causes of similarities and dissimilarities in the fates. The two stories set apart at a time period of eighty-four years by two different authors of different gender display stark similarities in depicting the silences of women and hypocrisy of men at different time periods in China thereby reflecting the miserable fates of the women and society at large. Sheng Keyi in her story reiterates what Lu Xun had envisioned for women a century ago. The value of comparison of the two works lies in assessing and tracking the changes and constancies in the Chinese society with passage of time where various economic, political and social changes have taken place.*

Keywords: *women, Lu Xun, Sheng Keyi, Nora, Chinese society*

I

Lu Xun (1881 - 1936) and Sheng Keyi (1973 -) are notable writers of modern and contemporary China respectively. Both are prolific writers who have written fiction extensively of which《伤逝》Shangshi *Regret for the Past* and《低飞的蝙蝠》Difei De Bianfu *The Low Flying Bat* shows striking resemblance with one another. Whereas *Regret for the Past* was written in 1925 after the May Fourth Movement, *The Low Flying Bat* was written as recent as in the 21st century in 2008. Not only the two stories show resemblance in terms of content, language and characters, but also there are similarities in the lives of the two writers.

The two authors Lu Xun and Sheng Keyi bear a striking resemblance in terms of how they entered the literary world. In the beginning, Lu Xun wanted to practice "medicine" to cure the ailments of the masses. However, he left his medical studies in Japan halfway and went back to China to cure the "spirit" of the people through literature. Similarly, Sheng Keyi was a migrant worker who worked in Shenzhen in various roles before she gave up her profession to pursue full-time writing in 2001. In case of Lu Xun, his desire to change the nature of people became an inspiration to pursue a literary career while in case of Sheng Keyi discovering "perspective of

truth" had inspired her to write. On usage of literary devices as a political tool she stated that she uses rhetoric for the purpose of aesthetics and not as a political tool. She believes in construction of fiction to tell the truth while Lu Xun used fiction to expose. She wants to explore the "fate of humankind" through fiction. Whereas Lu Xun saw fiction as means of changing the society, Sheng Keyi sees it as exploring the possibilities in the world and thus sees fiction as the end. Lu Xun had put the society under the "microscope" and "telescope" and hence had studied the society with precision and farsightedness. Lu Xun through his writings voiced his opinions and made an attempt to cure the ailments the Chinese nation was suffering from. Sheng Keyi stated that writer can look into the future and see really far, rendering her to see the world under the telescope.

Lu Xun was a "distinguished writer at the forefront of national emancipation" (Mao, 1937). He used his mighty sardonic humorous pen to consistently and incessantly fight against the feudal and imperialistic and dark forces of the society. Sheng Keyi has acknowledged she writes for herself. However, her writing is a strong voice against the policies of Communist Party of China (CPC) in contemporary China.

Her journey from being born in the 1970s to a poor rural household in Yiyang in Hunan province to fame following the publication of *Northern Girls* seems like a fairy tale. However, in case of Lu Xun, his family had been reduced to poverty after his grandfather was jailed. Sheng Keyi, in an interview, had said that a writer can be a soldier or a doctor: a soldier fights and a doctor heals. Lu Xun left medicine his chosen career to choose literature to heal the spirit of the people by exposing the darkness. Lu Xun and Sheng Keyi belongs to the class of intellectual and migrant workers respectively. Sheng had left her formal education after Middle School. However, even with such vast differences in educational background, and gap in time period of writing, their stories show similar conclusion in regard with fate of women.

II

The two stories set apart at a time period of eighty-four years by two different authors of different gender display stark similarities in depicting the miserable fates of women and hypocrisy of men at different time periods in China. The value of comparison of the two works lies in assessing the influence of the original on the latter and tracking the changes and constancies in the Chinese society with passage of time where various economic, political and social changes have taken place. The paper compares and contrasts Lu Xun's *Regret for the Past* and Sheng Keyi's *The Low Flying Bat* from the perspective of fate of the two female characters, and

language, thereby trying to analyse the cause of similarities and dissimilarities in the works, thereby linking it to the issue of status of women in the Chinese society.

Lu Xun in a talk entitled *What Happens When Nora Leaves Home?* given to Literature and Arts Society at Beijing Women's Normal College on 26 December, 1923 had pointed out to the two options that a woman had after leaving the society: to fall into degradation or to return home. Lu Xun wrote *Regret for the Past* in 1925 in which he carves out a female protagonist Zijun, who leaves her father to accompany her lover, Juansheng against the wishes of the society only to return to her father and die. Sheng Keyi in her short story begins from the same story line. However, it is about a woman who leaves her husband and family to create her own life in the society and marry someone of her choice and in the end falls into degradation. Thus, the two stories begin with a similar note and ends with what Lu Xun had envisioned about women in the Chinese society nearly a century ago.

> "It is like the case of caged bird: of course, there is no freedom in the cage, but if it leaves the cage there are hawks, cats and other hazards outside. Another alternative is to starve to death, but since that means departing this life it presents no problem and no solution either. (Lu Xun Selected Works Volume Two 1980 p. 86)

III

The Rise and the Fall of the Woman Characters

The characters in the stories are somehow expressions of the writers' own experiences in their life. It is interesting to note that the protagonists in Lu Xun's *Regret for the Past*, i.e , Juansheng and Zijun are intellectuals and Sheng Keyi's protagonist is a migrant worker. This has a direct connection to the lives of the two writers, Lu Xun and Sheng Keyi, who were intellectual and migrant worker respectively.

Both the female protagonists in the two stories showed their resolute determination to lead their lives according to their wishes but later on, become victims or sacrificial products.

The Chinese society has always restricted the choices of women in choosing partners. When Zijun chose Juansheng, she did it against the wishes of the society. It is evident as Juansheng was cursed on his face by her uncle and Zijun had been disowned by her father. Initially, Zijun faced boldly 'searching looks', 'sarcastic smiles', 'lewd and contemptuous glances' of people without any fear. She even

went on to assert that she belongs to herself. With resolute and strong determination, she left home and started a live-in relationship with Juansheng.

Similarly, when the 'woman' in Sheng's story realized that she was unhappy in her arranged marriage, she wanted a divorce, and wanted to make her own place in the society but she was being manipulated by her mother-in-law and husband's brother's wife in continuing with her marriage with her husband. When her mother-in -law gave her a lecture on the word 'endure' and 'compromise' in her marriage, she remained silent out of 'respect for her age'. She had decided to remain in marriage for sake of her children. Even her sons for whom she had borne the brunt of the marriage for so long failed to understand her and blamed her, sided with their father on the day of judgement. However, she, too like Zijun was determined and set on her journey all alone.

Both women had maintained silence: Zijun turned a deaf ear to the lewd remarks of the society and the "woman" to the remarks of her mother-in-law. However, their silences are the manifestations of the social conditioning and helplessness rather than rebellion.

Zijun & 'Woman' as Commodities

Juansheng saw Zijun as a means to satisfy his ego and a way to escape from the 'dead quiet' and 'emptiness'. After the rosy days were over and Juansheng was laid off owing to his illegitimate relations with Zijun, Juansheng asked Zijun to leave his house. Zijun complying with his wishes left with her father without a word. The journey of Zijun's life from 'happiness' to 'melancholy' to 'icy reserve' to 'desertion' left her shattered. Zijun's silence is not a sign of strength but a sign of helplessness. Later this helplessness and lack of choices manifest in form of death which she must have chosen for herself.

In the story, *The Low-Flying Bat*, the lawyer saw the 'woman' as a sexual product. Their relationship was made in bed in the dark. The lawyer treated the woman as a maid who waited upon him and he saw her as child-birth machine, and wanted her to give him an heir. The old cadre, too, saw the woman in the light of 'sexual commodity' and as someone to fill the emptiness and void in his life as his family had abandoned him. Later on, the old cadre tried to coax her in staying with him by giving her assurance to give her his property and when such methods did not work, he did not return her identity-card, which was essential for her to search for a job and attain economic independence.

Both the stories have not been narrated from the perspective of the women. *Regret for the Past* is written in form of remorse and has been narrated from the

perspective of Juansheng. And Sheng Keyi's story is narrated by a narrator, who seem to be biased. In both cases, we do not have a first-hand version of the reality through the eyes of the female protagonist but a reading between the lines shows the despair of these two women protagonists. The narrator of the story *The Low Flying Bat* states that things were even out between the 'woman' and the lawyer when their affairs were discovered by their partners. This is the most easily understood logic. However, I would like to point the circumstances in which they had affair with the other was different. The man had constantly stated that the Mrs Li was "short-tempered", lacked the temperament of woman and that he really loved the woman and not Mrs Li. However, he slept with Mrs Li which was evident from Mrs Li carrying his child in her womb. On the other hand, the woman slept with the old cadre since she wanted money to file a divorce in the court which of course the lawyer did not provide her. The lawyer never asked the woman to divorce from her husband. It did not stem from him abiding by the morality of his profession but he was because he did not want to take her responsibility but only to satisfy his sexual needs as their relationship was made in the bed secretly.

Thus, the male characters were nothing but hypocrites, who treated the women as 'commodities' and threw them away, when they failed to satisfy their ego and asserted their own wishes.

Women tagged as "Useless"

In the face of odds, Zijun, who once seemed to be the embodiment of the glorious future of China and a fatal blow to the pessimism and the feudal ideologies about women turned into an entirely insensible woman driven by the imperative to feed and eat. After Juansheng was fired from his job, Juansheng complained that Zijun had no interest for intellectual activities. No matter whatever claim Juansheng made to show himself as progressive by belittling Zijun, somewhere Juansheng was weak and was holding on to traditions. Perhaps Lu Xun was being critical of the male intellectuals like Juansheng, who initially encouraged women to go against the patriarchal system, but somehow deserted them at the onset of unfavourable circumstances or more likely when the females failed to feed their ego. For instance, their relationship deteriorated when Juansheng lost his job owing to his "illegitimate relations". Zijun's lively eyes, her actions, her words which gave him encouragement till this time seemed 'hollow' and 'empty' to him. She was engrossed in cooking and looking after the animals and had no time to spend with him as evident from the words 'no time even to chat, much less to read or go for walks. Her smile seemed to be forced. Juansheng seemed to discover 'covert looks of unhappiness'. Juansheng no longer found her to be 'considerate' or 'quiet'

as she had been. Here, although the cause elucidated is that it does not let him to focus on his work, it might be interpreted in a different perspective. This, somewhere, subtly hints at the fact that Zijun was not complying with his wishes. According to Juansheng, Zijun had been 'dispirited', 'sulky', 'bored' and 'sad'. Her proud and bold words seemed to be hollow as she had forgotten all that she had learned. According to him, Zijun had forgotten earning a living was the first step and love was secondary. Juansheng's hypocrisy is exposed as the woman who had squabbled with her uncle and had been eventually disowned because of Juansheng, had been thrown out of the house by him. Juansheng disregarded her sacrifices and did not hesitate to say crude words to her. Thus, Juansheng was one of those people, who just saw his own interest and not their interest. He never wanted her to progress but to satisfy his ego that he had been a cause in somebody being progressive. As we see, it had left Juansheng 'record his grief and remorse'. However, there is a little hypocrisy in even remorse because even after her death, he just wanted to 'forget' her for his 'own sake so that he could 'make a fresh start'.

The 'woman' in The Low-Flying Bat had been a housewife and she was dependent on her husband. After she left her home, she was not able to earn a living on her own and was torn into pieces between the lawyer and the cadre for what she wanted. However, here economic independence did not come because of two different reasons. While she was with the lawyer, the lawyer prohibited the woman from work as she is 'his woman' and working in a low-paying job was sign of utter disrespect for him and was equivalent to 'losing face'. However, the lawyer also accused that she has taken an easy way and is reluctant to learn new skills for earning money. When the woman was with the cadre, and wanted to work, she required her identity card. But she had to submit her identity card to the cadre because she had borrowed money for filing a divorce and the old cadre would give back only after she would repay him. This was a tactics he had used to forcibly keep her in his life, a symbolic of the cage that Lu Xun speaks about. And hence she had no option but had to wait upon some other man (the other men are symbolic of predators like hawks).

Both the lawyer and the cadre restricted her from gaining economic independence and wanted to control the woman through subtle ways like coaxing by painting a glossy picture of the future. As long as the woman slept with the two men, they had no problem with her, but as soon as she wanted to assert her independence, they tried to control her through manipulative scheming. Some might advocate that such women have 'bottom power', that is to get anything from the man by sleeping with

him, but this is not equivalent of 'power' that men wield as women tap into the power of some other person for some time and in some cases it might even backfire.

In the story *Regret for the Past*, when Juansheng asked Zijun to leave, Zijun went back to her father without uttering a word. In the story, The Low-Flying Bat, the 'woman' in Sheng Keyi's story has maintained silence in order to preserve the purity of love. She maintained silence when he exploited her by treating her as a 'maid' without pay, she did not speak up when she wanted money for filing a divorce in fear of tainting her love with money, she maintained distance when the lawyer spoke with Mrs Li from the Taxation Bureau. When the lawyer pressurized her to give birth even after knowing that she had tubectomy, she remained silent. Her silence stems from the thought of losing the lawyer. Silence of these two women is not again surely a choice but out of fear and perhaps love.

It is the general belief that a woman is strong when she has choices and when she chooses without being subtly affected by the social conditions around her. The women in both the stories could not choose something which is not being done through social conditioning. The silences of Zijun and the woman were not choices but products of social normalization and silence was a way of life.

Women As Animals

In *Regret for the Past*, when Juansheng faced economic crisis as he was thrown out of job for having illegitimate relations, his real character comes out. In the face of odds, Juansheng thought of hens, Asui, their dog as additional burdens. Zijun is shown to be as inferior as Asui. Needless to say, that in course of time, Zijun too had become a burden to him and he asked her for separation. Not only the hens end up becoming 'food', Asui is pushed into a trench so as to prevent him from coming back, Zijun is also compelled to leave and embrace death. Lu Xun indirectly compared the status of Zijun to that of an animal.

In contrast, in Sheng's story, when the woman expresses her desire to lead an independent life, the husband of the woman compares her to a bat, which unlike a bird is unable to fly high and can only reach as low as the eaves of the roof of a house. This reaffirms that women are still considered insignificant in comparison to men. The protagonist of the story has no name and is referred to as "the woman". This symbolizes the story is related to every woman in China. It seems it is still very difficult for women to survive in a world outside marriage or out of relationship with men.

IV

On the issue of women, Lu Xun was never of the view that these women would be given rights. They had to undergo inevitable struggle, assert their economic independence. Lu Xun was perhaps pointing to the lack of opportunities to economically support themselves outside of marriage. The fact that Lu Xun had provided Nora with the drastic alternative option of "prostitution" instead of returning home shows us that he believed in the strength of women to fight against the odds of the society. However, to some extent falling into degradation is not the best solution but only an alternative which degrades women, and hence is far from what is true emancipation or empowerment. It is interesting to note that Lu Xun's words still hold water. Women seem to be having similar fate even in the twenty-first century China. Lu Xun's character Zijun returned home while Sheng Keyi's 'woman' went to prostitution with the awakened feeling that she was a louse (women) trying to seek shelter under a strand of hair (lawyer) of the cow (patriarchal society). Although Sheng's 'woman' has failed to make a respectable living in the society, she had chosen the alternative to 'go to degradation' than 'return to her family'.

At even different stages of development with a gap of nearly a century in China, women continue to be the second-class citizens and the 'second sex'. Negligence is what Juansheng had for Zijun. Although the story is narrated in form of remorse of Juansheng, a reading in between the lines show the abuse that Zijun faced in her relationship. Even the lawyer or the old cadre in Sheng's story were no great. What these men inflicted on these two women were sophisticated form of violence. Emotional violence was on both the inflicted by the men. Zijun returned home – the first alternative that Lu Xun had suggested for women. Sheng's 'woman' resorted to 'prostitution'- the second alternative that Lu Xun had envisioned for women.

V

There are similarities in these two stories in terms of the fates of women. There can be two reasons behind these similarities. First, Lu Xun being one of the greatest modern Chinese writers had an influence on Sheng Keyi. This is evident when Sheng, in an interview made direct references to Lu Xun's concept of "a dog-eat-dog world, person-eat-person world" (cannibalism) (Mullin 2018). In a way, Sheng has seen the development of the 21st century in terms of "machi eat person world": a world in which fast-paced economic development of China has taken place at the cost of blood and sweat of migrant workers but the same migrant workers are ill-treated making them sacrificial products.

Second, the condition of women in the Chinese society has not changed. It is seen that the fate of both the women as depicted in the two stories is miserable. However, they belong to different era. Thus, question arises, as to what has changed in China in regard to status of women. Are both the woman have anything special characteristics peculiar to the era they are living in or is it the same? Has the Chinese society stagnated in terms of development towards women?

A superficial study would say 'yes' but what we need to analyse is that both the women are not the same individual and have other identities associated with them.

When Lu Xun wrote the story in 1925, it was the phase after the May Fourth Movement, when there was a call for emancipation of women. It was written in Republic of China when the intellectuals were trying their best to change the feudal mindset of the society. Women were challenging the norms of the society through education, choosing partners for themselves. However, Sheng Keyi's story has been written in the 21st century when China has already had experienced 'economic miracle' after decades of political turbulence. Although the economic miracle lifted China from poverty but it also created a brand-new class of migrant workers who are being exploited. And the condition of women migrant workers is even worse as they not only face discrimination for being a 'migrant' but also face discrimination for being a 'woman'.

On one hand, Zijun is an image/product of the 1920s intellectual class who were embodiment of change in transition from the feudal society to modern China. Scholars have established the fact through Zijun's physical description that she was "an archetypal school girl during the May Fourth Movement period: her pale round face, stripped cotton louse and black skirt" (Feng 2004 p. 41). On the other hand, Sheng's 'woman' is a migrant worker and has been a product of the Reform and Opening Up policy in 1980s and never existed before 1980s in China. With setting up exclusive economic zones, women from rural villages migrated to the cities in search for jobs. Under the leadership of Deng Xiaoping and the others, China's adopted the economic reforms and opened its door to the outside world, which led rural inhabitants to migrate to the cities. The condition of such women migrant workers was quite miserable. The protagonist of the story *The Low-Flying Bat* travels to such a place which gave them hope of a new and better life. Although the economic miracle lifted China from poverty but it also created a brand-new class of migrant workers who are being exploited. Sheng writes about the contemporary rural migrant women and she herself was one of those vast army of migrant workers (*liudong renkou* 流动人口 floating population) who had no option but to work in menial jobs or to get into relationship for survival. Sheng Keyi's 'woman'

moves from one man to other. In short, she resorts to 'prostitution' to make the ends meet. With the diversification of the sex industry in China, seven types of prostitution[1] are identified with 'mistresses' being the top-notch and the "xiagongpeng" 小工棚after-work shacks, the lowest in the hierarchy. The woman belongs to the category of "xiagongpeng". Unlike, mistresses who are given luxurious apartments, lumpsum monthly payments and live a 'glamourous life', these women enter into relationship with men, however old or young to avail 'accommodation' and 'two square meals' a day, just as Sheng's 'woman' did. This diversification in the sex industry like these women migrant workers is also a product of the Reform and Opening-up policies.

In both the stories, the women are seen as feeble and weak, who cannot make a life outside marriage or without men. In both cases, the options chosen by the women were not voluntary but the consequences of the circumstances they faced, which in turn was the result of the actions of the male characters. Although we would never know a first-person narration of the women characters in the story, it is not hard to tell that Zijun had no option but to return to her father. And the woman too had was compelled to switch over to a job in "prostitution" as in China without a local hukou or identity card, one cannot get employment. Thus, the woman had no option but to wait upon men and she did realize in the end that she was a "louse" seeking shelter under one strand of hair. Thus, although the stories have been set a time span of eighty-four years, the situation related to women have not changed. They continue to remain under the dominance of men. No matter how high women want to fly, they lose the abilities and continue to remain in their cages or fall prey to the predators outside! And the validity of Lu Xun's statement for Chinese women remaining same is sad but true.

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[1] For more details on the seven types of prostitutes, refer to Barbara Onnis (2012)

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SHIFTING BETWEEN PLACE AND SPACE: THE TRANSFORMING POWER OF WOMEN IN SELECTED FILMS

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Abstract: *This article is an investigation into how the theoretical formulations of the concepts of place and space are related to the cultural practices in society. It is specifically oriented to analyse how the representations of women in films are influenced by the idea of a social space generated and maintained by the patriarchally hegemonic structures in society. This study has taken two representative Malayalam films in which the various strategies of male dominated society to repress the women are presented. The theoretical framework adopted in this study is the concept of the production of space and its relationship with the concept of place as proposed by Andre Lefebvre. Human beings, irrespective of their gender, occupy a place that they can transform into a meaningful space to exist with all the colours of a visioned life. A sense of place is vital for navigating through a sensible space of being. Sometimes the place stretches out with almost all the beauties of a lived landscape and at other times it scorches with the blaze of repressive lived experiences. The portrayal of this subtle shades of transition from the given place to the created or acquired space in the celluloid has often challenged the traditional norms of cultural and political acceptance of actual human conditions. The representation of women who transcend the limits of their individual places to realise their uniqueness and meaning of existence could be observed in the recent films in Malayalam and two of them are taken as specimen and analysed here.*

Key words: space, place, representation, patriarchal masochism, identity.

Academic research and intellectual investigations into the trajectory of gender studies have propped up and problematized many an ideological position regarding the status women occupy in the society. These discussions were powerful enough to question a variety of conceptions which remained conservative or regressive and were purported to restrain the freedom exercised by women both inside and outside their home. Various changes brought about in the social life as a result of shifts in

the theoretical and academic fields were accepted as manifestations of a new sensibility in the patriarchal and hegemonic structures of society. Many changes occurred in the representation of women in literature, art, films, and academic enterprises. It seemed to bring about a sea change in the way the issues of women were addressed in the society. The theoretical rise of feminism and discourses related to it foreshadowed the hope in remoulding the social values for a more equalitarian system in the social and political life. The three waves of feminist thought, as Fiona Tolan argues, paved the way for the rise of a new cultural turn that turned out to be a catalyst for the emancipation process of women, though it took place primarily in the West.

Despite the fact that the apparent and visible features of feminism make the impression that women are placed in high esteem in various social institutions like family, education, and administrative structures, the reality turns out to be just opposite to it. The relative progress and advancement in the status of women in society are still distant dreams to be realised. The very attitude of the society remains regressive and conservative towards even the most successful among women who could find a place in the higher bodies of administration in the country. The claims over equal treatment of women and the respect towards the unique position of women in the development of the nations can be juxtaposed with the actual practice where the opposite prevails. This contradictory situation needs to be analysed to find out the reasons for and solutions to this pressing problem.

This article proposes the argument that the issue in hand is the result of a mistaken understanding regarding real emancipation and progress. The relative progress society claims can be seen as advancement in the position or place of women and it does not concern the quality of the space they occupy A speculative analysis of the difference/relationship between place and space is attempted here to see how these key terms play a vital role in the understanding of women liberation. The traditional philosophical and academic understanding of place envisaged it as restricted and having a binary relationship with the concept of space. The very understanding of the difference between place and space may be seen as a paradigm shift in the history of the philosophical systems. Tim Mehigan states:

> A distinction was introduced – let us say it began with Descartes – between the process of ordering experience through the activity of the mind, on the one hand, and the existence of one's physical body in 'outside' space, on the other. The ordering activity of the mind, where 'units' of perception were created from what could be taken in of the world through consciousness,

> separated the mind's processes from what could be assumed about the make-up of the world outside the boundaries of the self. (8)

It is the space outside the mind which can be understood as the place where one encounters one's place of existence as different from the space within the mind (personal as well as social) which dynamic and calls for liberative changes from the stagnant existence in the physical place.

Doreen Massey explains that this view of place is "as bounded, as in various ways a site of an authenticity, as singular, fixed and unproblematic in its identity. It is a conceptualization of place which rests in part on the view of space as stasis" (5). However, he counters this view emphasising the interconnectedness and mixing up of boundaries. "The identities of place are always unfixed, contested and multiple. And the particularity of any place is, in these terms, constructed not by placing boundaries around it and defining its identity through counter position to the other which lies beyond, but precisely (in part) through the specificity of the mix of links and interconnections to that 'beyond'" (5). This view of place provides room for more free and spontaneous ways in which the gender roles in the society may be analysed. The occupation of a particular place, understood in the traditional conceptualization, leads to stagnation and ensuing slavery as far as women are concerned. Place imposes boundaries while the crossing of place to find space leads to new horizons. "The construction of gender relations is also strongly implicated in the debate over the conceptualization of place. The view of place advocated here, where localities can in a sense be present in one another, both inside and outside at the same time, is a view which stresses the construction of specificity through interrelations rather than through the imposition of boundaries and the counter position of one identity against another" (7). All identities including the gender identities are constructed from the negotiations of self. "Place and space do not merely provide a backdrop for the negotiation of individual identities but are both central resources in the construction of working selves and are made and re-made through these on-going negotiations of self" (Halford 11).

The transition from the constrains of the limited place to the limitless and creative free space is what is required for women to enter into a new way of being in the society. The concept of space as a triad of spatial practice, representations of space, and representational space envisaged by Andre Lefebvre contributes to the meaningful understanding of space as a means for the emancipation of people especially that of the marginalised. "These three levels of determination correspond, within an overall unity, to the perceived, the conceived, and the directly experienced (or 'lived ')" (246). It is in the creative synchronisation of

these three levels of space that an emancipatory social system can emerge. Lefebvre quotes the example of Greek society to show how the marginalisation of women takes place:

> All historical societies have diminished the importance of women and restricted the influence of the female principle. The Greeks reduced the woman's station to that of the fertility of a field owned and worked by her husband. The female realm was in the household: around the shrine or hearth; around the omphalos, a circular, closed and fixed space; or around the oven - last relic of the shadowy abyss. Women's social status was restricted just as their symbolic and practical status was - indeed, these two aspects were inseparable so far as spatiality (spatial practice) was concerned. (247-8)

Hence any social practice involves the conception of space followed by the society and any transformation in society inevitably necessitates a shift in the social ideological standpoints. Films are very powerful medium through which the social ideologies are produced and disseminated. The possibilities of the transformation of gender identities from place to space are effectively represented in and through the visual medium of reels and this study takes two films are specimen to analyse how this shift contributes to the empowerment of women who are generally deemed to be weaker sections in society.

The Great Indian Kitchen (2021) tells the story of a girl who is deliberately given no name to show that her experiences have a general, if not universal, character. She is pictured as one who is destined after marriage, to shrink herself fully to the domestic chores cloaking her wide vistas as a professional dancer. The role expected out of her is that of a conventional goody Indian wife centred around the traditional place of a 'non-stop' Indian kitchen. In that place, at first, she tries her level best to adapt to the expectations of her patriarchal fellow inhabitants—her husband, in-laws, aunts and cousins—performing all the tasks of a super house-wife and even more to say. Her sun rises and sets in the kitchen! She is even denied a time of her own for the participation of life in a community. She is not allowed to pursue a job of her interest. It seems that she is a machine of flesh and blood bought through marriage to toil, wash, and clean the entire family. For instance, one day when she expresses her desire to apply for the job of a dance teacher, her father-in-law responded: "That won't work for us…the chickpeas curry you made is superb!" (The Great 0:52:53) Even the basic amenities of the kitchen were not provided; and repair works, if any, are ignored and scorned at when pointed out in abject necessity. On one fine morning, when she rushes to her husband on his way

to office to remind him about arranging a plumber to repair the leaking kitchen sink, he scorns at her: "Waste is a big problem for you, right…?" (The Great 0:57:13). After these words, he gives a false assurance to rectify it nodding his face wryly at her. Not only the kitchen, but the boudoir too is a place of patriarchal domination and oppression for her. She is expected to preform sex too as one among the other regular duties of a wife or rather like a slave for it does not matter whether she is willing or not.

The construction of gender is carried out in and by places of domination and oppression. What is actually needed is an undoing of the places that give way for subjugation of the weaker sections in society. The urge to transcend those places of servility demands the creation of a space of one's own. Conventional placings are always beaded on a set of thread-codes of morality which should be eschewed at any cost. The patterns are to be framed newly according to the demands of the independent individual mind. The film proclaims this idea as the female protagonist of the film becomes successful in creating her own spaces of liberation and identity. The decision to create such spaces arises in utter loneliness and at a juncture where the victim realizes that there is nobody to support her individual causes. Generally, we say that home is the nucleus of society; but if it rejects the secrets of a unifying and egalitarian society, those norms have to be seriously questioned. The female protagonist is exactly doing the same thing. Marriage can be seen as a social sanction to build a home and if a home does not sanction a conducive atmosphere for its inhabitants, that space has to be redefined in unison with the interests of its inhabitants. If that too is not possible the person is forced to migrate to newer spaces of individual recognition. The protagonist of the film goes in search for this new space that crosses the border of patriarchal order and power.

To find an outer space to be cheerful, friendly, and free is a great task of choice and ingenuity. People prefer to come together and celebrate in such an outer space they have created for themselves. This newly generated space turns out to be liberating in the sense that it elevates them from the monotonous familial and communal ties. The Malayalam film *Ishq* (2019) becomes successful in creating such a space of emancipation. The red car, the key of which the hero, Sachidanandan, somehow manages to get after some friendly arguments with his mother, becomes such a space much sought-after for celebrating the birthday of Vasudha, his lady love. More than a mode of conveyance, the car becomes a vehicle of their dream-journey, a space of their choice that can take them to newer spaces of liberation beyond their familial and lodging restraints. For the loving couple in the film, the car is both a private and public space to celebrate.

The tension of such a much sought-after space germs when this red car is spotted and even intruded by outside agencies represented by the characters Alvin and Mukundan, his friend. They confront with the hero and heroine late night when the couple parks the car in a public parking lot. Mukundan sardonically asks: "What program is going on in this car for a lass from Ramapuram, Kottyam and for you a lad from Kochi…?" (*Ishq* 0:37:21). As a result, the red car, to speak as synonymous with its colour, which was earlier a symbol of the passion and vigour for the couple, now turns out to be a sign of threat and danger for them. It becomes a great challenge for the couple to find solutions to get out of this maze of confusion and fear; they are unable to take an official move like informing the police and get rid of the issue for fear of making known their secret plans to their families and friends.

Their pressure seems to blow up when this space created by them is almost confiscated by the wing of moral policing. Apart from the pranks of moral policing, Alvin also develops attraction towards Vasudha and makes treacherous advances towards her in the presence of her helpless lover. The public place overpowers the private space and the woman is put at stake to protect herself. It is at this height of tension and insecurity produced out of the clash between these public and private spaces that Vasudha rises to conquer the situation for her. Her bold move against Alvin frees herself from the cosy cocoon of protection she had once dreamed of her lover. While her lover resorts to the conventional revenge pattern against Alvin and his innocent wife, Vasudha recognises the fissures in her relationship with Sachi. These fissures open a strange and disgusting face of patriarchal keenness of a lover to test the chastity of his beloved. She recognises the 'Alvin in Sachi'! If Alvin was the public figure who thwarted and spoiled her private space, it is the 'Alvin' in Sachi who really destroyed her faith in a relationship. The next time when Vasudha meets Sachi, she wants to get a specific answer from Sachi for her question: "If he (Alvin) had done anything malicious to me, would you have avoided me or not?" (*Ishq* 2:08:38). Sachi does not give her a reply though he is shocked at her decisive stare. Vasudha realises that in her society, men, whether young or old, stranger or native, are knowingly or unknowingly oriented towards the pattern of patriarchal masochism and a woman finds her identity and freedom outside these patriarchal spaces, whether public or private. Her gesture raising the middle finger at the end is a gesture of both a negation of patriarchy and a liberation to her freed spaces.

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VICTIMIZATION AND DIVINIZATION OF WOMEN IN THE RITUAL OF THEYYAM

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Abstract*: Theyyam is one of the famous rituals celebrated in the Norther part of Kerala. The ritual is a celebration of the victimization of marginalized people. According to the legends of Theyyam rituals, it is understood that most of the characters are victims of various social injustices or discriminations. They were attacked severely and killed or made them to commit suicide. The major theyyam forms in Northern Malabar are Pottan, Kathivannoor Veeran, Mucchilottu Bagavathi, Makkam etc. There are about 400 varieties of Theyyam which are performed in the Malabar region of Kerala. Among them the female theyyams have a specific space. The contemporary relevance of the themes of the rituals made the ritual unique and important. The article explores the features of female theyyams in the Kolathunadu*

Keywords*: Gender, Caste, Ritual, Female, Subjugation, Victim, Divine*

Theyyam is a famous ritual in the northern part of Kerala. This ritual is celebrated during the month of January to April every year. Normally the ritual is a performance of three or four days. The literature of the theyyam is known as thottam. The thottam reveals the mythical stories about the heroes or heroines of the theyyam. There are about 400 theyyams in Northern Kerala. The article deals with the female theyyams to reveals its unique characteristics. The major theyyams discussed here are Neeliyaar Bagavathi, Mucchilottu Bagavathi, Maakkapothi, Madayil Chamundi, Karinjamundi, Kundora Chamundi, Padakkethi Bagavathi, Puthiya Bagavathi and Koonjar Kurathi.

Neeliyaar Bagavathi is the only daughter of Chatan pulayan and Kunjikkali. They worked hard in the field to bring up their daughter. When she became young the poor father and mother was dreaming about her marriage. Unfortunately, the land lord saw Neeli and he tried to seduce her. When she refused, he spread out a news that Neeli had an illegal relationship with someone. He ordered that she should be punished by the *Nattukoottam (* A judgement panel of villagers). Chatan and Kunjikkali were collapsed totally. Chatan knew that what would be the decision of Nattukoottam. Nattukoottam punished poor Neeli to cut off her head by Chatan himself. On the very next day, Chatan cut off his beloved daughter's head to protect the pride of his clan. It is believed that immediately after the incident, she

became a revengeful goddess and to please her the landlord and villagers built a temple for her and conduct theyyam every year.

Mucchilottu Bagavathi is a victim of the jealousy of patriarchy. Ucchilla was daughter of Maniyottu Mana Namboothiri. She was a scholar in Sastras, Samhitas and Vedas. All the Brahmin scholars and high caste men felt jealousy to her. Two three days before of her marriage with her cousin, Maran, the feudal land lord came to her and requested her to participate in a debate with great scholar Perinchelloor. In the debate, Perinchelloor had to taste the bitterness of failure infront of Ucchilla. On the third day, he decided to destruct the girl. He asked her two questions:

Which is most intense pain in human life? And which most enjoyable pleasure in the life?. She replied, "ഏറ്റവും നൊവാർന്ന നോവേറ്റുനോവ്, ഏറ്റവും പൊലിപ്പാർന്ന നോവീറ്റുനോവ്, ...ഏറ്റവും രാസമാർന്നതൊന്നുമാത്രം കാമരസമത് കാമരസം" (Karippath, 66-67). She replied that the most intensive pain is pain of delivery and the most enjoyable pleasure is sexual pleasure While she answered the questions, all the scholars and spectators blamed her that she is not a virgin that a virgin could not have speak about such matters. Perinchelloor announced that she had to be banned from the society and as per his instruction she had been expelled from her house and village. In the grief, she committed suicide at Payyannur Perumthrikovil. Then she became goddess of Vaniya community since a Vaniya helped her to burn out by giving oil.

Makkapothi is a victim of the jealousy of her sister in laws. Makkam is the only sister of twelve padanayars in the Kunjimangalam Tharavadu. She enjoyed the unconditional love of her twelve brothers even after she got married. The sister in laws did not bear their husband's love and care towards their sister and children. All they did not have children. They cooked up a story of rumour about the chastity of Makkam. Unfortunately, the brothers believed it and killed their sisters and children by cutting off their head. After death, the Makkam came to the tharavad as a flame and burnt out the sister in laws and the Kunjimangalam Tharavadu. Only the younger sister who sympathised to Makkam were remained and she narrated the magical power of Makkapothi to the villagers.

Similarly, another story of Padakathi Bagavathi reveals the relationship between sister and brother. Seven Brothers had a little sister and they loved them very much. There was a silent competition between them in expressing their love towards the little sister. When she became pubescence, they made it a festival. On the fourth day of puberty, they intend to arrange a feast to the villagers with meet of deer. They went to forest to hunt deer. After their successful hunting they

returned to their home with dreams of the festival. They sing "മുത്താണ്, മുത്തുപോലെൻറെ പെങ്ങൾ, മെയ്യിരണ്ടിന്ന് മൂന്നാം ദിനത്തിൽ, പന്തലിൽ പന്തിയൊരുക്കമുണ്ടെ ...,മാനിന്റെ പുത്തനിറച്ചിയുണ്ടേ" (Ibid 107). She is our beloved, on the third day of puberty, should arrange a feast, should have fresh meet of deer for it. (self translation). But on the way they were brutally killed by a group of men for the meet of deer. Then the sister became a flame and burnt out the men who killed her brothers. She is known as Padakathi Bagavathi.

Puthiya Bagavathi is a theyyam who had an uncontrolled thirst of blood. She was also born as a sister of seven brothers. Because of her craving for blood, her brother's were killed. After their death, she attacked the villagers, animals etc to quench her thirst of blood. At last she was worshipped as theyyam and she was pleased with the devotees.

Manayil Pothi, was killed by her uncle. She was born in a rich family. She lost her mother in her early age. For preparing a good dish for her uncle, she took a tender jack fruit from the Jack tree. The jack tree was bloomed for the first time. Unfortunately, the uncle became angry and he killed her. The Nattukoottam expelled him from the home and village. The died became a ghost and started to disturb the villagers. Villagers erect a temple to her and made her a theyyam.

Kunjaar Kurathi, daughter of Paramasivan and Parvathi defeated Suryadevan in chess. His repeated failure made him to send her to earth, since he feared that she will defeat all gods by playing chess. She was born in the as Kunjaar Kurathi with magical powers. Realising her special powers, the people made her a Theyyam.

Madayil Chamundi, Karinjamundi, Kundora Chamundi are evil goddesses, who killed the hunters, pregnant woman and new born baby, cattle, the evil people etc. Madayil Chamundi is an evil goddess who resides in the deep and dark forest. She killed the hunters who came to disturb the natural silence of the forest. Karinjamundi is another evil goddess who likes the blood of embryo and pregnant woman. In the legend of Karinjamundi, she killed the embryo of Ali's wife, Ali's wife Kadeesu and Ali. Kundora Chamundi is Poomol, the daughter of Paramashivan. Shiva sent her to kill Darika. After their cruel deeds, they disturb the villagers also by killing innocent people, cattle etc. So, to please them, all these goddesses are treated as theyyam and erected temples for them.

Theyyam as a ritual discusses most of the important and relevant issues of woman especially in the patriarchal society. All the stories explored a conflict between knowledge and power. Some kind of ignorance resulted the destruction of female characters. The male characters exercise their power with this ignorance. The

ignorance of the innocence of Neeliyar Bagavathi, Makkam, Mucchilottu Bagavathi leads to the destruction of their life. The patriarchal society did not intend to realize the truth of their female friend, daughter, wife, sister etc. Linda K Robertson discusses in her essay " Ignorance and Power: George Elliot's Attack on Professional Incompetence" observes that "The failure of an individual to fulfil his role in society with a reasonable level of competence because of inadequate knowledge or an inability to apply information properly is a matter for concern" (2). All these legends, the male characters are failed to perform their role as father, brother etc because of their inadequate knowledge of an inability to apply information properly. Chatan was one among them who is not able to question the decision of land lord even though he is sure about the innocence of his daughter. Moreover, the male scared off the expertise of woman in any field.

Neeli is a low caste woman. According to the subaltern theory of Gayathri Chakraborthy Spivak, she is double marginalized. Mariginalization occurred due to low rank in class, caste, gender etc. But as a woman she marginalized in two ways, as a low caste as well as a woman. According to Spivak, subaltern women are subjected to oppression more than subaltern men. Spivak says, "If… the subaltern has no history and cannot speak, the subaltern as female is even more deeply in shadow" (Spivak 2203).

The sexuality of woman become a discussion in all these stories. Neeli, Makkam, Ucchala all are victims of the concept of chastity in the Indian culture. They never break the rule of the society but the patriarchal society easily misunderstood by the cooked-up stories about their chastity and killed them brutally. Actually, the stories reveal how the woman sexuality was a significant item of discussion in the society of all time. Anyone can spread out a simple story about the sexuality of a woman. Moreover, the murder of the victim was such an easy task. The stories of Padakathi Bagavathi and Pothiyil Bagavathi are to narrate the power of a revengeful woman. The relationship between the siblings and its significance in the society of that time also become matter of discussion. Manayil Pothi also reveals the arrogancy of the high caste male. For plucking a jackfruit which has been bloomed for the first time, he killed his niece. The life of the jackfruit gets more importance than a life of a wretched woman. The status and condition of the woman of the ancient time of Kerala become a theme here. The legends of Chamundi's explores a dark part of mother goddess concept. According to Jung

> … the embracing/ devouring monster/ dragon/ serpent represents the unconscious dread of the mother's womb. To re-enter the womb would be to extinguish consciousness and thus to die. The unconsciousness dread has

> no symbolic form until it assumes such a form through the psychic process of projection. Such projections take place as internal and environmental factors activate the archetype. Jung suggests that only some parts of infantile fantasies may refer to the real mother. Other parts could refer to mythological products. The part of the fantasy that refers to the personal mother stems from more or less superficial layer of unconscious which is referred to as the personal unconscious. It is at this level of unconscious the particular mother complex develops whether the actual mother is needed or not. The instinctual bipolar mother archetype, with its good and terrible aspects, can be configured through the disturbance of the same archetype. These disturbances produce fantasies that come between the child and the mother as an alien and often frightening element (Beers 88).

Thus, the creation of such mothers is product of the dread of the devotees. All them are terrible form of mothers.

The ritual discusses many relevant and significant social issues. But the society did not recognize its importance and consider the ritual as a part of religious festival. It seems that the ritual is created to restrict the society to commit such injustice deeds in the future. But the ritual restricted in its aesthetic level of performance without knowing its real meanings.

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AN ENQUIRY INTO THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE PARTICIPANT/ OBSERVER AND THE POLITICS OF REPRESENTATION: A CASE SUDY OF JOHN HOWARD GRIFFIN'S *BLACK LIKE ME*

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***Abstract**: The aim of this paper is to explore the politics of representation in a text in terms of its form and content and the subject of representation as well as the ways in which such representation has been carried out. The text chosen for such exploration, John Howard Griffin's Black Like Me (1961), is an 'ethnographic' text in the way that apart from observing the daily social life and practices of the communities studied as part of the author's fieldwork over a period of time, the author employed his 'self' as a part of the field, as participant in the community that he set out to observe.*

***Keywords**: Representation, participant, ethnography, observation, subject*

INTRODUCTION

The aim of this paper is to explore the politics of representation in a text in terms of its form and content and the subject of representation as well as the ways in which such representation has been carried out. The text chosen for such exploration, John Howard Griffin's *Black Like Me* (1961), is an 'ethnographic' text in the way that apart from observing the daily social life and practices of the communities studied as part of the author's fieldwork over a period of time, the author employed his 'self' as a part of the field, as participant in the community that he set out to observe. He placed his own position as participant and participant-observer into scrutiny through constant interaction between participation, observation, and experience in the course of his narrative. The question of 'who is being represented' therefore also includes him as he too undergoes multiple types of self-construction in the process of "learning, becoming, experiencing, and remembering" (Collins and Gallinat 14). Before going into a detailed discussion of the text, it is necessary to provide a theoretical background into the type of ethnography that Griffin attempts in this case.

Anthropological work has for a long time now questioned the style of doing ethnography that studied a particular society from an elevated position without coming into direct contact with the society, "epistemologically grounded in

straightforward scientism", and at the same time maintaining social distance with the "object" of study (Collins and Gallinat 2, Clifford and Marcus, 1986). Such style of ethnography also maintained a scientific, objective point of view in representing that society in writing, arguing that they provided (and not produced) a picture of that society as a whole the way the society (the "subject" of study) itself realised. This particular style of doing and writing ethnography failed to acknowledge the fact that the production of data and representation through writing was never the actual truth about that society. In fact, there could not be any actual truth but the way the anthropologist analyses and interprets a society or community based on the data s/he generates. As Clifford puts it, ethnographic texts produce "partial truths" and are "serious, true fictions" in the way that they are produced and invented through language by the ethnographer who include and exclude information according to his/her interest ("systematic and contestable exclusion") (Clifford 6-7). Anthropological works like *Writing Culture* and also that of Collins and Gallinat challenge such conventions in doing and producing ethnography by reducing the social distance between the ethnographer and the society s/he aims to study, and by introducing the ethnographer into the writing through self-reflexivity, narrative techniques like representation of informants through a dialogic form, using figures of speech like metaphor into writing, using the ethnographic self as resource etc.

The ethnographic self can be as much a source of data as the process of generating that data through accounts of memory that become a part of writing. In opposition to an objective, scientific way of producing ethnography such works dissolved the line of division between ethnography and literary techniques that were till then strictly regarded as ways to write fiction. In fact, the employment of such literary techniques into the ethnographic narrative challenged the conventions that separated anthropological texts as non-fiction and fictional texts. To be more accurate, the categories of "fiction" and "non-fiction" were themselves put into jeopardy as literary works (like novels, or poetry) became sources from which ethnographic data could be generated (Collins and Gallinat 8). As a result, anthropologists like Clifford, Tyler and others were countering any strict method of writing ethnography where "language was considered a neutral tool" through which the anthropologist could present a true account of a society (Collins and Gallinat 2). Rather, language was used as a medium through which subjective feelings, contradictions, or doubts within the anthropologist could be brought out into the writing along with providing a voice to the informants/interviewees rather than representing them totally from the point of view of the anthropologist (Tyler, 1986). Newer trends in anthropology put the ethnographer in various positions with respect to his/her study and the position of the informants and study the ways in which s/he coordinates or interacts with the

ethnographic "self" and how the ethnographer copes with his/her position as both participant and observer (Collins and Gallinat 8-16, Gallinat 25-40).

One way of doing and producing such ethnography is anthropology at 'home'. The 'home' however, should not be regarded as readily available site of knowledge for the anthropologist. Such conventional analysis often considers the society or culture at "home" of the anthropologist as singular and monolithic that s/he already knows a priori due to the long attachment with the space over time. Not only do such analysis suppress the presence of other cultural practices within the space of the "home", but also there is reliance on, or criticism of the ethnographers' (biased) subjective knowledge of the space that precludes the possibility of intensive research. Very often the ethnographer may also partake in such analysis by regarding the communities of his/her 'home' as "my people". Other than showing a paternalistic attitude towards one's "own" society that s/he is studying as an educated anthropologist, it is also indicative of a homogenising tendency to identify all cultures and people of the society as "one's own", that the people may not comply with. As anthropologists like Gallinat have argued, anthropology at 'home' is as much as using the ethnographic 'self' as source of data (through recount of memory) as it is about studying the society and the people through interviews, participation and experience, and developing a social relation with them (that includes placing the self intentionally within the field of study as a fellow of that same community) (Collins and Gallinat, 2010). Otherwise, ethnographic data generated only through self-reflexive accounts of memory could easily be subjected to the ethnographer's bias, without any recourse to clarification of the data. It is in this particular context that I would like to put the text of discussion in this paper, John Howard Griffin's *Black Like Me*. The intention is to analyse the way in which the text uses the data that is generated through fieldwork into weaving the narrative that represents the community the author has studied and gives a picture of the author/ethnographer's positionality.

CASE STUDY: AUTHORIAL PERSPECTIVE AND THE ISSUE OF REPRESENTATION IN *Black Like Me*

Black Like Me was initially written in the form of a journal and later consolidated into a book and published in 1961. The book narrates the experience of John Howard Griffin, a American journalist and expert on the study of race, in his six-week expedition to the southern racially segregated states of the United States of America (especially that of Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and Georgia), to know about the living and social conditions of the Negro (used as a historical term) and "what their plight was", 'dressed' as a Negro himself (Griffin 3). The book

preserves the form of the journal, with date, month and year in which, as Griffin narrates, the specific observations, participation or experience were made. Even as the journalistic form imparts a realistic tone to the events that are narrated, the story moves away from the objective and scientific mode of expression and representation of a journalistic account. This may be primarily because the journal was written in the form of a diary, narrating in first person Griffin's experience of being discriminated against as a Negro while he traveled through the southern states. Even as he reworked later on his journal to supply the magazine *Sepia* with stories of his account, he decided to "throw away" the "correlating statistics" and "reports" and "reveal the truth of what it is like to be discriminated against" because none of those scientific tools were able to "actually" lay bare the "truth" of his experience (Griffin 158). As a result, he decided to publish the account in the way it "simply…happened" to him (Griffin 158).

It is necessary to bring into question the nature of this actuality and "truth", and the way that has been represented through the form of the text. The intention is to not question the authenticity of experience (because, after all the reader has little exposure to that except through the narrative of the text) but analyse the form and content of the text through which such experience is represented. This paper shall argue along with James Clifford and with respect to Griffin's text that ethnographic texts are "true fictions" that employ various literary techniques like expressions, figures of speech, allegories etc. (in a way that the "poetic and political are inseparable") to the extent that the narrative is structured in ways that the author "cannot fully control" (Clifford 2,7). At the same time, "truth" is a politically loaded term that cannot be represented "as it is" (the word "re-presentation" itself denotes restructuring) but is fashioned and manufactured by the author through the form and style of the narrative (Clifford 6). Thus, by correlating the form and content of Griffin's text this paper shall make used of the way he represents the Negro communities in the southern states and also assesses his own position as participant and observer as he oscillates between the two in the course of his travel. The paper shall demonstrate certain examples from his text to accentuate this point and also establish the significance of those examples in constructing the text's point of view.

As I have mentioned before, Griffin constructs the narrative of his text from the point of view of his observation, participation, and experience. However, these three are not mutually exclusive occurrences and very often feed into one another. My examples will try to take all three into consideration. I would first like to attend to the issue of representation. Griffin's main intention (at the beginning of his expedition) was to represent the discrimination faced by the Negro of the southern

states of America at the hands of the white Americans as a part of their daily personal and material lives (Griffin 2). However, by the time Griffin ended his journal he was discussing the mutual hatred between the White and Negro (the 'hate stares'), albeit with a sympathetic attitude towards the latter because s/he has historically been the subject of discrimination. Griffin ended his journal pleading for Negro unity and to "rise above vengeance" otherwise which the clash between the White and Negro would lead to "senseless tragedy" and "we" (the word here denotes both the races) would pay "for not having cried for justice" (Griffin 176). The transformation in his intention has happened due to his own experience as Negro among the Whites and vice versa. In that sense, not only was he representing the problems of the Negro but also of his own changed 'self' against himself and the society. He wanted to gain the experience of "discrimination based on skin colour…over which one has no control" (Griffin 1).

Whether conscious or not, Griffin's first experiment with his transformation into a Negro was against himself. This was his first observation, his first experience where he subjected himself into racial discrimination by experiencing a sense of alienation with the "fierce, bald, very dark Negro" who was a "stranger" that did not resemble Griffin "the white" in any way (Griffin 11). HIs first representation/recreation of himself as Negro was also his objectification of the Negro through the use of strong adjectives like "fierce" and "dark" that stood as metaphors for discrimination. He tried to create a dichotomy between the flesh and the mind, being "imprisoned in the flesh of an utter stranger" who was "unsympathetic" (Griffin 11). The self-reflexive moment after the transformation was therefore the experience of horror and a sense of loss from the white skinned Griffin and the familial and social position that came with it, to the extent that there was a strong desire to undo the transformation, an "inclination to fight against it" (Griffin 11). It was also full of self-contradiction as the "completeness of this transformation" signified for Griffin the Negro skin and body while the Griffin of the past had become "invisible", hiding in the flesh of another (Griffin 12).

The transformation for Griffin was never actually complete as, we shall see later, the desire to regain the white body always remained. However, the transformation went through a trajectory of change in the course of his contact with the Negro communities and white Americans. This happened to the extent that on one hand he internalised the performance of the Negro body and behaviour in public. On the other hand, the experience of being racially discriminated and sexualised as a Negro body by the white American made him more conscious and terrified of his Negro existence. This resulted, towards the end of the book, in his forceful removal of the

black pigment from his skin, to retransform himself into the white Griffin. Even then, the transformation was not complete as the internalisation of the performance as a Negro body had also formed his identity in the social institutions of the south. The transformation for him was a "miracle" but a bitter miracle and not the one he desired because the change in social behaviour towards the white Griffin (that he strongly desired after his initial transformation) only highlighted the act of racial discrimination. His experiment towards the end, of crossing the Negro locality of New Orleans as a white man and inviting the hate stares of the Negro is argued later, from his point of view, as an act of mutual hatred from which the Negro too must rise. It seems that in here occurred a shift in the author's positionality as he wished to rise above his Negro or White identity to adopt a more humanistic approach that is different from the perspective of a Negro.

His oscillation between a Negro and White identity could be criticised by arguing that he could and switch—in fact he always had the liberty to—between the identities at his discretion and never really knew what it meant to be born *into* a Negro community. His transformation into a Negro, though new and something that demanded preplanned actions for the bas requirements for existence, was thrust from the *outside* and for a short period of time, by which he could never really *become* a Negro. His anthropology in that sense was and was not at 'home' at the same time. No doubt as Collins and Gallinat argue with reference to Larsen and Rapport, it was through the "reflexive consideration" of his competence as participant in his own research that shaped Griffin's competence in fieldwork. He successfully suppressed the secret of his disguise in the multiple dialogues with Negros belonging to various economic status, and also in the multiple cases of being discriminated against by the white American (Collins and Gallinat 15). To add to that, the multiple instances of feeling uncomfortable with the Negro way of life for basic amenities (like provision to a rest room, place to sit, or water to drink), or struggling with his inner psyche (like his nightmares of being victim of discrimination) brought him closer to "anthropological insights" about the reality of the daily torturous life of the Negro (Collins and Gallinat 15).

Taking all these into consideration, the equation Griffin tried to create between "the hate stare that was everywhere practiced" on him by the white people and the "same shrivelling treatment" he received from the Negro community is ultimately directed to an account of "what happened to (him)" as human and not as representative of the Negro community (Griffin 128,132, 158). After all, equating both experiences on the same plane is denying the Negro of his/her history of being racially discriminated and segregated and at the same time, putting the author's own

perspective into question. In agreement with Collins and Gallinat's take on the position of the anthropologist, it can be argued that Griffin could not claim belonging to the Negro community as much as and when he wanted. Clifford has argued that indigenous ethnography, though it has imparted a "new angle of vision and depth of understanding" to the study of a society, does not guarantee better ethnography (Clifford 10). As the position of anthropology is constantly changing with respect to its object of study, there is no "automatic authority" given to speak for another (Clifford 10). It is of course true that Griffin was not a Negro but he changed the pigmentation of his skin to black through medication in order to transform and sustain his Negro identity for six weeks. But, did he through that "*become* one of them" as he claimed (italics mine) (Griffin 3)? As scholars like Strathern and Collins have claimed, the notion of the 'home' as an always-already known space should be put into question by assessing the terms of belonging to a space or community (Collins, 2002). Griffin's argument in the beginning as a completely transformed Negro or his latter claim for justice from a humanist position by standing outside of either community is problematic because there is no place outside the power-relation between the races. One has to position his or herself within the power dynamics of the society where racial division is produced at the everyday level through discrimination, acknowledge the historical course of such discrimination and struggle for change. Griffin's position in this sense is confusing. How far did he or could he claim membership to the Negro community to become an indigenous ethnographer? I have already discussed this question with respect to his self-reflexive assessment of himself as a Negro and white man. Let us now discuss this question with respect to the changing voice and perspective of the author in his relationship with the society.

The examples I provide here from the text shall argue that there is a constant shift back and forth in Griffin between his participation as Negro is his field of study and his reflection as a white man, sometimes consciously and sometimes not, to the extent that it confuses the reader about his position and perspective. It also questions Griffin's point of view of how successful he was in representing the Negro community of the south.

The first instance is his prolonged conversation with a group of Negro at the Y cafe in Dryades, New Orleans. Griffin presented this in the narrative in the form of a dialogue between the people and him, giving voice to their opinion and restricting himself only into asking questions that were informative in nature. The issue was the socio-economic condition of the Negro in the south and how that could be bettered. Griffin was acting not as an interviewer here but as Negro participant to a

"conversation" that had started before he entered the cafe, and that "others entered, ordered breakfast, and joined (the conversation)" (Griffin 42). He mastered his position tactfully as someone who could participate in the conversation, asking operative questions like "what's needed?" to improve the condition of the Negro (where he used the pronoun "us" to include himself) when the white Americans thought that the Negro could not essentially "measure up" to their standard (Griffin 42-43). At the same time, he also provided enough space for the people to voice their opinion who engaged in a dialogue to provide a solution to the Negro's socio-economic plight.

The interaction of "polyphonic voices" got somewhat interrupted when Griffin entered into one of his immediate self-reflexive mode, suddenly adopting the objective position of the white researcher who now referred to the Negro not as "us" but as "him" and "they" (Griffin 44). The reflexive position was more like a "self" realisation of the white man about the Negro who "had acknowledged a double problem" in his own society (Griffin 44). It was an inference to what Griffin as Negro had observed and the data he had generated out of the dialogue with respect to which he could change his position and perspective and distance the Negro with the help of language whenever he wanted. The mind-body duality is highly visible in this case that confuses Griffin's position for the reader and gives the impression that the body was used merely as an instrument for the production of knowledge and the author's position could switch readily from the Negro body to the White mind for a summary and objective analysis of the condition of "they", the Negro. This makes the reader ultimately question the perspective from which Griffin chose to represent the condition of the Negro. Was it from the point of view of a Negro, or a White man? We shall look into the question further through another example from the text.

While travelling by bus to Hattiesburg, Mississippi, Griffin as a Negro engaged himself in a conversation with the Negro people travelling with him.[2] Finding that he was new to the place, the others were busy giving his instructions to avoid trouble in Mississippi due to its volatile nature in racial relations. There was further precaution in the instructions because not long ago in Poplarville, a Negro was lynched by angry mob of white men to which the Mississippi jury had refused to bring any indictment. By this time in his expedition, Griffin had overcome the

[2] Griffin talks about racial segregation within the space of the bus during his numerous travels in the south. Even though such segregation as made illegal by law, the change had not yet penetrated to the society. The white people still occupied the front seats of the bus and the negro the rear ones, and no white would sit with a Negro in a bus even though there was no other seat available. For further reference see

initial trauma over his own black skin and had internalised the docility in a Negro's behaviour in public by being subjected to "hate stares" and racial discrimination a number of times. This very internalisation made him search for comfort and warmth among the Negro as is evident from his narration of the journey to Mississippi where the deeper the bus entered into the state, the Negro people including Griffin (he shifts to the pronoun "we" to indicate a collective fellow-feeling) "felt strongly the need to establish friendship as a buffer" to the threat of racism that Mississippi kept in store for them (Griffin65). Mississippi itself stood as metaphor for a space produced through discrimination, a dangerous space. The space of the bus was a microcosm of the discriminated space of Mississippi, as it went deeper into the state and the "distance between the whites and the blacks grew tangibly greater" and "hostility emanated from them in an unmistakable manner" (Griffin 65). The collective fellow-feeling this gave rise to, as mentioned before, also included Griffin as he didn't identify himself separately from the Negro as "we tried to counter it (the hostility) by being kind and warm to one another" (Griffin 66). It was the matter of security of his own body that was black but also of his mind that as Griffin himself would say was "imprisoned in the flesh". Griffin could not have predetermined the consequences of his travel into Mississippi as a Negro. As a result, his strategic positioning of himself as a Negro in Mississippi to gather information about the Negro's exploitation was unsuccessful as he felt repulsed and shocked at the condition of the Negro ghetto and exercised his *choice* of pulling himself out of it and residing at a friend's place instead. The very sensation of insecurity for Griffin was not from the point of view of a "completely transformed" Negro because that Negro had no choice/liberty to reposition himself elsewhere. This puts Griffin's position as representative of the Negro community into question not because he was a white man disguised as Negro but because he failed to stick and be true to his position as Negro when he disguised himself as one.

I shall conclude with a final example from his experience on his travel to Hattiesburg itself. The fellow-feeling of a collective "we" and participation in the conversation as Negro was interrupted symbolically when the bus crossed Poplarville. The memory of the lynching and court verdict created a tense and tragic atmosphere among the Negro in the bus who now spoke in a "quiet, expressionless voice" (Griffin 66). Griffin however, failed to share the same trauma and emotional tragedy as he quickly shifted to an objective position in his narrative, observing and analysing the reaction of the Negro as if through the lens of his mind. His body had no change of expression as he recorded the change in facial expression of the Negro, "*their* faces were pinched, *their* expressions indrawn", resulting in an automatic change from the collective "we" to the distanced "their" (italics mine)

(Griffin 66). This is because he could not share the same fear of discrimination and injustice that the Negro had experienced through historical time and therefore had to resort to observation and objective analysis rather than adopting the position of the Negro. His fear, as discussed above, was different and against which there existed the *choice* of change and retransformation.

CONCLUSION

The examples I have analysed in the course of this paper argue that the "truth" Griffin wanted to publish had its inconsistencies and politics of representation. His unpredictable shift between the Negro and white perspective was indicative of the fact that he could shift between being a participant and an observer, between direct experience and experience through observation, at his convenience. This according to me limited his chances of observation and experience from the position of a Negro, to "experience discrimination based on skin colour" and to "become one of them" (Griffin 1,3).

There was an inherent duality in Griffin's narrative between the mind and the body, and it is to this mind of the white man that he often took respite to and that unconsciously became his lens of observation when he could not identify with the emotions of the Negro. As a result, the process of *becoming* a Negro, and claiming "membership to the particular community" was never really complete for Griffin (Collins and Gallinat 8). Over here it is necessary to also assess the truth quotient of what he said, "happened to (him)" (Griffin 158). I argue here with Clifford that the truth even about his own experience is fashioned and manufactured by tropes of language and the style of the narrative, and consists of, as I have discussed through the examples, internal inconsistencies to the extent that even the narration of his own experience is "partial truth" (Clifford 7). It is subject to the changing perspective of the ethnographer, the data generated out of the notes made, the structure of the narrative, as well as the employment of language. It depends on the way these aspects are received by the reader, and interpreted by him/her, as the way I have read and interpreted Griffin's text. The claim to truth about one's own "self" and experience has been problematised here by critiquing the way that "truth" has been represented by Griffin.

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‘MALE AND FEMALE’ IN HOMOSEXUALITY: A LITERARY AND CULTURAL READING

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Abstract*: The present study problematises the role of heterosexual normativity in the cultural Fabric of contemporary life. The issue of the dominance of heterosexual inclination even between homoerotic couples intensifies the need for a study in the way Heterosexual domain operates in the life of homosexually oriented people. In a society where male and female heterosexuality prevailed, the concept of reproduction and family was formed through sex between a man and a woman. Therefore, most of the human life was expressed through heterosexuality. Beyond that, the society witnessed even a small deviation from that system with shock. The normativity get shocked at the realization of the homosexual current in the life of the people who are bold to assert their sexual orientation. The present study takes a few instances as case studies and analyses the nature of the homosexual orientation in contemporary culture.*

Keywords: *Heterosexuality, Homosexuality, Heteronormative, Lesbianism, Homoerotic Male –Female dichotomies*

Debates around homosexuality are always connected with the orientation of gender identity. Heterosexual normativity has become a hegemonic order in the symbolic realm of cultural life. The fllowing slice from the conversation between two homoerotic partners. “I asked her once, if I were a man, ours is a Muslim family...so religion is not a problem, if it was like that, wouldn't we be able to get married?” These are the words of Adila Nasreen and Fatima Noora, who are homosexuals, in an interview to the media after the Kerala High Court ruled that adults have a constitutional right to live as they please. These homosexuals are concerned about who to be a male and who to be a female.

Perhaps the safety and social recognition of men and women who have established social dominance in a heterosexual order make them think this way. Another dialogue of the same nature is from the story by Kamala Das. We read: "Sheela, if you were a child, you could have started loving me. I have been taught by my father. Therefore, I am your guruputri. Have you not heard about the princes who loved Guruputri? Why were you not born as one?”(Kamala Das “The sandal trees” DC books, Page 69)

This is a dialogue between the homosexuals Sheela and Kalyanikutty in Madhavikutty's 1988 story Sandalwood. The discourse around Adila and Noora

along with Kalyanikutty and Sheela in the sandalwood reiterate the notion of the unchanging aspect of the public consciousness of Kerala. This is the reason that makes even homosexuals think about heterosexuality, where male and female dichotomies are created for a life together even after recognizing their own sexual orientation and identity.

The cultural fabric of Kerala society which is called modern and enlightened still keeps an approach towards Adil-Noora's attitude in the operation of homoerotic discourses. This is quite conservative. Questions like, who is it? Who is the girl? Who is the boy? Expose the patriarchal unconscious that permeates the society. In a society where male and female heterosexuality prevailed, the concept of reproduction and family was formed through the sex between man and woman. Therefore, the collective feeling of human life was expressed through heterosexuality. Any deviation in the system was witnessed with a shock by the society.

On sixth September, 2018, the Supreme Court verdict of repealing IPC 377 highlights human relationship and legalizes consensual homosexuality. Since then it is not a criminal offence. Rooted in liberal life, this verdict has been enthusiastically received by the gay community, organizations and the progressive sect of society. Constitutional avowal has led to further publicity and acclaim. Sexual orientation of people was determined according to social concerns. Human personality, morals and social dignity have always been tied to sexuality. Therefore, when the progressive society tries to come up with the view that revealing the sexual identity is a lack of personality and comes with a view that it is the effect of personality, a large section is trying to hit back. Even today, society's attitude towards homosexuals is much distorted. Female homosexuals are more criticized than male homosexuals. Because as a second-class citizen, women's sexuality is repressed and not free from patriarchal views. So society has always been reluctant to embrace women's homosexuality.

As second-class citizens, women's sexuality is repressed and not free from patriarchal status quo. so society has always been reluctant to embrace women's homosexuality. Even a mention of women with the word sex is awkward, but the objectification of women's bodies is based on sex. It is not only men, but even women have been interpellated to this mindset. Therefore, our common sense is formed based on the thoughts of the male class who cherished patriarchal concepts and this worldview is indoctrinated to female folk. The famous French philosopher, social theorist and feminist Simon de Boudoir say in her book *Second Sex* "one is not born, but rather becomes, a woman". From the day a baby is born, it is made into a girl. She is treated as a tool for marriage and procreation. Women have been taken as a cultural body based on certain moral thoughts and value

judgments. Therefore, the society that cannot accept the liberation of the woman from heterosexuality in any means.

American philosopher and gender theorist Judith Butler talks about this in her well-known and much-discussed book *Gender Trouble.* She says that all women have a common personality. Every woman is different, but without accepting that difference, all women are molded into a unique personality with the intention of maintaining heterosexual normativity. Human society has always tried to continue this forced social order. Mainstream society has always felt that expressing sexual orientation towards the same gender is a taboo. Such people are supposed to break the culturally conditioned order of heterosexuality. Instances are in plenty. A powerful example of this is the movie "Fire" by the director Deepa Mehta. The film was released in 1996.

The movie problematizes same-sex love and sex between two married women. Hindu extremist organizations launched an attack against the film and stopped the screening in the metropolitan cities of Bombay and Delhi. Radha and Sita's are two women's lives who have been killed by the patriarchal structure. They were able to overcome social and political opposition by moving from male-female heterosexuality to homosexuality, defying the stereotypes of Indian culture.

It is a great proof that even homosexuals are influenced by marriage and sex as an example of male and female duality. The movie breaks down the traditional concept that a woman's life is complete when she becomes a mother. Radha and Sita's repressed sexuality is recovered through homosexuality. Moreover, the patriarchal society has always opposed the non-reproductive homosexuality and its sexual relationships. Therefore, the movie Fire challenges the patriarchal system. From time immemorial, since the birth of man in the cycle of human evolution, there have been various sexualities that have been expressed in story, poetry and art.

Along with the supposed natural relationship between men and women, the sexual minority community has also revealed its own expression in the cultural and literary field. Sappho, the Greek poet of classical antiquity is a prime example. Her poetry conceptualizes queer woman in literature. In 1900 French poet Nathalie Clifford Burne writes sonnets with traces of homosexuality. In 1880, French naturalist writer Emile Zola wrote a novel *Nana* which shows glimpses of homosexuality. Although the main character Nana has relationships with manymen, she has an intense sexual attraction to a woman named Saturn. Nana was also possessive and therefore Saturn gets angry at the men and women in Nana's house.

The passage "All of them must be sent away tonight. We both need to be alone tonight, otherwise I will leave." states that Emilie Zola has referred to the different sexual choices of man in his extreme love of realism.

But it is in the modern social and political environment that writings about sexual minorities become the main theme in literature. Many works have appeared mentioning lesbianism. The first work in the English language was "The Well of Loneliness" written in 1928. When the British author Radcliffe Hall mentioned homosexuality through his autobiographical novel, the book generated a lot of controversy in the cultural environment of England. But at that time lesbianism has been legally accepted. Yet the novel was condemned as immoral in the British society and the novel was banned until 1959 and copies of the novel were destroyed. The book publisher was arrested and imprisoned under the obscene publication act of 1857. The editor of The Sunday Express said this as he intensified the campaign against this book. " I would rather give a healthy boy or a healthy girl, a phial of prussic acid than this novel "

It is possible to see how much influence the underlying structure of heterosexuality has had on even the British society, which is legally recognized and still entering the modern society. The argument against the novel was that it tried to reinforce unnatural and unnatural sexuality by challenging motherhood and the identity of a woman, and that it would cause the new generation to think in such a way. The main character of the novel "The Well of Loneliness" Stephen Gordon is in love with a married woman and the plot of the novel. From the beginning of the novel, Stephen, a woman, would try to become a man. Stephen's frustration at not being a boy is bothering him like his parents. But still he could not control his sexual orientation. At the very first sight, he tried to kiss the maid in love with her. Later, she has a romantic relationship with

a man but the relationship breaks down because she is not sexually attracted to him. After that, she has an affair with a married woman and falls in love.

Later, when her partner started denying her love, she realizes that she is a lesbian. Despite the heroine of the novel's constant attempts to travel with social psychology, her sexual greetings were only for women. In this novel, Stephen and the married woman and in the relationship between Stephen and the servant can be seen precisely in the transition of Stephen from masculinity and his partner from femininity.

It can be seen that heterosexual role models are consciously and unconsciously followed by lesbian partners.After Radcliffe Hall's Well of Loneliness, Sylvia Plath's Bell Jar came out in 1963. *Bell Jar* was first published under the pen name "Victorius Lucas". The novel was widely discussed as Plath's autobiography. Plath's life can be seen in the letters written by Plath to her

Mother during her studies. The main theme of the novel is the identity crisis that a woman faces throughout her life.

Bell Jar exposes the patriarchal culture that suppresses the moral values of women and suppresses their sexuality and personality. The homosexual theme of the novel is the emotional connection John feels with Esther, the main character in *Bell Jar*. Esther and John fall in love in the mental hospital.

For some reason, Esther forbade Joan to have sexual intercourse with her. After that, sex naturally enters into Esther's romantic relationship with a man named Irwin. As for John, Esther was losing her hand. In this, a homosexual lover named Manam Nonth John committed suicide. The love and passion of a woman for a woman is a threat to the existence of heterosexuality.

Esther's intuition that a woman's identity can only be expressed when she has a lover is also a culturally constructed patriarchal value system. That was the reason why she quickly turned away from homosexuality and turned to heterosexuality. That is how homosexual partners are mentally enslaved to conform to male-female dichotomies.

Instances from literary works are available in writings from different parts of the world. Of late with the post covid scenario of gender debates the tradition of love and erotics in literature has seen radical changes. Several women writers have subverted the heteronormative conventions of the recent literature and they expressing homoerotic desire. Lesbian poetry as has been argued above traces its origins to Sappho. Same sex desire as seen in literature gives women agency over their body and sexual orientation. This allows them to make desire as it is and not in the way the patriarchal structure commands.

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THE PRESENCE OF AN ABSENCE: READING MEMORY, HISTORY AND IDENTITY IN KHALED HOSSEINI'S *AND THE MOUNTAINS ECHOED*

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Abstract: *The function of memory is to access the past. Memory, "a presence of the absent," has engaged the attention of philosophers right from the times of Plato. Theorists like Paul Ricoeur state that memory is the only resource to our past. Memory, when used as a narrative tool, helps in reconstructing the past life of individuals as well as communities or nations. The identity of an individual also depends on his/her memories. The present paper explores how Khaled Hosseini, in his novel* And the Mountains Echoed*, employs memory as a strategy to reconstruct the past of individuals as well as the nation. The nuances of memory as employed in the novel are also probed into. The paper also analyses how memory plays a key role in constructing the identity of individuals.*

Keywords: *Memory, history, forgetting, mediation, identity, metaphors of memory, trauma*

Memory is the key to human existence. When analysed from a socio-political perspective, memory is found entangled with history and narratives, as every memory takes a person to a reconstruction of the past through the narration of it. Paul Ricoeur, in his work *Memory, History, Forgetting,* states: "We have no other resource, concerning our reference to the past except memory itself" (21). Hence memory provides the key to a narrative that constructs a person's as well as a community's or nation's history. It also plays a significant role in the identity formation of an individual. As Emil Keightley contends, remembering is an active reconciliation of past and present. He further states how memories mould our notions regarding ourselves: "Memories are important as they bring our changing sense of who we are and who we were, coherently into view of one another" (58). Hence, though memories are individual and personal in nature, they are social in effect being fixed in a lived context.

Born in Afghanistan in 1965, Khaled Hosseini left the country when he was eight, with his father who was a foreign diplomat, for Iran and then Paris. Following the Soviet invasion and the subsequent unrest, Hosseini's family moved to the USA. His novels are interspersed with memories of myriad shades and hues of life in pre-Soviet Afghanistan. His major works are *The Kite Runner*, *A Thousand Splendid*

Suns and *And the Mountains Echoed*. Unlike the early novels, *And the Mountains Echoed* is more a collection of different stories of different people, all connected to each other, leading from one perspective to another, filling the blanks in the process, ultimately providing a wholeness regarding the events narrated. Hosseini chronicles the tale of many generations of Afghan people, providing the reader with an insight into the different phases through which the country passed. The paper examines how the narrative uses memory as a tool to reconstruct the past of Abdullah and Pari, two siblings who were separated in childhood by harsh conditions of poverty. Different chapters present different characters' memories regarding their lives, intricately linked with the lives of many including Abdullah and Pari. The study analyses how the readers construct the past, not only of Abdullah and Pari, but also of Afghanistan in general, both before and after the war, through the memories of different characters narrating their lives.

In reminiscing, as suggested by Edward Casey, one person's memories serve as a reminder to other person's memories. This memorial process takes place in diary writing, memoirs, autobiographies and so on, "in which the support of writing provides materiality to the traces preserved, reanimated and further enriched with unpublished materials" (Ricoeur 39). Nabi, as the person responsible for Pari's adoption, is the most appropriate person to enlighten her as well as the readers about what happened in her life . His letter contains memories stored up for future for the benefit of the persons connected to his life, especially Pari, whose life had changed so drastically in just a single day. Another piece of writing that is as important as this letter is Nila Wahdati's interview which appeared in a French magazine *Parallaxe*. Memories revealed through this frank and revealing interview had roused Pari's suspicions regarding her identity, which were later confirmed by Nabi's letter. The memories of both Nabi and Nila act as authentic document regarding Pari's life and identity. Written down memories carry the mark of authenticity with them along with materiality for the sake of the beneficiaries.

The novel shows how memories are fluid and can be mediated through cultural and personal appropriations. Manipulated memories happen due to the intervention of power. This manipulation happens in the case of Pari's memories owing to the mediation of Nila who wants Pari to forget her past identity. Also, Nila does not want to create the impression that she is a hard-hearted woman who deserted her husband when he was ill. Hence she appropriates Pari's memories by providing her with the narrative that Suleiman had died just after they left Afghanistan: "He had fallen ill in 1955 – which was when Maman and she had moved to Paris – and had died shortly after" (Hosseini 214). Thus, Pari's estrangement from her near and

dear, accentuated by the displacement from her homeland, results in distorted memories or absence of original memories. Another instance for manipulation is the one done by Adel's father. In an aggressive exercise of physical power, this former Commander ruthlessly confiscates the land of the Shadbagh people and imposes his rule there. His might and wealth have silenced all so that nobody is willing even to talk about the plight of Pari's uncle Iqbal who fought with him. Only appropriated information reaches Adel as his father wants to conceal his true self from the boy. Even his mother is submissive to the power exerted by his father as she also narrates a highly mediated version of the memory regarding their wedding. Thus, memory can be manipulated through the mediation imposed by the powerful.

The history of Afghanistan evolves through the narrative, from the era of King Amanullah, a very progressive person who banned wearing burqa, to the invasion of the Taliban and later the arrival of the Northern Alliance. Ricoeur considers memory as "the womb of history" as "memory remains the guardian of the entire problem of the representative relation of the present to the past" (87). It is from Nabi's narrative that one gets information regarding the turbulent years that upset the peace of the country, starting with the arrival of the Soviets. Though he does not detail much on the later years, the reader gets to know the suffering of the country from his words: "I can sum it up in one word: war. Or, rather, wars. Not one, not two, but many wars, both big and small, just and unjust, wars with shifting casts of supposed heroes and villains, each new hero making one increasingly nostalgic for the old villain" (Hosseini 138). The 1990s saw the attack of goons and vandals, and later the looting by the militiamen. The house of Wahdatis has become a relic of the RPG blasts, rocket attacks, grenades and bullets, bearing the scars of the decades-long terrible attacks and wars.

The experiences of defeat, occupation and reconstruction, where power definitely works to the disadvantage of the poor, are also visible in the novel. Through the personal narrative account of different characters, one comes to know of a country plagued by various occupations, war and invasions, wreaking havoc on the lives of the citizens. The underprivileged and the poor suffer the most, as others such as the families of Idris and Timur could escape to the developed countries like the US, whereas the families of Abdullah and most of the Shadbagh people had to remain refugees in Pakistan. Iqbal, Abdullah's stepbrother and his family could return only after a long period, and when they finally did, it was only to find that their ancestral home and land had been seized by powerful people like Adel's father.

Hosseini shows how identity is constructed and moulded through the narratives of these memories. Identity of an individual is closely connected to his/her memories: "… to remember … something is at the same time to remember oneself" (Ricoeur 3). But as memories are fragile, one's identity also is fragile. Pari had been on an identity quest even before she comes to know about Nila's revelation that her husband was a homosexual. Nila has told her many a time that she does not know her as a person and what she is capable of: "I don't know what sort of person you are, Pari. I don't know who you are, what you're capable of, in your blood. You're a stranger to me" (Hosseini 235). Pari's identity is questioned here, causing her much distress. The interview upsets her and leaves her confused about her identity and individual existence. Once she gets married and settles with a child, she gradually loses her urge to search for an identity. She could find an identity of her own as Eric's wife and Isabelle's mother: "The truth is, Pari no longer feels the piercing urge to search for answers and roots. Because of Eric and his steadying comforting companionship" (Hosseini 255-56). Nabi's memories that reach Pari in the form of a confessional letter shatters and reconstructs her identity. The visit to Afghanistan and later to the US to meet Abdullah reshape it further. Her identity gets evolved through the entire novel.

Memory is intrinsically connected to places. As Ricoeur states: "It is on the surface of the habitable earth that we remember having travelled and visited memorable sites. In this way, 'things' remembered are intrinsically associated with places" (41). Pari, as she is removed from the places associated with her memories, find them easily forgotten. Once she comes back to Afghanistan and enters her house, things automatically revive within her. Markos says: "When I took her upstairs, she knew which had been her bedroom … I remember her breath catching when she spotted the short little armoire in the corner of the bedroom" (Hosseini 331). Shadbagh could not revive any memories as the place had ceased to exist as it was; it had had a facelift recently - the old village had been knocked down to be converted to the huge mansion where Adel's family now lived.

There are different metaphors of memory used in the novel. Feather becomes a metaphor of memory in the novel as Pari used to collect feathers in a tea box. Abdullah had once even traded his shoes to collect a peacock feather for her. Even after Pari's departure Abdullah collects every feather that comes his way and keeps the tea box full, hoping to meet her someday. When Pari gets it, she fails to attach any importance to it, but it conveys the depth of the wound that Abdullah had suffered. The giant Oak tree which was part of the story of generations with a swing on it for children was a reminder of the happy times spent around it. The tree

was thought to have magical powers to grant one's wishes by shedding exactly ten leaves on the head as a reply to one's wish. Though Saboor cuts it off, the stump of the tree lasts throughout the novel reviving memories of the past of the village. The stories that Saboor used to narrate, tales which contained the memories of the community stored in them, passed on to him by his grandmother, form another metaphor. The lullaby that Abdullah's and Pari's mother used to sing for him is a recurring metaphor: "I found a sad little fairy/ Beneath the shade of a paper tree/ I know a sad little fairy/ Who was blown away by the wind one night" (Hosseini 24). Abdullah used to sing the first two lines, the rest of which was always completed by Pari. At the end, she tries to recapture his memory using this verse, but in vain.

Apart from the functioning of memory, the malfunctioning of memory is also seen in the novel, as in the case of Abdullah who is affected by Alzheimer's disease, and Pari, whose early memories have faded away from her mind. The photographic nature of memories where one can go back to whenever needed, is overturned by the destruction of memories in human beings due to neural issues, like Alzheimer's disease or dementia. Abdullah forgets his most precious memories related to Pari which he never wanted to fade away from his mind. Aware of the malfunctioning of memory in him, having been diagnosed with the disease in 2007, he prepares a note for Pari along with his precious gift box of feathers: "On it were written, in English, the words *For my sister, Pari*" (Hosseini 460). He wrote the note for his sister in the hope of it reaching her someday. "Memory is the means by which the relationship between the event and its reconstruction is negotiated" (King 6). As Abdullah has lost this interconnecting cord, he fails to recognise his most beloved young sister when she comes back to him as a middle aged lady.

Narrative always involves forgetting because an early memory easily fades away from one's mind, making it difficult to recollect it clearly. Ian Hacking suggests that all memory begins with scenes and feelings, which later get translated into language (King 26). The faded memories come back to Pari as an absence that she feels in her heart: "That there was in her life the absence of something, or someone, fundamental to her own existence" (215). She feels the sensation as a vague radio signal, remote and warbled. Nicola King observes: "Moments of the past can be invoked by words, smells, tastes and sounds" (9). Pari feels this indistinguishable feeling that makes her heart lurch at times: "… in Provence two years earlier when Pari had seen a massive oak tree outside a farmhouse. Another time at the Jardin des Tuileries when she had watched a young mother pull her son in a little red Radio Flyer Wagon" (Hosseini 215). Pari's vague unconscious surfacing to the conscious comes in the shape of a dog, when she sees the old woman in the street

followed by a small tan terrier. The image that comes to her mind is that of a dog which is "furry, dirty, with a severed tail and ears" (252). The dog Shuja, who used to just adore Pari, lives somewhere amidst the fog of forgotten memories. The call from Markos and Nabi's letter dig the dormant memories out of Pari's mind: "… memories struck upon, rising up from the depths" (270). She feels a hole opening up in her and the absence that she has always felt is filled: "Brother," she says, unaware she is speaking. Unaware she is weeping" (Hosseini 271). Even when things are forgotten, they leave a hollow space where they had been, the mark of which cannot be erased completely.

Different characters deal with humiliating memories in different ways. Christopher Bollas has suggested that "the passing of time … is intrinsically traumatic" (119). Abdullah undergoes this trauma throughout his life and that is reflected in his approach to Pari, his daughter. He has never forgotten the traumatic experience of losing his little sister, which makes him name his own daughter as Pari, and which has led him to keep close watch on her, to the extent that he forbids her from even going for picnics. Abdullah can be seen as enthralled in his past. He was wounded at heart, the wound always open and bleeding profusely. Saboor, Pari's father, has contained all the memories in his heart, not letting anyone in. To escape from the excruciating memories of his daughter, he even cuts off the giant Oak tree: "… he had swung his ax at the old tree with violence, with his jaw firmly set and a cloud over his face – like he couldn't bear to look at it anymore" (Hosseini 52). The more he tried to escape from his memories, the more they closed in on him. He stopped telling stories altogether, as stories always carried memories within them: "He didn't tell stories anymore, had not told one since he and Abdullah had returned from Kabul. Maybe, Abdullah thought, Father had sold the Wahdatis his muse as well" (Hosseini 54). Saboor forbids Nabi from coming to Shadbagh anymore to escape from his haunting memories. The story of Baba Ayoob, with which the novel begins, depicts how forgetting is a blissful escape from traumatic memories. Saboor also might have hoped that some magical potion would erase their memories regarding Pari. He tells Abdullah: "Do you understand, Abdullah, how this was an act of mercy? The potion that erased these memories?" (Hosseini 15). But both Saboor and Abdullah could not find that magical potion of forgetfulness for themselves. They were burdened with the weight of their memories for the rest of their lives, Saboor until his death and Abdullah until his liberation through Alzheimer's disease.

In short, polyphonic voices and ruptured memories, when synthesised together, create a whole and complete narrative in the novel regarding the people and the

country. Memories play a crucial role in the personal sphere as well as the communal level. The multiple narrative voices in the novel reveal different phases in the life of Abdullah and Pari as well as that of Afghanistan in general, through different temporal and spatial zones. The functioning as well as malfunctioning of memory is portrayed by Hosseini who relies upon Nabi's memory to reconstruct the past of Abdullah, Pari, Suleiman Wahdati and Nila; yet, at the same time depicts Abdullah's lost memory due to dementia and Pari's faded memories owing to mediation and appropriation. The nuances of memory are referred to and detailed in the novel in the attempt to recreate the past of the separated siblings. The past of the country is also reconstructed through the memory narrative that follows the life of Abdullah and Pari. The identity of individuals as well as the history of a country is linked with the memories of the people as their lives are intricately connected to the past of the country. The narrative grows outward from individual memory to focus on broader dimensions of social memory.

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CHARACTER AND TECHNOLOGICAL CULTURE: TIME-SPACE COMPRESSION, SPEED AND THE *CHARACTER* OF SOCIETY IN DON DELILLO'S *COSMOPOLIS*

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Abstract: *This paper attempts to understand the interface between character and technological culture, and how the dominance of a technological culture informs the character of society as they get manifested in Don DeLillo's novel Cosmopolis (2003), a novel that is concerned with the impacts of technology and the order it creates in American society. The paper discusses how technological culture and the various impacts it produces, including a culture of speed, have come to determine the character of contemporary American society as it is presented in DeLillo's millennial novel Cosmopolis. The peculiar character of contemporary American society, as it is presented in the novel, is, I argue, a cumulative effect of what I call an "impression-creation" in which DeLillo's fiction engages in in its attempt to portray an American society that is peculiarly technological in nature. This impression-creation is evident, I argue, in his presentation of society's notions of time and space and in the production of a culture of speed that determines the character of New York City. DeLillo's fiction thus functions, I argue, as powerful insights into and a diagnosis of contemporary American society enmeshed in technological realities.*

Keywords: *Technological Culture, Character, DeLillo, Time-Space Compression, Speed.*

Introduction

In the context of fiction, the term *character* has often been understood only as or in relation to the human/nonhuman actions, motives and the interior workings of *human/nonhuman beings* presented as 'fictional' characters. Taking a departure from these conventional understanding of *character*, this paper considers *character* as an *idea* that can help us better understand fiction's investments and embeddedness in the world outside. This particular way of understanding character, I argue, is made possible by fiction's inscription—through various references to the effects of certain social factors such as technological culture and the order it creates—within the fictional world and in the mind of the readers certain "impressions" of a society portrayed in that fiction. To understand how this impression-creation works in fiction, it is useful to look at the term *character*. *Character* is a complex and multivalent term, and the complexity inherent in the etymology of the term itself makes it less amenable to easy interpretation. Its

various dictionary meanings include "a stamp", an "inscription", the letters or "marks on a page", an "instrument of marking", "moral character", a person invested with peculiar quality in a fiction, the subject of a character description, as well as the description itself (*the OED*). *Character* thus indicates, apart from a fictional being, both the *thing* engraved and the *process* of engraving/stamping.

A nuanced understanding of *character* would help us understand how "impression-creation" works in fiction, particularly in DeLillo's novel under discussion. To elaborate on this particular use of *character*, I also draw on the American author William Gass whose unconventional conception of *character* can illuminat my use of *character* as *an idea*. In an interesting and provocative essay, "The Concept of Character in Fiction", Gass redefines our 'usual' understanding of *character* while observing that "an idea or a situation, or a particular event, an obsessive thought, a decision, a passion, a memory, the weather…— anything which serves as a *fixed point*…functions as a character" (50; emphasis added). The inscription of *character* through impression-creation is also what Gass stresses here when he says that "character is a matter of degree" to which something in a fiction attains peculiarity (50). Such peculiarities are evident in many contemporary fictions where *character* not only assumes different shades, figures, roles, and things, ranging from an obsessive thought about an event or issue, or certain non-human entities as cyborgs, machines, animals and other posthuman figures, but also refers to the peculiarity of an age or time as ours. This multivalent nature of the word allows us to see how/that *character* (a fictional being/a *thing)* is *inscribed* (the process) on the pages of a novel/story with *characters* (the written/typed words). Drawing on Gass, I argue that an author's persistent concern (read it as Gassian "obsessive thought") with certain social forces or cultural conditions such as technology, capitalism, consumer culture and the order they establish can create "impressions" of that society in peculiar ways. These particular impressions of a society can be seen to *constitute* the *character* of that society presented in the fiction.

Technology and Time-Space Compression

The late twentieth-century has witnessed, as David Harvey and Ursula K Heise have emphasised, a crisis in the conventional idea of both *time* and *space* (*Condition of Postmodernity, Chronoschisms*). Conterminous with such perspectival changes, due primarily to technological innovations, there can also be seen certain re-alignments in the conception of time and space, which are, in turn, reflected in fiction's exploration of such crises. Also, the emergence of the Internet in the late 80s and early 90s, and subsequently cyber technology, have radically changed the way human understand notions of time and space. Further, unlike earlier technologies,

cyber technology and its creation of a new space called *cyber-space* have compelled us to imagine spatialities differently, and have taken communication beyond the social or individual spheres. As Harvey argues, "space appears to shrink to a 'global village' of telecommunications and a spaceship earth of economic and ecological interdependencies ... and as time horizons shorten to the point where the present is all there is …, we have [had] to learn to cope with an *overwhelming sense of compression* of our spatial and temporal worlds (240; emphasis in original). This time-space compression, according to Harvey, has revolutionised "the objective qualities of space and time that we are forced to alter, sometimes in quite radical ways, [including] how we represent the world to ourselves". It is so because "the history of capitalism has been characterised by speed-up in the pace of life, while so overcoming spatial barriers that the world sometimes seems to collapse inwards upon us. (240)

This time-space compression relates to the workings of contemporary capitalism and coincides with the rapid technological revolution which itself is a result of capitalism's need to accelerate the flow of capital and information. Consequent upon this time-space compression is also the increasing speed with which multinational companies integrate and organise their circulation of capital on a global scale. This process has also led to the endless flow of money, capital and information paving way for the end of traditional concepts of geography, space and time, as Richard O'Brien has argued (1991), and replacing them with new ideas of spatiality and temporality such as web 'sites', cyber spaces, information super-highways, and social media spaces, with the emergence of computer and other information technologies (Mitchell 1996). Such conceptions of spatiality have not only created a new interconnected relation/networks between human and technology, but have also allowed communication to assume a radically different character, allowing for the problematic disappearance of 'reality' itself as a consequence of the new speed and simulation that characterise such spaces (Virilio 2000, Baudrillard 1995). The shift in our spatio-temporal perceptions, effected by these new technologies, has also changed the *character* of our society, our thinking, and our relation to others/ things around us. In such a condition, notions of time and space, as traditionally understood, have been replaced by ideas of "instantaneity", "speed", "globality" and a consequent presence of ideas of a seamless present, or "future present" (*Cosmopolis* 34). The accelerated production and consumption that characterise late-capitalist society creates, as Heise argues, a "culture of time" that fosters "drastically shortened temporal horizons at the expense of long-term planning and coherence", creating such new notions of time as the nanoseconds of the computer (Heise 6). This has corresponding implications for the creation of

fictional character, plot and structure. This also suggests that the *character* of fiction can also be shaped and determined by the *character* of a society. The changing notions of time and space consequent upon technological changes and globalization, and their effects on language, individuals' perception and understanding of the world and events, have been some of the thematic concerns of DeLillo's work since its inception.

Technological Culture and the Culture of Speed

The increasing speed with which almost all experiential realms of individuals and societies are mediated as a result of the various technological developments has great impacts on our understanding of several things situated and performed in time and space. The changes such transformations bring in are connected to the logic and order of a capitalist system. One of the ideas around which time-space realignment is often discussed is the *speed* that technological modernity has brought in. In a culture addicted to speed where speed has become, as Mark C Taylor puts it, "the measure of success—faster chips, faster computers, faster networks, faster connectivity, faster news, faster communications, faster transactions, faster delivery, faster product cycles, faster brains, faster kids, faster lives"[—]" [only] the quick inherit the earth" (*Speed Limits* 2). Speed creates a new world order that can alter everything including human character, as evident in the changes in how we do things and what we value. Speed affects, as Taylor further asserts,

> different people in different ways; indeed, speed has become, if not the primary, a socioeconomic differentiator. As some people speed up, others slow down; as some people work more than they want, others work less than they want or even not at all; as some people get "ahead," others fall "behind." What "winners" and "losers" in this new fast paced economy share are the insecurity, anxiety, and discontent that speed creates. (*Speed Limits* 4)

The "losers" who cannot pace with the speed or its logic (of course the capitalist logic) produced by such a technological culture become, after Bauman, "wasted lives", creating a new form of what can be called a *human waste* that can easily be disposed off and replaced by "winners" (24).

Characterising the accelerated age in which we live, Paul Virilio uses the term "speed-space" in his work, and argues that "resistance to the present would not just be about slowing down, but also about *becoming* a producer of speed (Koepnick 407; Adams 174). Introducing "speed-space", as opposed to time-space, Virilio observes that:

> [t]he new space is speed-space; it is no longer a time-space, a space where time is manipulated. What we are manipulating is no longer man's time, but machine's time, which I call speed-space, or the dromosphere, meaning the sphere of speed. In conclusion, from my point of view, *speed is not a means, but a milieu –another milieu, and one that tends to escape us*. .. speed…is *a milieu,* a milieu in which we participate only indirectly through the video-tape machine after recording, through information science and 'robotized' systems. ("Speed-Space" 71; emphasis added)

Virilio's argument for a conceptualisation of "speed-space" against "time-space" suggests the end of an era of technologies of transportation and the beginning of an era of information technologies of the cyberspace that enable "instantaneous communication over space", resulting in "the friction of distance" (Clarke and Doel 176). This creates an "ecstasy of speed", says Taylor, which "changes the present to 'omnipresent(s)', and eternity —the term we used to refer to the 'timeless present'—today is called 'real time'—24/7/365. In real time, all times, all places, are *here and now"* (Taylor 6; emphasis added). The invention of new technologies such as cyber technology and other information technologies have created a global space in which information could be circulated without any delay across and between places that are physically remote. The postmodern experience of temporality produced by the simultaneity of disparate geographical spaces and historical periods through the virtual space of various 'screens' has also created in individuals a desire for instantaneity. The new digital technologies immerse the individuals in what Heise calls a "hyper-present", "a hyper-intensified immediacy" (26). The cumulative effect of such a condition or time-space compression is a shortening of time horizon to a point where what remains is a persistent present (Harvey 240).

Time-Space Compression and Speed as the *Character* of Society in *Cosmopolis*

The idea of spatial and temporal compression that David Harvey, Heise and Virilio and others see as one of the chief characteristics of postmodern experience finds expression in DeLillo's works too, especially in his *Cosmopolis.* The changes in the idea of time and space are conveyed in the novel through different objects, occurrences, and commentaries on the status of language in a highly technologised world. *Cosmopolis* suggests that just as the introduction of clock time changed society into a different temporal consciousness, so too has digital time altered the sense of time and space. The novel surrounds its protagonist Eric Packer, a 28 year old Billionaire and currency trader's almost Odyssean journey around New York City in a customised, high-tech limousine supposedly to have a "haircut" "in the

year 2000". The year itself is significant as it marks the significant changes that the world in general and America in particular would undergo from that moment (*Cosmopoli*s 7). Though the car is full of cutting edge technologies, and is "a a tremendous mutant thing that stood astride every argument against it, it moves, interestingly, "at an inchworm creep" as it is caught up in the traffic (*Cosmopolis* 10, 64). Packer makes a very poor time, but performs many of his social and business roles—while not moving much—by making communication about and with his finance capital, his marriage, father, friends, enemies, doctor (for a prosthetic condition) and so on. He experiences slowness not as something that soothes him in a world of speed, as the monk in Tsai Ming-liang's movie *Journey to the West/Walker* does. Packer—though caught in the *traffic* of the city (and the cyber space because of the fluctuation in the currency trade)—cannot afford slowness, as it is not *his* world (*Cosmopolis* 11). However, he moves in a deadly slow motion, at a pace "that speaks in quarter inches", as his body guard Torval says; but the events that happens, both online (seen on the many screens inside the limo) and offline— the funeral of a Sufi rapper, an anti capitalist protest, the visit of the president, a murder, his sexual encounters, his online activities, his stock market dealings, getting of his prostate checked, etc.—in between this slow movement of the car points paradoxically to ideas of speed, instantaneity, the erosion of the border between *here* and *there*, and *then* and *now*, as the chief characteristics of a contemporary period in a cyber capitalist, highly technologized world. While everything that occurs in the cyber world—shown to us through the many screens inside the limousine—is in a fast pace and Parker himself embodies this speed in many ways because of his (body's)networked relation with the outside/cyber world, the "outside" is very slow with the death procession of a Sufi singer, an anti-capitalist protest, the president's visit, and the ensuing traffic.

The novel can be read as a critique of a culture of speed effected through DeLillo's use of a language of slowness, a language that is, as Mark Goble argues, "jammed and moves in fits and starts", and that we also see in his later works such as *Point Omega* and *The Body Artist* (188). While there have been studies (I have in mind Sam Anderson and Lutz Kooepnick's works in particular) that argue that though DeLillo presents speed as the cultural logic of late/cyber capitalism, "stasis, paradoxically, has become the animating force of" his later novels, I read his reflections on speed and the order it produces as his concerns with the peculiar *character* of contemporary America as presented, obliquely in *The Body Artist*, *Falling Man* ad *Post Omega* and explicitly in *Cosmopolis*. I read speed in *Cosmopolis* as a peculiar *character* of the American society in a cyber capitalist, highly consumerist and digitised present. I argue that DeLillo's *fixation* with

(William Gass's observation on the concept of character is what I suggest here) *speed* as one of the determining factors of the character of contemporary American society makes one believe that speed itself *is* the character *in* and *of Cosmopolis*. This *fixation* is evident, I argue, in DeLillo's constant emphasis on the "future present" or "omni present" as the persistent character of time under high technology. The importance that DeLillo gives to the concept of time—as exemplified in his statement that "[t]he theme that seems to have evolved in my work during the past decade concerns time"— itself suggests that time is not just a "fixated" (in Gassian sense) idea in his later fictions but that it also has the potential to function as a character ("Interview", 2005). Time in these later novels is, as the cryogenics scientist in DeLillo's *Zero K* (2016) calls, "multiple, [and] is simultaneous" where "this moment happens, has happened, will happen" (244-245). This multiple temporalities in his works often erases any sense of pastness and dissolve the future into producing, what Taylor calls as, an "omnipresent[s]" (6). In his review of *Cosmopolis*, John Updike has referred to this "temporal dislocation" as that which "indicates an underlying shift in the past-future paradigm" (1; *Cosmopolis* 86). Packer's Chief of Theory, Kinski, explains this temporal dislocation thus, "[c]omputer power eliminates doubt. All doubt rises from past experience, but the past is disappearing. We used to know the past but not the future. This is changing" (86).

The reorientation of time and space and the insistence on speed in a technologically advanced culture is suggested by Packer's relation to other people, things and incidents, most of which he sees on his screens inside the limousine, sometimes even before they actually occur. The changes in the idea of time and space in *Cosmopolis* are also conveyed through different objects, occurrences, and commentaries on, among other things, the status of language and words. The changing notions of time are also conveyed through the novel's insistence, at different levels, on the "future present". As Eric Packer himself emphasizes it,

> [t]he idea is time. Living in the future… money makes time. It used to be the other way around. Clock time accelerated the rise of capitalism. People stopped thinking about eternity. They began to concentrate on hours, measurable hours, man-hours, using labour more efficiently." It is cyber-capital that creates the future. What is the measurement called a nanoseconds?" ten to the ninth power". This is what. One billion of seconds. (78-79)

The novel's insistence at different levels on the "future present" that new technologies often embody would make more sense if one reads it in the light of DeLillo's own observation that "the future is intruding into the present", suggesting that new technologies—especially cyber technology—affect our sense of temporality in radical ways ("Talk" 2010). The accelerated time, of which DeLillo himself talks elsewhere, creates a "fleeting present" (DeLillo 2005, 8). This insistence on "future present" also requires a new theory of time, as Kinski, his "Chief of Theory", emphasises: we need a "new theory of time" (86). Packer explains why nanoseconds are no more fast because there are now new "zeptoseconds" and "yectoseconds", "one septillionth of a second" (79). Packer's wish to "live on a disc" also epitomises the novel's portrayal of the changing idea of time and space (*Cosmopolis* 22), as well as the posthuman character of our life in such technological culture.

Cyber Technology, Speed, and the Limits of Language in *Cosmopolis*

One of the effects of the great acceleration in the present brought out by technology is in the field of language itself, and how human use it to capture this seamless presentness and vanishing times. The acceleration creates conditions where language itself becomes inadequate to convey the experience of the speed time. As has become already evident, what lies embedded in DeLillo's take on time in the above quoted statements is also the failure of language in effectively capturing and giving expression to the speed with which things, including technology, change in a digital culture where there is an obsessive insistence on present/"omnipresent", rendering certain technologies obsolete in no time. It is so because the very idea of slowness also changes, and it enters into the realm of the *eternal presentness* so fast that "what was surprisingly fast yesterday is intolerably slow today" (Taylor 39). In such a capitalist system and the culture it produces, the very character and form that "innovation itself takes", as Jonathan Crary remarks, "is the continuous simulation of the new" (40). We see this repetition also in the continuous *updation* of certain technologies to keep up with this "present" that seems to constantly simulate itself. In such sculpture of speed, speed becomes a commodity to be desired and achieved, if you want to be 'successful'. Packer's existence in the market/in the world as a cyber capitalist depends on his possession of cutting edge technologies and the data that signify speed and instantaneity. In such a cyber capitalist order, what is crucial is speed itself and not *what* is contained/achieved within it. This is what Packer emphasises to Vija Kinski, his "chief of theory": "speed *is* the point. Never mind the urgent and endless replenishment, the way data dissolves at one end of the series just as it takes shape at the other. This is the point, the *thrust, the future*. We are not

witnessing the flow of information so much as pure spectacle, or information made sacred, ritually unreadable" (*Cosmopolis* 80).

Eric Packer frequently comments on the inadequacy of language in a fast changing world saturated with digitization, media images, data, and finance capital. The shifts in the conception of time and space and their relation to identity and reality create a harrowing disorientation in *Cosmopolis*. In the world of Packer, the "human" language—as language has always been understood—quite often becomes ineffective, and it acquires the quality of a posthuman existence where language acquires more of technological character than of organic one. While some of his earlier novels like *Americana* and *The Names* show the role of language in shaping identity, *Cosmopolis* both reflects and addresses issues related to the inadequacy of 'language' in an age of cyber technology. In such a condition, the very character of language itself changes, making certain (older) technical terms inadequate to capture and represent the "(un)reality" offered by cyberspaces. Packer's reflections on the inadequacy of the terms "ATM" and "skyscraper" , for instance, both refer to the fast obsolescence of certain technologies in a fast changing world and our need to acquire new language to capture the reality of such a new world order. For Packer, ATM and skyscraper have "an anachronistic quality", and "no recent structure ought to bear" the word "skyscraper" because "it belonged to the olden soul of awe" (*Cosmopolis* 9). Even words like 'phone' and 'computer' are an obsolete one for him: "it was time to retire the word phone", and the "word computer sounds backward and dumb" (104). Even the latest technologies are, according to Packer, becoming obsolete. This is pointed out by Benno Levin, his murderer and antagonist: "things wear out impatiently in [Packer's] hands" (152). The speed with which technology changes itself or the requirements demanded by new technologies to perceive and understand things and ideas is also emphasized by Packer, while referring to his video scan retrieval technology as something "that seemed already oppressively sluggish" (34). The recurring speed with which forms of technology themselves undergo changes is also suggested by Packer when he says that "[p]lasma screens were no flat enough. They used to seem flat, now they did not" (140). Transience, the increased rate of changes—of things, people, places, and relationships—all are conveyed through the protagonist's observations. Unlike the nostalgic desire to go back and embrace the beauty and charm of slowness that characterises the experiential world of some of the characters of Milan Kundera's *Slowness,* what we see in Eric Packer and others here is a desire to surpass the "limited' speed with which certain technology *works.* In such conditions, the very idea of speed itself constantly changes.

In what appears to be a futuristic, yet contemporary, American social order created by high technology, DeLillo laments the very failure of language in capturing the technologically sublime experience of the present. This failure is also an indication of, as Virilio suggests, human's inability to cope with the *intensive* time of the machine, a time where "no human being can be [fully] present" (Interview, Dercon 71). The inadequacy of language also suggests the extent to which the language of fiction itself often becomes inadequate to present the un-presentable in a highly technological and *media*ted society. There are suggestions in the novel that language also has to assume a particular 'character' peculiar to a high technological era in order to represent the reality offered by technological revolution and the various shifts it brings with it in capitalist mode of operation, exchange, and production. DeLillo's peculiar use of language in this novel also finds its continued manifestations in his later novels such as *Point Omega* (2010), *Zero K* (2016), and *The Silence* (2020) which are characterised by what can be called a "late style" in DeLillo's writing. However, unlike the language and its subtle suggestion of the unrepresentabily in *Cosmopolis,* the language of *Point Omega,* for instance*,* is minimalist. It is a language that coveys a sense of the possibility and potentialities of expression, representability and meaning in a culture of speed, only if we have the patience to be slow/readers, though some of these novels are ironically short.

In Packer's cyber-capitalist world, time, I argue, is *located in* and *understood as* the future-present or "insistent future" where there is no past, but only the presen(t)/ce (of) future (*Cosmopolis* 79). Packer's insistence on the importance of understanding such an idea of time is very interesting. As he says,

> [t]he idea is time. *Living in the future.* Look at those numbers running. Money makes time. It used to be the other way around. Clock time accelerated the rise of capitalism. People stopped thinking about eternity. They began to concentrate on hours, measurable hours, man-hours, using labor more efficiently…*It's cyber-capital that creates the future*. What is the measurement called a nanosecond?" "Ten to the minus ninth power." "This is what." "One billionth of a second," [but] he…understand[s] none of this. (78-79; emphasis added)

According to Packer, one has to be "rigorous [if one] need[s] to take adequate measure of the world around us" in a cyber capitalist, digitised world now, where "[t]here are zeptoseconds" , "Yoctoseconds", [and] "one septillionth of a second" now (79). DeLillo's reflection on time here chimes with Virilio's discussion of "speed-space" in which, according to him, human cannot live *fully* because it is an *intensely* technological time. As he provocatively says,

> [t]oday we are entering an era of *intensive* time: that is to say that new technologies lead us to discover the equivalent of the infinitely small in time.… [This] is an infinitely short time, which is that of technology's billionths of seconds…. we'll never be present in that billionth of a second… we [need to] program our definitive absence [in this technological time]….No human being can be present in the intensive time that belongs to machines. ("Speed-Space" 71)

Virilio's observations on time echo DeLillo's use of "zeptoseconds", "Yoctosecond" and "septillionth of a second" in the novel. As DeLillo says, time in the cyber capital world is "…a corporate asset now. It belongs to the free market system [programmed by cyber technology]. The *present* is harder to find. It is being sucked out of the world to make way for the *future* of uncontrolled markets and huge investment potential. *The future becomes insistent.* This is why something will happen soon, maybe today" (*Cosmopolis* 79; emphasis mine). The "new technological time", as Virilio insists, "has no relation to any collective memory. It is pure computer time, and as such helps construct a *permanent present*, an unbounded timeless intensity" (emphasis added, *Lost Dimensions* 15).

Packer requires to constantly *update* his technologies, data on the currency trade and his knowledge of the workings of cyber-capitalism *to be fully present* in this "*intense* time", and to be a winner in the finance market ("Speed-Space" 71). This idea of the need to speed up constantly is also suggested—when looked at from the perspective of his failure/death at the end—by the fact that even though he moves in a highly customised and technologized limousine, he cannot reach the other end *in time* because of the traffic*;* he takes hours even to get across Manhattan city that otherwise would have taken for him only a few minutes. Speed as the character of our time is also emphasised in the novel through the circulation of data and the circulation of money in the cyber capital world. Though Packer's car moves very slowly, his money that he works through cyber-capitalism, spanning across the globe, has been "accelerated"at a speed that can only be understood in "zeptoseconds" or "yoctoseconds" (*Cosmopolis* 79). And what is important for Packer for sustaining him in the market is the data that he sees on the screen of his limousine. They are so important to him that they not only determine who he is but also how valuable—winner or loser—he is. DeLillo provocatively conveys this idea:

> He looked past Chin toward streams of numbers running in opposite directions. He understood *how much it meant to him*, the roll and flip of data on a screen. He studied the figural diagrams that brought organic

> patterns into play, *birdwing and chambered shell*. It was shallow thinking to maintain that numbers and charts were the cold compression of unruly human energies, every sort of yearning and midnight sweat reduced to lucid units in the financial markets. In fact data itself was *soulful* and *glowing*, a *dynamic aspect of the life process.* This was the eloquence of alphabets and numeric systems, now fully realized in electronic form, in the zero-oneness of the world, the digital imperative that defined every *breath of the planet's living* billions. *Here was the heave of the biosphere. Our bodies and oceans were here, knowable and whole.* (*Cosmopolis* 24; emphasis added)

Packer is so obsessed with data that he even characterises it as the "soul" of the "life process"/the "biosphere", and not just a part of a techno-system (5, 12). What DeLillo seems to also suggest here is the change in the character of technology itself, as well as the environment that it creates that forms the order of the world today where technology has become part of the entangled existence in our posthuman condition.

It is important, and interesting to note that DeLillo's critique of speed in the novel is, very ironically, spatialised in the text in what can be called a spatiality of slowness: the traffic in Manhattan city, which is at the heart of new York, and is one of the most technologized finance capitals of the world. It is through this traffic that Parker takes the Ulyssean journey. Although the traffic jam is created by, and creates slowness and deceleration outside, which is shown through the slow motion of the limousine in which Parker travels, it is juxtaposed very interestingly with the acceleration of the virtual time on which Eric Packer, the currency trader's, fortune and career depend. In the (virtual) world, which governs capital now which is indicated both through the flashing of numbers on the sign boards over the stock exchange and the images, videos and other data that appear and disappear on the screens inside the limousine, the finance capital moves so quickly that words and phrases such as "zeptoseconds" or "yoctoseconds," "one septillionth of a second" become so suddenly obsolete, necessitating new time scales to capture the flow of data in the virtual capitalist world (*Cosmopolis* 79).

The use of speed as that which *character*ises, according to DeLillo, the contemporary America/n reality, and the insistence on a "future present" in the novel seem to be directed towards certain futuristic ideas that defined the very character of America from the begging. This obsessively future-directed vision of America, as presented in the novel, I argue, has a particular connection with the very character of American society and its people, as suggested in the works of

Emerson, Tocqueville (*Democracy in America*), and Fredric Jackson Turner (his use of the idea of the future is embedded in the "manifest destiny"of his frontier thesis) and others (Weinstein 2). This insistence on the future present makes more sense when we analyse it in the light of Cindy Weinstein's use of "optative mood" as that which define many American fictions today. In his book on the multiple temporalities in American literature, Weinstein suggests that the idea of "the optative mood" is what characterises the different fictional temporalities in American literature. He observes that "the optative mood is a grammatical mood with a complex temporality. In its adjectival form, it expresses a *wish* or a *desire* which has within its very structure a fundamental *discontent with the present"* (2-3). As he further argues, "[t]he grammatical import of the optative mood—its *drive toward the future*, its *frustration with the present*, and its *elision of the past*—seamlessly affixes itself to accounts of American character" (2-3; emphasis added). This temporal/ "optative" focus in America literature also has another interesting aspect to it: it quite often is made manifest, as Weinstein argues, *spatially* (ibid). In other words, the "destiny, or future time [that so characterise many America literary works], is made manifest, *as space*. America's temporal mood gets spatialized as the advance of time is materialised through the perpetual acquisition of more space, more territory" (3). While in the earlier time this spatialization of the optative and temporal mood was evident in the conquering of territories of "others"(others from both within—the native Americans, as apart of the Westward expansion, and from without—other countries), in a highly technologized world like ours it gets manifested in the conquering of more advanced technologies, data and virtual spaces—the place though/within which finance capital operates—and the place that provides or through which contemporary forms of power operates, as evident in *Cosmopolis*. Such tussle for virtual "shares" and spaces also produces many outlier figures like Benno Levin, Packer's rival, whose lives, I argue, become "wasted" because of their failure to fit in and achieve such power that can control the flow of finance capital in a cyber capital world.

Conclusion

DeLillo's presentation of these *impressions* of the character of contemporary American society in *Cosmopolis* is a result of the technological culture that characterises most advanced societies today. However, his attempt to present such a reality is also informed by certain difficulties posed by language in *fully* transcribing such realities into us. This is primarily because of what Virilio calls the *intense time* in which most people in advanced and advancing societies live today under a culture of digital technology and the order it creates that insists upon an intense

sense of presentness. A consequence of this *intense presentness* is a culture of speed in which we live today, whose intensity we have not been able to understand fully. In his thought-provoking meditation on slowness—a work that also seeks to reformulate the current discourse on "slowness"—and the different implications of speed, Lutz Koepnick indicates such a time in which we live today where speed *is* the way. His remarks capture the character of such a life that we lead in a highly technologized world as ours, where everything that we do has been altered, determined and informed by the speed brought in by technology. As he provocatively says,

> [O]ur age of electronic networks, global transactions, and rapid transportation technologies causes many to *suffer* from too much speed in their lives….Cell phones, handheld computers, and ubiquitous screening devices urge us to be always on and produce instantaneous responses, yet we no longer take the time to contemplate an image, develop a profound thought, traverse a gorgeous landscape, play a game, or follow the intensity of some emotion. Life *is* faster today than it has ever been before…, but in accumulating ever more impressions, events, and stimulations we end up with ever less—less substance, less depth, less meaning, less freedom, less spontaneity. (*On Slowness* 1)

In such a world of speed and instantaneity, we do long for retrieving the slow pace of things; but any attempt to achieve that are very often realised ironically through cultural artefacts like fiction, which is quite often and paradoxically characterised by an aesthetic of speed. And very ironically, what has succeeded in achieving some semblance of slowness that we all desire, it seems, are by the economy (the melt down of global economy in 2008) and a tiny virus (current slow down/"lock down")—whose very arrival the technology that we all believe sustains life in all forms today cannot even predict, nor has its containment been so far made possible by it. As a substitute for this culture of speed, DeLillo seems to advocate for an aesthetics of slowness, as also evident in some of his others works such as *The Falling Man* (2007)*, Point Omega* (2010), and *The Body Artist* (2001). In some of these works, DeLillo's obsessive concern with the various effects of speed created by high technologies is very latent and embedded within the texts' narratives, while in others the concerns are so evident and manifestly fixated, as in *Cosmopolis,* that speed seems to even assume the status of a character.

However, very ironically DeLillo posits language itself, and hence fictional narrative, as a counter force to such a *culture of speed*. As argued in his interviews and non-fictions, for DeLillo, language has to work as counter history to the

hyperrealities created by technologies, and fiction often seems to create for him a counter narrative ("The Power of History"). It seems that, for DeLillo, it is only by using fiction as a form of counter-history that authors can challenge or subvert conventional or normalized narration of history, and that fiction can survive in an age of media images, copies and digitisation that make obsolete even the power that we once attached to language. He asserts in "The Power of History" that "language can be a form of counter history. The writer wants to construct a language that will be the book's life-giving force. He wants to submit to it. Let language shape the world. Let it break the faith of conventional re-creation" (62). However, how does one make use of the *power* of language when its very possibility of being used so is determined, and informed by various technologies and media?

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नंददुलारे वाजपेयी की दृष्टि में आचार्य रामचन्द्र शुक्ल

ज्ञानेन्द्र कुमार संतोष

भारतीय भाषा केन्द्र, जवाहरलाल नेहरू विश्वविद्यालयनई दिल्ली ,

ACHARYA RAMCHANDRA SHUKLA IN THE PERSPECTIVE OF NANDDULARE VAJPEYI

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शोधसार-: *आचार्य रामचंद्र शुक्ल हिंदी के सबसे बड़े समालोचक माने जाते हैं पर हिन्दी जाति के समक्ष आचार्य रामचन्द्र शुक्ल की प्रस्तुत छवि मिथकीय है। हिंदी में आचार्य शुक्ल की आलोचना दृष्टि की समीक्षा की एक समृद्ध परंपरा रही है। इस आलोचना परंपरा में नन्ददुलारे बाजपेयी की आलोचना का विशेष महत्व है। आलोचकों ने अपने प्रतिमानों की मिट्टी से आचार्य शुक्ल की अलग-अलग मूरतें गढ़ी हैं। आचार्य शुक्ल को मिथक में रूपांतरित करने में नन्ददुलारे बाजपेयी की आलोचना की प्रमुख भूमिका रही है। अतः आचार्य शुक्ल के वास्तविक रूप के साक्षात्कार के लिए आचार्य शुक्ल के सन्दर्भ में नन्ददुलारे बाजपेयी की आलोचना दृष्टि का अध्ययन अपरिहार्य है। नंददुलारे वाजपेयी ने छायावाद और रहस्यवाद के सन्दर्भ मे आचार्य शुक्ल के विचारों की तीव्र आलोचना की है। उन्होंने आचार्य शुक्ल के व्यक्तित्व के दूसरे पहलुओं को नहीं देखा है। मतभेदों के बावजूद नंददुलारे वाजपेयी आचार्य रामचन्द्र शुक्ल के महत्व से परिचित हैं।*

मुख्यबिंदु-: *आलोचना, मिथक, हिन्दी जाति, सहज मनुष्य, छायावाद, रहस्यवाद*

Abstract:

Acharya Ramchandra Shukla is widely regarded as the most celebrated critic of Hindi literature, although his image is somewhat mythologized within Hindi academia. In the realm of Hindi literary criticism, there has been a long-standing tradition of critical examination of Acharya Ramchandra Shukla's viewpoints. Nand Dulare Bajpai's literary criticism has played a significant role in this critical tradition. Various critics of the time used their own perspectives to portray Acharya Ramchandra Shukla as different kinds of idols. Nand Dulare's criticism was instrumental in creating the myth of Acharya Ramchandra Shukla in Hindi literary criticism. Therefore, studying Nand Dulare's critical perspective is crucial for understanding Acharya Ramchandra Shukla's actual viewpoints. With regard to Chhayavad (Romanticism) and Rahasyavad (Mysticism), Nand Dulare Bajpai strongly criticized

Acharya Ramchandra Shukla's views and did not give much importance to the personal accolades of Ramchandra Shukla. Nevertheless, despite the disagreements, Nand Dulare Bajpai was fully cognizant of Acharya Ramchandra Shukla's significance.
Key words : Criticism , myth, Hindi Academia , Chhayavad (Romanticism) and Rahasyavad (Mysticism)

मलयज ने महसूस किया है कि हिन्दी जाति के समक्ष आचार्य रामचन्द्र शुक्ल की प्रस्तुत छवि मिथकीय है। मलयज के इस एहसास के ठोस कारण हैं। इतिहास में शायद ही किसी व्यक्ति के व्यक्तित्व का प्रतिफलन रचनाकारों द्वारा इतने भिन्न स्तरों और परस्पर विरोधी भावों के साथ किया गया है, जितना कि आचार्य रामचन्द्र शुक्ल के व्यक्तित्व का। रचनाकारों और आलोचकों ने आचार्य शुक्ल का मूल्यांकन अलग-अलग प्रतिमानों से किया है। बल्कि यो कहें कि आलोचकों ने अपने प्रतिमानों की मिट्टी से आचार्य शुक्ल की अलग-अलग मूरतें गढ़ी हैं। यहाँ तक कि बनाई गयी अपनी प्रतिमा में अपने सौंदर्य बोध में बदलाव के तहत दूबारा फेरबदल भी किया है। विजयदेव नारायण साही ने कहा है कि "मनुष्य की परिभाषा वैज्ञानिक न होकर सर्जनात्मक होती है। इसलिये साहित्य कभी सहज मनुष्य को नहीं पकड़ता वह केवल उस केन्द्रित कालबद्ध, जाल में फँसी हुई सीमित झलक को पकड़ता है जहाँ से वह सहज आभासित होता है। कुछ दिनों तक युग परिवर्तन की एक मुद्रा में सहजता का यह आभास सजीव और मर्मग्राही लगता है. हमें लगता है, अंतिम पूर्ण सत्य को हम पा गये हैं। फिर धीरे-धीरे युग परिवर्तन की दूसरी मुद्रा आने तक सत्य की यह प्रतीति विनिष्ट होने लगती है, हमें लगता है कि हमारी पकड़ में तो सिर्फ दो-चार तत्व ही आये। मनुष्य की सजीवता और मनुष्य का मर्म तो फिर भी छूट गया।"[1] (मलयज 17) सामान्य मनुष्य की तलाश की यह विडम्बना आचार्य शुक्ल के सम्बन्ध में भी सही है। युग परिवर्तन के साथ नये प्रतिमानों के जाल से आचार्य शुक्ल के व्यक्तित्व को पकड़ने की कोशिशें होती रही हैं। अलग-अलग ध्येय के लिये रचना करना सही है. पर आचार्य रामचन्द्र शुक्ल के व्यक्तित्व का असली मर्म इस प्रक्रिया में छूट सा गया है। हम देखेंगे कि शुक्ल जी की आलोचना के लिये रचनाकारों के प्रतिमान बदलते गये हैं। शुक्ल जी के समकालीन समीक्षक और रचनाकारों की दृष्टि शुक्ल जी के प्रति आलोचनात्मक है। नंददुलारे वाजपेयी निराला और प्रसाद ने आचार्य शुक्ल के जीवनकाल में उनकी कड़ी आलोचना की है। शुक्ल जी की मृत्यु के बाद संस्मरण के लिये इन्होंने अलग से उनके महत्व पर प्रकाश डाला और उन्हें 'नायक' की उपाधि प्रदान की। विस्तार से इसकी हम आगे करेंगे। पर यह कैसी विसंगति है कि जीवनकाल में कोई

व्यक्ति 'नादिरशाह' और 'दुर्वासा' के रूप में प्रस्तुत किया जाता है और मृत्यु के बाद 'महान' और 'दिव्यकालाधर' हो जाता है। स्पष्टत शुक्ल जी के मिथ रूपांतरण की प्रक्रिया उनके जीवनकाल से ही शुरू हो गयी थी। इस प्रक्रिया में जैनेन्द्र, आचार्य हजारी प्रसाद द्विवेदी, रामविलास शर्मा. नामवर सिंह आदि का आलोचनात्मक संघर्ष भी शामिल है। मलयज के लेखन के बाद भी इस मिथ के दूसरे स्तरों का निर्माण हो रहा है। नीलकांत, समीक्षा ठाकुर, सुधीश पचौरी, रामस्वरूप चतुर्वेदी आदि ने भी अपनी-अपनी दृष्टियों से शुक्ल जी को देखा है।

मिथ के पीछे छिपे आचार्य शुक्ल के असली मर्म का उद्घाटन तभी हो सकता है जब हम इस पूरी मिथकीय प्रक्रिया के इतिहास को देखेंगे।

किसी रचनाकार के वास्तविक महत्व का निर्धारण दो तरीकों से हो सकता है। पहला यह कि उक्त रचनाकार ने अपने समय को कितना प्रभावित किया तथा दूसराभविष्य- के विमर्श में उसकी क्या भूमिका है। दोनों दृष्टियों से आचार्य रामचन्द्र शुक्ल का व्यक्तित्व विशिष्ट है। शुक्ल जी के समकालीनों से आचार्य रामचन्द्र शुक्ल की तुलना करने पर यह बात स्पष्ट हो जाती है कि शुक्ल जी ने अपने समय के विमर्श को जितना प्रभावित किया उतना अन्य किसी दूसरे साहित्यकार ने नहीं किया। उसी तरह आज के विमर्श में अन्य किसी साहित्यकार को इतनी जीवंतता के साथ स्मरण नहीं किया जाता है जितना आचार्य रामचन्द्र शुक्ल को। विश्वनाथ त्रिपाठी ने इसी सन्दर्भ में लिखा है कि "हिंदी साहित्य की किसी एक विधा को कभी किसी एक साहित्यकार ने इतना अधिक नहीं प्रभावित किया था।"[2] (विश्वनाथ त्रिपाठी 51) साहित्य की दूसरी विधाओं पर अगर हम दृष्टि डालें तो वहाँ दो रचनाकारों के बीच एक ध्रवांतर नजर आता है। प्रेमचंद और अज्ञेय उपन्यास के क्षेत्र में दो छोर स्थापित करते हैं। उसी तरह कविता के क्षेत्र में प्रसाद और मुक्तिबोध में बहुत बड़ा फर्क है। पर आलोचना के क्षेत्र में नवीनता के साथ साथ शुक्ल जी की विकसित परम्परा भी है।

हम शुरुआत करेंगे शुक्ल जी के समय के विमर्श से जहाँ से हिंदी आलोचना विचारोन्मुख हुई। यह जानना काफी रोचक और महत्वपूर्ण है कि शुक्ल जी के प्रति उनके समकालीनों की क्या दृष्टि थी शुक्ल जी में गहरी ऐतिहासिक चेतना थी। उन्होंने न केवल जायसी, सूर और तुलसी पर लिखा है बल्कि अपने समय के शीर्षस्थ साहित्यकारों प्रसाद, निराला आदि पर भी लिखा है।

समकालीन रचनाकारों पर लिखने का तनाव और उसकी जटिलता का एहसास शुक्ल जी को था। उन्होंने लिखा है कि "वर्तमान... लेखकों और कवियों के संबंध में कुछ लिखना अपने सिर पर एक बला मोल लेना ही समझ पड़ता था। पर जी न माना। वर्तमान सहयोगियों तथा उनकी अमूल्य कृतियों का उल्लेख भी थोड़े बहुत विवेचन के साथ-साथ डरते-डरते किया गया।"[3] (रामचन्द्र शुक्ल 7) कहना न होगा कि वर्तमान' सहयोगियों' के साथ विमर्श ही शुक्ल जी की असली चिंता थी। शुक्ल जी अतीत के अन्वेषण के लिये इतिहास या आलोचना का निर्माण नहीं कर रहे थे। उनकी चिंता समकालीन और भविष्योन्मुख थी। इस विमर्श का परिणाम था कि साहित्य 'लोकोत्तर' श्रेणी से उतर कर 'जीवनाभूति' के करीब आया और 'मनोरंजन' के साधन से आगे बढ़कर लोकमंगल' का साधन' बना। साथ ही साहित्य 'लघुता के प्रति दृष्टिपात' कर जीवन' संग्राम' की भाषा बना। शुक्ल जी के चिंतन से हिंदी में साहित्य के प्रति परस्पर सहयोग का भाव जगा। इस प्रयास में परम्परा और नवीनता, शास्त्र और स्वच्छन्दता के बीच एक द्वंद्व है। बावजूद इसके साहित्य की स्वस्थ्य परिकल्पना के विचार सूत्र इसमें मौजूद हैं। हम जानते हैं कि रामचन्द्र शुक्ल और छायावादी कवियों और आलोचकों में गहरे मतभेद हैं। नंददुलारे वाजपेयी, निराला और प्रसाद ने शुक्ल जी की आलोचना की है। इस आलोचना का ऐतिहासिक महत्व है। इनकी आलोचना दिखाती है कि शुक्ल जी का छायावाद संबंधी कतिपय आग्रह पूर्ण सत्य नहीं है। वहीं शुक्ल जी की समीक्षा ने छायावाद की उन कमजोरियों को उजागर किया जो उसके पतन का कारण बनी। आचार्य शुक्ल ने छायावाद को विदेशी प्रभाव की रचना मानकर जहाँ गलती की वहीं उससे यथार्थ जीवन स्थितियों के चित्रण की माँग कर ऐतिहासिक महत्व का काम किया। आश्चर्यजनक है कि छायावादी कवियों के शुक्ल जी से मतभेद के बावजूद छायावाद का महत्तम रचनात्मक प्रतिफलन शुक्ल जी की माँग की तरफ ही हुआ। अब हम इस विमर्श के मुद्दों को देखेंगे जिसके तहत छायावादी कवियों आलोचकों और आचार्य शुक्ल में विचार-विनिमय हुआ है।

आचार्य रामचन्द्र शुक्ल की पहली आलोचना नंददुलारे वाजपेयी ने की है। नंददुलारे वाजपेयी ने आचार्य शुक्ल पर क्रमशः लिखा है। शुक्ल जी से संबंधित वाजपेयी के पहले दो निबंध शुक्ल जी के जीवनकाल के हैं। ये दोनों निबंध आलोचनात्मक हैं। शुक्ल जी की मृत्यु के पश्चात इन्होंने तीसरा निबंध लिखा जो प्रशंसात्मक है। जीवनकाल और मृत्यु के बाद के निबंधों में गहरा अन्तर्विरोध है। नंददुलारे वाजपेयी द्वारा की गई आलोचना एक विशेष दृष्टि की उपज है।

आचार्य शुक्ल का आलोचनात्मक प्रतिमान जहाँ संस्कृत क्लासिक्स और भक्तियुगीन काव्यों से निर्मित हुआ है वहीं नंददुलारे वाजपेयी का आलोचना सिद्धात छायावादी भावबोध और आधुनिक काव्य प्रवृत्तियों से बना प्रतीत होता है। नंददुलारे वाजपेयी मानते हैं कि "रस और अलंकार नायक और नायिका साहित्यिक आलोचना के आधारभूत तत्व ये ही है।"[4] (नंददुलारे वाजपेयी 81) रस, अलंकार को समीक्षा का आधार मानते हुए भी वे उसके मध्ययुगीन और रीतिकालीन स्वरूप की आलोचना करते है "रस किसी छंद में नहीं है वह तो मानव संवेदना के विस्तार में है। नायक-नायिका कवि जी की कल्पना में निर्माण होने के लिए नहीं हैं। प्रगतिशील संसार की नानाविध परिस्थितियों और सुख-दुख की तरंगों में डूबने-उतराने और धुलकर निखरने के लिये हैं और काव्यकला का सौष्ठव भी अनुभूति की गहराई में है, शब्दकोश के पन्ने उलटने में नहीं।"[5] (नंददुलारे वाजपेयी 82) काव्य की प्रकृति के सन्दर्भ में नंददुलारे वाजपेयी द्वारा व्यक्त ये विचार आचार्य शुक्ल से ही प्रभावित लगते हैं। आचार्य शुक्ल मानते हैं कि कविता भाव प्रसार करती है और यह प्रक्रिया मनुष्य हृदय का बाह्य जगत के साथ सामंजस्य स्थापित होने से होती है। शुक्ल जी ने कहा है कि "कविता बाह्य प्रकृति के साथ मनुष्य की अन्तः प्रकृति का सामंजस्य घटित करती हुई उसके भावात्मक सत्ता के प्रकार का प्रसार करती है"[6] (चिंतामणि, भाग-एक 91) जिससे "जगत... नाना गतिविधियों के मार्मिक स्वरूप का साक्षात्कार और शुद्ध अनुभूतियों का संचार होता है।"[7] (चिंतामणि, भाग-एक 88)

इस प्रकार काव्य की प्रकृति को लेकर नंददुलारे वाजपेयी ने कोई मौलिक प्रस्ताव नहीं रखा है। इस समानता के बावजूद कविता का उद्देश्यविषयवस्तु , और कार्यक्षेत्र के सन्दर्भ में नददुलारे वाजपेयी ने आचार्य शुक्ल से गहरा गतभेद व्यक्त किया है।

आचार्य शुक्ल पर लिखते हुए नंददुलारे वाजपेयी ने आलोचक के लिये कुछ दिशानिर्देश जारी किया है। वे कहते है कि "युग की संवेदनाओं से संमीक्षक का घनिष्ठ परिचय होना चाहिए। तभी वह युग के साहित्य का आकलन सम्यक रूप से कर सकेगा। जिन नूतन स्थितियों और प्रेरणाओं से नवीन काव्य का निर्माण हुआ है। जिन नवीन वादों की सृष्टि हुई है और जो नई शैलियाँ साहित्य में अपनाई गई हैं, उनका जब तक परिचय नहीं, तब तक साहित्य का मूल्यांकन क्या होगा? किंतु घनिष्ठ से घनिष्ठ परिचय में भी तटस्थता समीक्षक के लिये

आवश्यक है। यह तटस्थता सफल विश्लेषण की पहली शर्त है।" इस कसौटी पर शुक्ल जी को परखते हुए वे शुक्ल जी में 'तटस्थता' की कमी देखते हैं। शुक्ल जी के कर्म-सौन्दर्य की आलोचना करते हुए उन्होंने लिखा है कि "रामायण में यदि कर्म-सौन्दर्य खिल उठा है तो विनय पत्रिका में भी प्रेम-भावना चमक उठी है। इन दोनों में कौन-सा पक्ष अधिक काव्योपयोगी, है. इस सम्बन्ध में कोई भी निर्णय विवाद से खाली नहीं हो सकता। हमारा विश्वास है कि युग रूचि दूसरे पक्ष में है।"[9] (नंददुलारे वाजपेयी 89) नंददुलारे वाजपेयी ने जिस जल्दबाजी में दूसरे के पक्ष में अपना मत व्यक्त किया है, यह काव्य को एक विशेष दृष्टि से देखने का नतीजा है। अगर उनके शब्द 'काव्योपयोगी' को 'पयोगीजीवनो' कर दिया जाये तो सारी तर्क प्रणाली का निष्कर्ष बदल जायेगा। काव्य जीवन के लिये है और उसी से सम्बद्ध भी है। कर्म से प्रेम में सौन्दर्य का संचार होता है। अकर्मण्य प्रेम वस्तुतः भोग है। कर्मक्षेत्र जीवन को नई स्थितियाँ प्रदान करता है अतः अधिक जीवनोपयोगी है। कर्म के भीतर से प्रेम को अंकुरित होना चाहिए। इससे भी आगे जाकर नंददुलारे वाजपेयी ने कहा है "उन्होंने राम के निरूपण में ही रस की सत्ता मानी है, रावण के निरूपण से नहीं। स्पष्ट है कि काव्य से ऊपर नीति का स्थूल शासन शुक्ल जी नहीं छोड़ सके और भारतीय काव्यशारित्रयों के रस की ऊंचाई को नहीं छू सके।"[10] (नंददुलारे वाजपेयी 80) नंददुलारे वाजपेयी आधुनिक तर्क प्रणाली से प्रभावित करते हैं, लेकिन यह दृष्टि वास्तव में कला को समाज निरपेक्ष और मूल्यरहित बनाने वाली है। नददुलारे वाजपेयी ने 'राम' और 'रावण' को केवल व्यक्ति के तौर पर लिया है जबकि ये दो विरोधी भाव भी हैं। 'रावण' से रस निष्पत्ति हो सकती है पर साहित्य जब केवल निरपेक्ष रस नहीं है तो छिछले' और सौम्य रस' की पहचान होनी चाहिए। इसके अलावा रस की सामाजिक पृष्ठभूमि क्या है और वह किन मूल्यों और आदर्शों को प्रेषित करता है, यह जानना महत्वपूर्ण हो जाता है। रावण का दूसरा पक्ष हो सकता है, पर स्त्री अपहरणकर्ता के रूप में क्या 'उदात्त रस' की सृष्टि हो सकती है ? अगर होती है तब कला और नैतिकता का प्रश्न नहीं रह जाता है। शुक्ल जी ने परस्पर विरोधी भावों की स्थापना को स्वीकार किया है. पर 'सत्' 'असत्' के बीच एक द्वंद्व भाव वे अनिवार्य मानते हैं। नंददुलारे वाजपेयी ने अपने तर्क से वस्तुतः कला को निरपेक्ष स्वायत्त बनाने का प्रयास किया है।

नंददुलारे वाजपेयी ने छायावाद और रहस्यवाद के सन्दर्भ मे आचार्य शुक्ल के विचारों की तीव्र आलोचना की है। वे कहते हैं कि "स्थूल व्यवहारवाद को निस्सीम

बतलाकर और रहस्यवाद की कनकौए से तुलना कर विद्वान शुक्ल जी ने नवीन कविता के साथ अन्याय किया है।"[11] (नंददुलारे वाजपेयी 69) नंददुलारे वाजपेयी के अनुसार "छायावाद अथवा रहस्यवाद का क्षेत्र विस्तीर्ण है। मनुष्य के अध्यात्मपक्ष का सम्पूर्ण निरूपण इस प्रकार की कविता की सीमा के अन्तर्गत है और आत्मपक्ष के अन्तर्गत समस्त जीवन की व्याख्या की जा चुकी है।"[12] (नंददुलारे वाजपेयी 89) आचार्य शुक्ल ने नंददुलारे वाजपेयी की तरह रहस्यवाद का केवल एक विभाग नहीं किया है। शुक्ल जी ने इसे भाविकस्वा' रहस्यवाद' और साम्प्रदायिक' रहस्यवाद' में विभाजित किया है। स्वाभाविक रहस्यवाद के वे प्रशंसक हैं "मैं रहस्यवाद का विरोधी नहीं। मैं इसे भी कविता की एक शाखा विशेष मानता हूँ।"[13] (चिंतामणि, भाग-दो 34) शुक्ल जी का दोनों विभागों में विभाजन का आधार है तअज्ञा' की जिज्ञासा' और अज्ञात' की लालसा' का अंतर अज्ञात' की जिज्ञास' को स्वाभाविक रहस्यवाद मानते हैं और इसे वे काव्यभूमि के लिये उपयुक्त मानते हैं। जब अज्ञात' की जिज्ञासा' आगे चलकर अज्ञात' की लालसा' बन जाती है तब शुक्ल जी उसे काव्य के लिये उचित नहीं समझते हैं। वे मानते हैं कि लालसा' ज्ञात और गोचर के प्रति ही हो सकती है। अज्ञात की लालसा की प्रवृति से उनके अनुसार "हृदय पर बड़ा बुरा प्रभाव है।अज्ञानाप्रेयता... एक ओर श्रोता था पाटक के पक्ष मेंतो- इससे अज्ञानप्रियता का अनुरंजन होता है, दूसरी ओर कवि के पक्ष में उस अज्ञानप्रियता से लाभ उठा अहंकार तुष्टि का अभ्यास पड़ता है।"[14] (चिंतामणि, भाग-दो 63)

शुक्ल जी का 'छायाबाद' के साथ अन्याय का प्रश्न जरूर महत्वपूर्ण है। बृहत तौर पर देखने से यह स्पष्ट होता है कि आचार्य शुक्ल छायावाद के साथ पूरा सामंजस्य नहीं बैठा सके थे। उन्होंने छायावाद को विशेष काव्य शैली माना है, पर उसके भाव की जटिलता को बहुत स्पष्ट नहीं किया जो उनसे अपेक्षित था। इसके साथ ही हमें स्मरण रखना पड़ेगा कि छायावाद का महत्व भले ही शुक्ल जी नहीं समझ सकें, पर उसकी कमियों को उन्होंने बखूबी समझा था। बाद के समीक्षकों ने छायावाद के महत्व को समझा है और उसकी कमियों को भी दर्शाया है। शुक्ल जी ने दूसरा काम छायावादी समय में किया है. इसलिये उसका ऐतिहासिक और महत्व है।

'अभिव्यंजनावाद' और क्रोचे" के सन्दर्भ में भी नंददुलारे वाजपेयी ने शुक्ल जी की आलोचना की है। उनके अनुसार "शुक्ल जी क्रोचे के अभिव्यंजनावाद का विरोध करते हैं और कला' के लिये कला' सिद्धांत की खिल्ली उड़ाते हैं।" [15](नंददुलारे वाजपेयी 93) नंददुलारे वाजपेयी, आचार्य शुक्ल से सहमत नहीं हैं क्योंकि "क्रोंचे

और ब्रेडले जैसे कलावादियों ने अभिव्यंजना या कलावाद के मूल में उत्कृष्टतम मानसिक तत्व और प्रतिभा का अध्याहार कर दिया हैयदि ... शुक्ल जी यह कहें कि अभिव्यंजनावादियों की भित्ति स्वभावतः निशक्त है, क्योंकि यह काव्य की मानसिक भूमि सामाजिक आधार का लेखा नहीं लगाती, उनसे असंपृक्त रहती है, तो हम यह कहेंगे कि क्रोचे और अन्य कलावादियों का यह पक्ष ही नहीं था।"[16] (नंददुलारे वाजपेयी 93) नंददुलारे वाजपेयी पर यह स्पष्ट नहीं करते कि क्रोचे का पक्ष था क्या ? वस्तुतः कोचे का पक्ष-विपक्ष नंददुलारे वाजपेयी से ज्यादा आचार्य शुक्ल ने स्पष्ट किया है। शुक्ल जी ने काव्य' में अभिव्यंजनावाद' निबंध में इसको स्पष्ट करते हुए लिखा है कि "उसने अभिव्यंजनावाद का प्रवर्तन किया जिसके अनुसार कला में अभिव्यंजना ही सब कुछ है ....अभिव्यंजना से अलग कोई अभिव्यंग्य वस्तु या अर्थ नहीं होता। जो अर्थ किसी उक्ति के शब्दों से निकलता है, उसका संबंध किसी दूसरे अर्थ से नहीं होता।"[17] (चिंतामणि, भाग दो, 124) जिसके फलस्वरूप "कविता काव्य की सच्ची मार्मिक भूमि से बहुत दूर रहती है। यदि... काव्य की तह में जीवन का कोई सच्चा मार्मिक तथ्य, सच्ची भावानुभूति नही तो उसका मूल्य मनोरंजन करने वाली सजावट या खेल तमाशे के मूल्य से कुछ भी अधिक नहीं।"[18] (चिंतामणि, भाग दो, 124)

नंददुलारे वाजपेयी दूसरे सन्दर्भ में शुक्ल जी के 'लोकधर्म' की अवधारणा का खंडन करते हैं। वे कहते हैं कि "लोकधर्म भी उनका एक गतिहीन निरुपण ही सिद्ध हुआ, कोई प्रगतिशील और जागरूक स्वरूप उसे न मिल सका। नियमों की स्थिरता और एकरूपता ने उसके प्रति विद्रोह उत्पन्न कर दिया है।"[19] (नंददुलारे वाजपेयी 95) इस सन्दर्भ में इतना ही कहा जा सकता है कि कोई भी सिद्धांत सर्वकालिक नहीं होता है। बदलती परिस्थितियों के घात-प्रतिघात उसमें संशोधन की माँग करते हैं। आचार्य शुक्ल के 'लोकधर्म' में परिवर्तन का आग्रह गलत नहीं है और न इससे लोकधर्म का ऐतिहासिक महत्व कम होता है। महत्व इस बात का है कि शुक्ल जी ने साहित्य के केन्द्र में 'लोक' को रखकर साहित्य के सामने एक ऊँचा आदर्श रखा। इस आदर्श में कई अन्तर्विरोध हैं। इन अन्तर्विरोधों से होकर भविष्य का रास्ता निकाला जा सकता है।

नंददुलारे वाजपेयी आचार्य रामचन्द्र शुक्ल में सम्यक' तटस्थता' और साहित्यिक' मूल्य निर्धारण करने में पक्षपात रहित मनोयोग' का अभाव पाते हैं। गंभीर ढंग से विचार करने पर निष्कर्ष निकलता है कि नंददुलारे वाजपेयी जिसे तटस्थता का

अभाव कहते हैं, वह वास्तव में आचार्य रामचन्द्र शुक्ल की अखंडित महाकाव्यात्मक आलोचना दृष्टि है। उनकी आलोचना में एक मूल्य और मानदंड व्याप्त है, जिस पर उन्होंने पूरे इतिहास को परखा है। यह आचार्य रामचन्द्र शुक्ल की सबसे बड़ी विशेषता है और सबसे बड़ी कमी भी। आलोचक मानते हैं कि शुक्ल जी ने सिद्धों, नाथों, कबीर, छायावाद आदि के साथ पक्षपात किया है। बात बहुत दूर तक सही है। लेकिन क्या जिन ग्रंथों में पूरे इतिहास के साथ न्याय किया गया है वे ग्रंथ शुक्ल जी के इतिहास की बराबरी कर सके हैं ? उत्तर नकारात्मक है। ये किताबें छात्रोपयोगी 'गाइड' से ज्यादा हैसियत की नहीं है। आचार्य शुक्ल ने अपने सिद्धांतों को पूरी साहित्यिक परम्परा के साथ अभिन्न रूप से आदि से अंत तक व्यावहारिक रूप में प्रतिफलित किया है। शुक्ल जी का अप्रतिम महत्व इसमें है कि उन्होंने एक अखंडित साहित्यिक दृष्टि का निर्वाह सफलतापूर्वक अपनी आलोचना में किया है। इस अखंडित दृष्टि के कारण ही कुछ 'विशेष' साहित्य स बाहर रह गया है और उपेक्षित पड़ गया है। शुक्ल जी ने अपने अंतर्द्वंद्वों को दबाया नहीं है, यह उनकी ईमानदारी है। आचार्य शुक्ल के बाद आचार्य हजारी प्रसाद द्विवेदी ने दूसरा मौलिक इतिहास लिखा है। आचार्य हजारी प्रसाद द्विवेदी के इतिहास में भी द्वंद्व पूर्ण स्थिति है। 'जनता' से 'लोक' की तरफ उन्मुख होकर द्विवेदी जी ने 'कबीर' को साहित्य में पहली बार विशेष दर्जा प्रदान किया, पर 'नायक' उन्होंने तुलसी को ही बनाया है। अतः हमें मानना चाहिए कि महान और बड़ी दृष्टि में अंतर्विरोध अनिवार्य होता है, या फिर कि द्वंद्व के बिना महान रचना नहीं होती है।

मतभेदों के बावजूद नददुलारे वाजपेयी आचार्य रामचन्द्र शुक्ल के महत्व से परिचित हैं। उन्होंने कहा है कि "महत्व सीमाओं का नहीं है महत्व है सीमाओं के भीतर किये गये काम का। शुक्ल जी ने अपने समय की अर्द्धजागृतसाहित्य चेतना को दिशा ज्ञान दिया। रास्ता सुझाया ही नहीं, स्वयं आगे-आगे चले और मंजिल तय किए। महाकाव्योचित... औदात्य के लिये यह युग शुक्ल जी को स्मरण करेगा।"[20] (नंददुलारे वाजपेयी 87) आचार्य रामचन्द्र शुक्ल पर नंददुलारे वाजपेयी का लेखन भविष्य से संबंधित है। अपने उद्देश्य को स्पष्ट करते हुए नंददुलारे वाजपेयी ने कहा है कि "कुछ लोग उनकी बातों को दोहराने में ही उनका सच्चा शिष्यत्व समझते हैं। किन्तु प्रतिध्वनि कभी मूलध्वनि की बराबरी नहीं कर सकती। उनका सच्चा शिष्यत्व तो है उनके लिये हुए कामों को आगे बढ़ाने में, जिस प्रकार स्वयं उन्होंने पिछले किये हुए काम को आगे बढ़ाया।"[21] (नंददुलारे वाजपेयी 103)

स्पष्टतः नंददुलारे वाजपेयी की आलोचना का केन्द्र 'छायावाद' और 'रहस्यवाद' है। उन्होंने आचार्य शुक्ल के व्यक्तित्व के दूसरे पहलुओं को नहीं देखा है। नंददुलारे वाजपेयी की आलोचना से आचार्य शुक्ल के वास्तविक चिंतन का स्वरूप स्पष्ट नही होता है। बाद में निराला और प्रसाद ने छायावाद और रहस्यवाद के सन्दर्भ मे नंददुलारे वाजपेयी की आलोचना को आगे बढ़ाया है।

संदर्भ

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മാധ്യമാവിഷ്ട മലയാളി ജീവിതവും സമകാല ചെറുകഥയും: സുഭാഷ് ചന്ദ്രൻ, സന്തോഷ് ഏച്ചിക്കാനം കഥകളിലെ സന്ദർഭങ്ങൾ

നിമ്മി എ. പി. അസിസ്റ്റന്റ് പ്രൊഫസർ, മലയാളവിഭാഗം, ഗവ. ആർട്സ് & സയൻസ് കോളേജ്, കോഴിക്കോട്

Mediatized Malayali Life and Contemporary Short Story - Portrayals in Subhash Chandran and Santhosh Eachikkanam Stories

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പ്രബന്ധസംഗ്രഹം: *ആധുനികാനന്തര സാമൂഹ്യസന്ദർഭങ്ങളിൽ മുൻപില്ലാത്തവിധം മാധ്യമങ്ങൾക്കും മാധ്യമ സംസ്കാരത്തിനും സവിശേഷ ശ്രദ്ധയും സ്വീകാര്യതയും ലഭിച്ചു തുടങ്ങിയിട്ടുണ്ട്. മാധ്യമകേന്ദ്രിതവും മാധ്യമ നിയന്ത്രിതവുമായ ചരിത്രഘട്ടങ്ങളിലൂടെ മലയാളിയുടെ പൊതുജീവിതം കടന്നു പോകുമ്പോൾ കേരളീയ ജീവിതത്തെ നിർവ്വചിക്കുന്ന മൂല്യങ്ങളും സങ്കല്പങ്ങളും പ്രത്യയശാസ്ത്ര സമീപനങ്ങളും നിരന്തര പരിണാമത്തിന് വിധേയമായിത്തീരുന്നതു കാണാം. മാധ്യമങ്ങളുടെയും പൊതുമണ്ഡലത്തിന്റേയും ഇടപെടലാണ് ഈ പരിണാമത്തിന്റെ ഹേതുവായി പ്രവർത്തിക്കുന്നത്. നിരന്തര പരിണാമങ്ങളുടെ സാംസ്കാരികവും രാഷ്ട്രീയവുമായ അന്തരാളഘട്ടത്തിലൂടെ കടന്നു പോകുന്ന കേരളീയ ജീവിതത്തെ ഏറ്റവും സൂക്ഷ്മമായി അടയാളപ്പെടുത്തുന്ന സാഹിത്യ രൂപമാണ് ചെറുകഥ. സമകാലിക ചെറുകഥാകൃത്തുക്കളായ സുഭാഷ് ചന്ദ്രൻ, സന്തോഷ് ഏച്ചിക്കാനം എന്നിവരുടെ തെരഞ്ഞെടുത്ത കഥകളെ മുൻനിർത്തി മലയാളി ജീവിതം കടന്നു പോകുന്ന മാധ്യമ കേന്ദ്രിത ജീവിതത്തെ വിശകലനം ചെയ്യുകയാണ് പ്രബന്ധത്തിന്റെ ലക്ഷ്യം.*

താക്കോൽവാക്കുകൾ: സാമൂഹികമാധ്യമങ്ങൾ, പൊതുമണ്ഡലം, ചെറുകഥ, ആധുനികാനന്തരത

Abstract: *Media and Media Culture have attracted in recent Years, unprecedented attention and acceptance in Post-Modernist Social Contexts. While the Malayali Public Life passes through an historic Period that is both Media centric and Media-driven, there is an observable poignant transition in the values, concepts and ideological approaches that hitherto defined Keralite Social Life. This seemingly constant evolution is propelled by the interactions of Media and Public Sphere. Short Story is the Literary Form that most subtly imprints Keralite Social Life as it traverses through an interphase of inernal and Political transformations.This Paper attempts to analyze the Mediatized Malayali Life as depicted in the selected Short Stories of Contemporary Writers Subhash Chandran and Santhosh Eachikkanam.*

keywords : Social Media, Public sphere, short story, Postmodernism

ആധുനികാനന്തര സാമൂഹ്യ വിശകലനപദ്ധതികളിൽ ഏറ്റവും പ്രചാരം ലഭിച്ച സൈദ്ധാന്തിക സങ്കല്പനങ്ങളിലൊന്നാണ് പൊതുമണ്ഡലം എന്ന ആശയം. ജർമ്മൻ തത്വചിന്തകനും സാമൂഹ്യശാസ്ത്രകാരനുമായ യൂർഗൻ ഹേബർ മാസാണ് ഈ സങ്കല്പനത്തെ

ആദ്യമായി ആവിഷ്കരിക്കുന്നത് . പൊതു പ്രശ്നങ്ങൾ ചർച്ച ചെയ്യാനും ആലോചിക്കാനും തീരുമാനങ്ങളിലെത്താനുമായി വ്യക്തികൾ ഒത്തു ചേരുന്ന ഇടമാണ് പൊതുമണ്ഡലം. വ്യക്തികൾക്ക് അവരുടെ അഭിപ്രായങ്ങൾ, യോജിപ്പായാലും വിയോജിപ്പായാലും തുറന്ന് പ്രകടിപ്പിക്കാനുള്ള ഇടങ്ങളാണ് പൊതുമണ്ഡലങ്ങൾ സാധ്യമാക്കിയത്. അതുകൊണ്ടു തന്നെ ആധുനിക സമൂഹങ്ങളുടെ ജനാധിപത്യവൽക്കരണ പ്രക്രിയയിൽ പൊതുജനാഭിപ്രായങ്ങൾക്ക് വലിയ പ്രാധാന്യം സിദ്ധിക്കുന്നുണ്ട്.

കൊളോണിയൽ ആധുനികതയുടെ വരവോടെയാണ് കേരളത്തിൽ പൊതുമണ്ഡലമെന്ന ആശയം രൂപീകരിക്കപ്പെടുന്നത്. വിദ്യാഭ്യാസത്തിലും അച്ചടിയിലും മാധ്യമരംഗങ്ങളിലും കൊളോണിയൽ ആധിപത്യം വരുത്തിയ മാറ്റങ്ങൾ വ്യക്തികളുടെ ചിന്താഗതിയിലും കാഴ്ചപ്പാടുകളിലും വ്യത്യസ്തതകൾ സൃഷ്ടിച്ചു. അപ്രാപ്യമായ ഇടങ്ങളെ എല്ലാവർക്കും പ്രാപ്യമായ രീതിയിലേക്ക് മാറ്റിയെടുക്കാനുള്ള ശ്രമങ്ങൾ ആരംഭിക്കുന്നത് കൊളോണിയൽ ആധുനികതയോടെയാണ്. പൊതുഗതാഗതം, പൊതുവിദ്യാലയം, പൊതുഗ്രന്ഥശാലകൾ എന്നിവയുടെ നിർമ്മിതിയോടെ ജാതിയിടങ്ങൾക്കുപരിയായി എല്ലാവർക്കും കൂടിച്ചേരാവുന്ന പൊതുസ്ഥലങ്ങൾ സ്ഥാപിക്കപ്പെട്ടു. കേരളീയ നവോത്ഥാനത്തെ സാധ്യമാക്കുന്നതിൽ ഈ ഉദ്യമങ്ങൾക്ക് നിർണ്ണായകസ്ഥാനമുണ്ട്.

കേരളത്തിന്റെ പൊതുമണ്ഡലനിർമ്മിതിയിൽ വർത്തമാന പത്രങ്ങൾക്കുള്ള പങ്ക് വലുതാണ്. കേവലമായ ഒത്തുചേരലിനപ്പുറം ചിന്തകളുടെയും അഭിപ്രായങ്ങളുടെയും പരസ്പരം പങ്കുവെക്കലുകളുടെ ഒരു ലോകത്തേക്ക് കേരളീയരെ നയിക്കാൻ വർത്തമാന പത്രങ്ങൾക്ക് സാധിച്ചിട്ടുണ്ട്. കൊളോണിയൽ ആധുനികതയുടെ സ്ഥാപനങ്ങളാലും ഉപകരണങ്ങളാലും രൂപപ്പെട്ടു വന്ന നവോത്ഥാന ആശയങ്ങളും മറ്റും ദേശീയമായി വ്യാപിപ്പിക്കുന്നതിൽ അച്ചടിയും പത്രങ്ങളും കാട്ടിയ ജാഗ്രതയാണ് തികച്ചും ആധുനികമായ പൊതുമണ്ഡലം എന്ന സംവാദാത്മക അന്തരീക്ഷത്തെ ബലപ്പെടുത്തിയത് (കലേഷ് 2018 : 291).

കേരളീയ നവോത്ഥാനത്തിന്റെ ഭാഗമായി നടന്ന നിരവധി സമരങ്ങളും സാമൂഹ്യപരിഷ്കരണ പ്രസ്ഥാനങ്ങളുടെ പ്രവർത്തനങ്ങളും സൃഷ്ടിച്ച അന്തരീക്ഷത്തെ പൊതുമണ്ഡലമായി തന്നെ കാണാം എന്ന് ഷാജി ജേക്കബ് അഭിപ്രായപ്പെടുന്നുണ്ട് (2014 : 28). പൊതു സ്ഥലങ്ങളും സ്ഥാപനങ്ങളും മറ്റും എല്ലാ ജാതികൾക്കും വിഭാഗങ്ങൾക്കും അവകാശപ്പെടാനായി നടന്ന സമരങ്ങൾ വഴി രൂപപ്പെട്ട അഭിപ്രായങ്ങൾ ജനകീയ പൊതുമണ്ഡലത്തെയാണ് സാധ്യമാക്കിയത്. പാശ്ചാത്യവിദ്യാഭ്യാസം വഴി ലഭിച്ച അറിവുകൾ പൊതുമണ്ഡലത്തിന്റെ വികസനത്തെ സഹായിച്ചു. കൊളോണിയൽ വിദ്യാഭ്യാസം വഴി സൃഷ്ടിക്കപ്പെട്ട പുതിയ സാഹിത്യരൂപങ്ങൾ, സവിശേഷമായി നോവൽ, ചെറുകഥ പോലെയുള്ള സാഹിത്യ ജനുസ്സുകൾ സാമൂഹ്യ വിമർശനത്തിന്റെയും അഭിപ്രായങ്ങളുടെയും സാഹിത്യ പൊതുമണ്ഡലങ്ങളെ സാക്ഷാത്ക്കരിച്ചു.

ഇലക്ട്രോണിക് മാധ്യമങ്ങളുടെ വരവോടെ പ്രചാരത്തിലായ നവമാധ്യമവിപ്ലവം അതിവിപുലവും ജനകീയവുമായ പൊതുമണ്ഡലയിടങ്ങളെയാണ് സൃഷ്ടിച്ചെടുത്തത്.

ടെലിവിഷൻ, ഇൻറർനെറ്റ്, ഫെയ്സ്ബുക്ക്, ട്വിറ്റർ തുടങ്ങിയ നവമാധ്യമങ്ങൾ ഒരു ആധുനികാനന്തര ജനകീയ പൊതുമണ്ഡല നിർമ്മിതിയെ രൂപപ്പെടുത്തി. "പരമ്പരാഗത മാധ്യമങ്ങൾക്കുമേൽ നിയന്ത്രണമേർപ്പെടുത്തുന്ന ഭരണകൂടങ്ങളെ വെല്ലുവിളിച്ചു കൊണ്ട് പൗരകേന്ദ്രിതമായ ജനാധിപത്യം നടപ്പാക്കുന്ന നവമാധ്യമങ്ങൾ" എന്ന് ഹൊവാർഡ് റീൻ ഗോൾഡ് (James curran, David Morely 2007 : 278). പൊതു പ്രശ്നങ്ങൾ ചർച്ച ചെയ്യാനും തീരുമാനങ്ങളിലെത്താനും ജനാധിപത്യപരമായി ഇടപെടാനും സ്ഥലകാലദേശ രാഷ്ട്രപരിമിതികൾ ഇല്ലാത്ത ഒരു തുറസ്സാണ് നവമാധ്യമങ്ങൾ നിർമ്മിച്ചെടുത്തത്.

നവമാധ്യമവിപ്ലവം കേരളീയ പൊതുമണ്ഡലത്തിൽ വരുത്തിയ ചലനങ്ങൾ സാമൂഹ്യ ചിന്തയുടെ ഘടകവും പ്രാഥമിക സ്ഥാപനവുമായ കുടുംബത്തിലും പ്രതിഫലിച്ചു. കേരളീയ കുടുംബാന്തരീക്ഷത്തിലേക്കുള്ള മാധ്യമ ഇടപെടലുകളെ ആധുനികാനന്തര കഥകൾ സാക്ഷ്യപ്പെടുത്തുന്നതെങ്ങനെയെന്ന് സുഭാഷ് ചന്ദ്രൻ, സന്തോഷ് ഏച്ചിക്കാനം എന്നിവരുടെ കഥകളെ അടിസ്ഥാനമാക്കി വിശകലനം ചെയ്യുകയാണ് പ്രബന്ധത്തിൽ.

മാധ്യമങ്ങളും പരസ്യങ്ങളും വിപണിയും ചേർന്ന യാഥാർത്ഥ്യമാക്കിയ ഉപഭോഗസംസ്കാരത്തിന്റെ പൊതുമണ്ഡലത്തിലൂടെയാണ് ആധുനികാനന്തരകാലം കടന്നു പോകുന്നത്. ഷാജി ജേക്കബ് വിലയിരുത്തുന്നതു പോലെ ഇരുപത്തൊന്നാം നൂറ്റാണ്ടിലെത്തി നിൽക്കുന്ന കേരളീയാധുനികതയുടെ സാംസ്കാരിക പ്രത്യയശാസ്ത്രമണ്ഡലങ്ങളോരോന്നും മാധ്യമകേന്ദ്രിതമായ വിശകലനത്തിനും വിലയിരുത്തലിനും വിധേയമായിക്കൊണ്ടിരിക്കുകയാണ്. അതു കൊണ്ടു തന്നെ മലയാളിയുടെ അഭിരുചികൾ, ജീവിതശൈലികൾ, ലോകബോധം, രാഷ്ട്രീയവീക്ഷണം, വിശ്വാസാചാരങ്ങൾ, അറിവിന്റെയും വിനോദത്തിന്റെയും ഉപാധികൾ, മൂല്യസങ്കൽപ്പങ്ങൾ, ഭാഷാവബോധം, തൊഴിൽ, വിദ്യാഭ്യാസതാത്പര്യങ്ങൾ, സാമ്പത്തിക സാമൂഹിക സമീപനങ്ങൾ, വർഗ്ഗലിംഗസമവാക്യങ്ങൾ, ഉൽപ്പാദന ഉപഭോഗബന്ധങ്ങൾ എന്നിങ്ങനെ ഏതു രംഗവും നിർണ്ണയിക്കപ്പെടുന്നതിൽ മാധ്യമങ്ങളുടെ പങ്കാളിത്തവും സ്വാധീനവും ഇന്ന് പ്രധാനമാണ് (2014:145). മലയാളിയുടെ കുടുംബപ്രത്യയശാസ്ത്രബോധങ്ങളെ നിർണ്ണയിക്കുന്നതിൽ മേൽപ്പറഞ്ഞ മാധ്യമ പൊതുമണ്ഡലങ്ങൾ പ്രധാന പങ്കു വഹിക്കുന്നുണ്ട്. സുഭാഷ്ചന്ദ്രന്റെ "അമേരിക്ക" എന്ന കഥ അത്തരമൊരു സമീപനത്തെയാണ് അടയാളപ്പെടുത്തുന്നത്.

ആഗോളീകരണ താത്പര്യങ്ങളാണ് മലയാളിയുടെ കൊച്ചു താത്പര്യങ്ങളെ പോലും നിയന്ത്രിക്കുന്നത്. അമേരിക്കയിലേക്ക് കയറ്റി അയക്കുന്ന കൊഞ്ചിന് നാട്ടിലെ ചന്തയിൽ നിന്ന് ലഭിക്കുന്ന കൊഞ്ചിനേക്കാളും രുചി കൂടും എന്ന് കഥാനായകൻ ചിന്തിക്കുന്നത് അതുകൊണ്ടാണ്. സുഹൃത്തായ തങ്കച്ചന്റെ ചിന്തയും മറിച്ചല്ല. "വൈകുന്നേരം ഇതുവഴി വന്നാൽ നിനക്കു ഞാൻ രഹസ്യമായി അഞ്ചാറു കൊഞ്ചുകളെ തരാം. കൊണ്ടുപോയി നല്ല വെളിച്ചെണ്ണയിൽ പൊരിച്ചു ഞൗ ഞൗ എന്നു ചവച്ചു തിന്ന്. ഇന്നു രാത്രി നിന്റെ പുതിയ വീട് ഒരു കൊച്ചു അമേരിക്കയാകട്ടെ" (സുഭാഷ്ചന്ദ്രൻ 2015: 124). ആഗോളമാധ്യമങ്ങൾ വഴി പ്രചരിക്കപ്പെട്ട അമേരിക്കൻ സംസ്കാരത്തിന്റെ സ്വാധീനമാണ്

ഇത്തരം ചിന്തയിലേക്ക് പൊതുസമൂഹത്തെ നയിക്കുന്നത്. ആഗോളീകരണത്തെ അനുഭവയാഥാർത്ഥ്യമാക്കിത്തീർക്കുന്നതിൽ ടെലിവിഷൻ വലിയ പങ്കു വഹിച്ചിട്ടുണ്ട്. പൊതുമണ്ഡലത്തിലെ ചെറിയ ചലനങ്ങളെപ്പോലും കുടുംബത്തിനകത്തേക്ക് കൊണ്ടു വരുന്ന പ്രതീതി പ്രാദേശികരൂപങ്ങളായി ടെലിവിഷൻ രൂപാന്തരപ്പെട്ടിട്ടുണ്ട്. അമേരിക്കയിൽ കുട്ടികൾ ടെലിവിഷൻ കാണുന്ന രംഗത്തെ സുഭാഷ്ചന്ദ്രൻ അവതരിപ്പിക്കുന്നത് നോക്കുക,

"ആറു വയസ്സുകാരൻ മകനും നാലു വയസ്സുകാരി മകളും പതിവുപോലെ കാളക്കണ്ണുകളോടെ ടി.വി. നോക്കിയിരിക്കുകയായിരുന്നു. അക്ഷരങ്ങൾ മുഴുവനും പഠിച്ചു കഴിഞ്ഞിട്ടില്ലാത്ത മകൾ തന്റെ കൈയ്യിലിരുന്ന റിമോട്ട് കൺട്രോളിന്റെ മൊട്ടുകളിൽ കുഞ്ഞു വിരലുകൾ കൊണ്ടു തൊങ്കിത്തൊട്ടു കളിച്ചു. വീടിനു മുകളിൽ ഘടിപ്പിച്ച ഡിഷ് ആന്റിനയുടെ മലർത്തിവെച്ച കുടയിലൂടെ പലതരം കാഴ്ചകൾ അവളുടെ ഇംഗിതമനുസരിച്ചു വീടിനകത്തേക്കു ചോർന്നൊലിച്ചു കൊണ്ടിരുന്നു" (2015 : 126). കുടുംബം എന്ന സ്ഥാപനത്തിന്റെ താത്പര്യങ്ങളിലേക്ക് ആഗോളീകരണ പൊതുമണ്ഡലങ്ങളുടെ താത്പര്യങ്ങൾ ഇടംപിടിക്കുന്നതിന്റെയും മലയാളിയുടെ ജീവിതത്തിന്റെ എല്ലാ മണ്ഡലങ്ങളിലും സാങ്കേതികത വരുത്തുന്ന മാറ്റത്തിന്റെയും സൂചനകൾ മേൽപ്പറഞ്ഞ കഥാ വിവരണത്തിലുണ്ട്.

കഥാനായകൻ വാങ്ങിക്കൊണ്ടു വന്ന കഥകളിത്തലയെ "എന്താ ഇത്?" എന്ന ചോദ്യത്തോടെയാണ് മകൻ നേരിടുന്നത്. തൊട്ടടുത്ത നിമിഷം ടി. വി. ഓഫാക്കി ഫാഷൻ പരേഡ് കളിക്കാൻ കുട്ടികൾ തുടങ്ങുകയും ചെയ്യുന്നു. ഡൈനിങ് ടേബിളിനെ വേദിയാക്കി നാലു വയസ്സുകാരി മകൾ പൂച്ച നടത്തം പ്രദർശിപ്പിക്കുകയും മകൻ ചിരിയുടെ ഫ്ളാഷുകൾ മിന്നിച്ച് ക്യാമറാമാനാകുകയും ചെയ്യുന്നു. പ്രാദേശികതയുടെ ആഗോളീകരണരൂപമായ കഥകളിത്തലയെ കുട്ടികൾക്ക് തിരിച്ചറിയാനാവുന്നില്ലെങ്കിലും ടെലിവിഷൻ സൃഷ്ടിക്കുന്ന പ്രതീതി ലോകത്തിന്റെ അനുകർത്താക്കളാകാൻ അവർക്ക് കഴിയുന്നുണ്ട്. ലോകം വീടിനകത്തേക്ക് പ്രവേശിക്കുന്നതിന്റെ, അറിവിന്റേയും വിനോദത്തിന്റെയും മേഖലകളെ പരിചിതമാക്കുന്നതിന്റെ സൂചനകളെയാണ് കഥാകാരൻ പങ്കുവെക്കുന്നത്.

ടെലിവിഷൻ പോലുള്ള മാധ്യമങ്ങളുടെ ഇടപെടൽ കുടുംബത്തിനകത്തെ കുട്ടികളുടെ മനോഭാവത്തിൽ മാറ്റങ്ങൾ സൃഷ്ടിക്കുന്നുണ്ട്. സുഭാഷ് ചന്ദ്രന്റെ "ഗ്രഫ്തം ഒരു തിരക്കഥ"യിലെ ആൺകുട്ടിയെ സംബന്ധിച്ചിടത്തോളം കൂടെ പഠിക്കുന്ന സുഹൃത്തായ പെൺകുട്ടി പോലും ഉപഭോഗവസ്തുവാണ്. ടെലിവിഷൻ സ്ക്രീനിൽ കണ്ട നീലച്ചിത്രങ്ങളാണ് സഹപാഠിയായ പ്രതിഭയെ വീട്ടിനകത്തേക്ക് വിളിക്കാൻ പ്രണവിനെ പ്രേരിപ്പിക്കുന്നത്. നഗരജീവിതത്തിരക്കുകൾ കുടുംബ ബന്ധങ്ങളിലുണ്ടാക്കുന്ന വിടവുകളെ കഥ കൃത്യമായി രേഖപ്പെടുത്തുന്നുണ്ട്. ജോലിക്കാരായ അച്ഛനമ്മമാർക്ക് മകന്റെ വിദ്യാഭ്യാസ കാര്യങ്ങളിൽ മാത്രമെ ഉത്കണ്ഠയുള്ളൂ. അതിനപ്പുറം മകനോടൊപ്പം ചിലവഴിക്കാനുള്ള സമയങ്ങളെ കണ്ടെത്താൻ അവർക്കാകുന്നില്ല. അമ്മൂമ്മയുടെ അവസരോചിതമായ ഇടപെടലുകൾ കൊണ്ടാണ് പ്രണവിന് വലിയൊരു ദുരന്തത്തിൽ നിന്ന് രക്ഷനേടാനായത്.

പൊതുജനാഭിപ്രായ രൂപീകരണത്തിന്റെ തലത്തിൽ ടെലിവിഷൻ ചാനലുകൾ സജീവമായ ഇടപെടലുകളാണ് നടത്തുന്നത്. പത്രം, റേഡിയോ, ആനുകാലികങ്ങൾ എന്നിവയെക്കാൾ ടെലിവിഷന് സ്വാധീനമുണ്ടാകാൻ അഞ്ച് കാരണങ്ങളുണ്ടെന്ന് ജോസ്റ്റിൻ ഗ്രിപ്സ്റ്റ് റെഡ് അദ്ദേഹത്തിന്റെ അണ്ടർസ്റ്റാന്റിംഗ് മീഡിയ കൾച്ചർ (Understanding Media Culture) എന്ന പുസ്തകത്തിൽ വിശദീകരിക്കുന്നുണ്ട്. ടെലിവിഷന്റെ വൻതോതിലുള്ള പ്രാപ്യത, പ്രേക്ഷർ ഏറെ സമയം ചെലവഴിക്കുന്ന മാധ്യമം, അസാധാരണമാംവിധമുള്ള സാമൂഹികത, സംസ്കാര വൈവിധ്യത്തിന്റെ ഏറ്റവും പ്രമുഖമായ മാധ്യമം, പൊതുമണ്ഡലത്തിന്റെ അജണ്ടകൾ നിശ്ചയിക്കുന്നതിലുള്ള പങ്ക് എന്നിവയാണ് അദ്ദേഹം പറയുന്ന അഞ്ച് കാരണങ്ങൾ (Jostein Grispsrud 2002 : 260- 261). ഇതിൽ ചൂണ്ടിക്കാണിക്കുന്ന അഞ്ചാമത്തെ ഘടകം പൊതുമണ്ഡലമാണ്. ഓരോ വ്യക്തിക്കും പൊതുമണ്ഡലത്തിൽ നേരിട്ട് ഇടപെടാനും സംവദിക്കാനുമുള്ള സാധ്യതയാണ് ടെലിവിഷൻ പോലുള്ള സാമൂഹിക മാധ്യമങ്ങൾ വഴിയൊരുക്കുന്നത്. വ്യക്തിയും കുടുംബവുമൊക്കെ നേരിട്ട് പൊതുജന സംവാദ മണ്ഡലത്തിൽ പങ്കാളികളാകുന്നു. സന്തോഷ് ഏച്ചിക്കാനത്തിന്റെ "കൊമാല" യിലെ വിശ്വനും കുടുംബത്തിനും നേരിട്ട ദുരന്തത്തെ പ്രതീതി മണ്ഡലത്തിലെ പൊതുചർച്ചയാണ് പൊതുജനശ്രദ്ധയിലെത്തിക്കുന്നത്.

"കടബാധ്യത മൂലം ആഗസ്റ്റ് 15 പുലർച്ചെ 12 ന് കൂട്ട ആത്മഹത്യ ചെയ്യുമെന്ന" ബോർഡ് സ്വന്തം വീടിനു മുന്നിൽ എഴുതി വെച്ചവനാണ് കുണ്ടൂർ വിശ്വൻ. ഈ വാർത്തയാണ് മാധ്യമങ്ങളിൽ ചർച്ചാവിഷയമായത്. എന്തിനെയും കച്ചവടവത്ക്കരിക്കുന്ന ആഗോളീകരണ മാധ്യമസംസ്കാരം ഒരാളുടെ മരണത്തെയും അത്തരത്തിലൊരു കച്ചവടക്കണ്ണോടു കൂടിയാണ് കാണുന്നതെങ്കിലും പ്രശ്നത്തിന്റെ വിവിധ വശങ്ങളെ ചർച്ച ചെയ്യാൻ ഒരു ഇടം കടക്കാരനായ കുണ്ടൂർ വിശ്വന് ലഭിക്കുന്നുണ്ട്. വിശ്വന്റെ മാത്രം പ്രശ്നമായി ഒതുങ്ങി പോയേക്കാവുന്ന ഒന്നിനെയാണ് പ്രമുഖ മന:ശാസ്ത്രജ്ഞനും സാമൂഹിക പ്രവർത്തകനും എഴുത്തുകാരനുമായ ഡോക്ടർ സി. നന്ദകുമാർ, വെള്ളൂർ സഹകരണ ബാങ്ക് സെക്രട്ടറി മാധവൻ നായർ, നാഷണൽ ക്രൈം റെക്കോർഡ്സ് റിസർച്ച് ബ്യൂറോയിലെ ഉദ്യോഗസ്ഥൻ അലക്സ് പുന്നൂസ്, അഡ്വക്കറ്റ് ഫാത്തിമ ബീഗം എന്നിവരുടെ ഇടപെടലിലൂടെ പൊതു ജനമധ്യത്തിൽ ചർച്ചാ വിഷയമാകുന്നത്. കുണ്ടൂർ വിശ്വന്റെ പ്രശ്നത്തെ ഡോക്ടർ നന്ദകുമാർ വിശദീകരിക്കുന്നതിപ്രകാരമാണ്, "മരിക്കാൻ അയാൾ സ്വാതന്ത്ര്യദിനം തിരഞ്ഞെടുത്തു. വീടിനു മുന്നിൽ വലിയ അക്ഷരത്തിൽ ഭീഷണി എഴുതി വെച്ചു. മരിക്കാനല്ല, മരിക്കാതിരിക്കാനാണ് അയാൾ ഇതൊക്കെ ചെയ്തത്. ഞാൻ മുമ്പു സൂചിപ്പിച്ച പോലെ അയാൾ ജീവിതത്തെ മരണത്തോളം സ്നേഹിക്കുന്നു. വാട്ട് എവർ ഇറ്റ് ഈസ് ദ പ്രോബ്ലം ഈസ് വെരി സീരിയസ്. റൈറ്റ് ടു ലീവ് വിത്ത് പേഴ്സൺ ലിബർട്ടി ഈസ് ഫണ്ടമെന്റൽ. അതു പോലും നിഷേധിക്കപ്പെടുക എന്നു വെച്ചാൽ. ഇവിടുത്തെ സോഷ്യൽ സെറ്റപ്പിന്റെ വൈകൃതമാണ് വിശ്വൻ നമ്മുടെ മുന്നിൽ എഴുതി വെക്കുന്നത്. കേവലം വെള്ളൂർ സഹകരണ ബാങ്കിൽ മാത്രം ഒതുക്കേണ്ട പ്രശ്നമല്ലിത്" (സന്തോഷ് ഏച്ചിക്കാനം 2014 : 158). കുണ്ടൂർ വിശ്വന്റെ മാത്രം കുടുംബ പ്രശ്നം സമൂഹത്തിന്റെ പൊതു പ്രശ്നമായി അവലോകനം ചെയ്യപ്പെടുകയാണിവിടെ.

കണ്ണൂർ വിശ്വന്റെ പ്രശ്നം കേരളത്തിൽ വർഷംപ്രതി കൂടി വരുന്ന ആത്മഹത്യാ പ്രവണതയെപ്പറ്റിയുള്ള ചർച്ചയിൽ വരെ എത്തുന്നു. നാഷണൽ ക്രൈം റെക്കോർഡ്സ് റിസർച്ച് ബ്യൂറോ സീനിയർ ഉദ്യോഗസ്ഥൻ അലക്സ് പുന്നൂസിന്റെ അഭിപ്രായത്തിൽ വിശ്വന്റെ കാര്യത്തിൽ കടമാണ്. പക്ഷെ കടം എന്ന് അങ്ങനെ പറയാൻ പറ്റില്ല. അതിനു മുൻപ് വിശ്വനെ കടക്കാരനാക്കിയ സാമൂഹിക ചുറ്റുപാടുകളെക്കുറിച്ചും ആലോചിക്കേണ്ടതുണ്ട്. അപ്പോൾ കടമല്ല യഥാർത്ഥ കാരണമെന്നു വരുന്നു. ഒരു വ്യക്തിയെ കടക്കാരനാക്കുന്നത് രാജ്യത്തെ ഭരണകൂടമാണ് (2014 : 159). വിശ്വന്റെ ആത്മഹത്യ ഭരണകൂടത്തിന്റെ കൂടെ ഉത്തരവാദിത്തമായി തീരുന്നു.

"കുറെ സ്നേഹവും വാശാനങ്ങളുമായി ഒരു പുതിയ ചങ്ങാതി നിങ്ങളുടെ പിറകെ കൂടിയിട്ടുണ്ടെങ്കിൽ ഒരു പരീക്ഷണം എന്ന നിലക്ക് കുറച്ചു പണം കടം ചോദിക്കുക. പിറ്റേന്നു മുതൽ അയാളുടെ പൊടി പോലും കാണില്ല" (2014 : 161) എന്ന തിരിച്ചറിവ് കണ്ണൂർ വിശ്വൻ മാധ്യമത്തിൽ പങ്കു വെക്കുന്നു. ഏകപക്ഷീയമായ വാർത്തയുടെ ഇടപെടലല്ല, മറിച്ച് സമൂഹത്തിന്റെ മുഴുവൻ പങ്കാളിത്തവും വിശ്വന് ലഭിക്കുന്നുണ്ട്. ഭരണകൂടത്തിന്റെയോ മാധ്യമസ്ഥാപനത്തിന്റെയോ വിപണിയുടെ യോ മാത്രം താത്പര്യങ്ങൾക്കനുസരിച്ചുള്ള ഇടപെടലുകളായല്ല വ്യക്തിയുടെ താത്പര്യങ്ങളെ കൂടി പൊതുമണ്ഡലങ്ങൾ ഏറ്റെടുക്കുന്നു എന്നത് ശ്രദ്ധേയമാണ്. മാധ്യമ പൊതുമണ്ഡലത്തോടാണ് വിശ്വൻ തന്റെ അനുഭവങ്ങൾ പങ്കു വെക്കുന്നത്. വ്യക്തിയും കുടുംബവും സമൂഹവുമെല്ലാം പൊതുമണ്ഡലത്തിൽ പങ്കാളികളാകുന്ന പ്രക്രിയയാണ് സമൂഹമാധ്യമങ്ങൾ രൂപപ്പെടുത്തുന്നത്.

ആഗോളമൂല്യങ്ങളെയും ആഗോള വിപണന താത്പര്യങ്ങളെയും പ്രോത്സാഹിപ്പിക്കുന്ന ഉപഭോഗസംസ്കാരത്തിലേക്ക് ആധുനികാനന്തര മാധ്യമങ്ങളുടെ ഇടപെടലിന്റെ ഫലമായി സമൂഹം/ കുടുംബം വഴിമാറപ്പെടുന്നുണ്ട്. കുടുംബത്തിനകത്തെ വ്യക്തികളുടെ ഇടപെടലുകളെയും പെരുമാറ്റത്തെയും മാധ്യമങ്ങൾ സ്വാധീനിക്കുന്നുണ്ട്. സന്തോഷ് ഏച്ചിക്കാനത്തിന്റെ "വാർത്താശരീര"ത്തിലെ പാട്ടിയമ്മ ആഗോള ജീവിതത്തിന്റെ എല്ലാ അറിവുകളെയും തിരിച്ചറിയുന്ന കഥാപാത്രമാണ്. അക്ഷരാഭ്യാസമില്ലാത്ത പാട്ടിയമ്മക്ക് പത്രം, റേഡിയോ, ടെലിവിഷൻ, ചലച്ചിത്രം എന്നീ മേഖലകളിലെല്ലാം മറ്റുള്ളവരെ അത്ഭുതപ്പെടുത്തുന്ന അറിവുണ്ട്. പുതിയ ടെലിവിഷൻ വാങ്ങിയതിനെപ്പറ്റി പറയുമ്പോൾ പാട്ടിയമ്മയുടെ അഭിപ്രായം ഇതാണ്, ടി.വി. യാകുമ്പോ ഒനിഡ തന്ന്യാണ് നല്ലത്. ബി.പി. എല്ലും വീഡിയോ കോണും മോശന്നല്ല, എന്നാലും ഒരൊറപ്പിന് ഇദെന്നെ പഷ്ട്" (2014 : 210).

മലയാളം കേസറ്റിനെക്കാൾ പാട്ടിയമ്മ ഇഷ്ടപ്പെടുന്നത് വാർഡാമിന്റെ ഇംഗ്ലീഷ് കേസറ്റാണ്. അന്താരാഷ്ട്ര പ്രശ്നങ്ങളെക്കുറിച്ചും രാഷ്ട്രീയ പ്രതിസന്ധികളെക്കുറിച്ചും വംശീയ പോരാട്ടങ്ങളെക്കുറിച്ചും പാട്ടിയമ്മക്ക് നല്ല അവഗാഹമുണ്ട്. സാധാരണക്കാരിയായ, ദരിദ്രയായ, അധ:കൃതമായ ഒരാൾ എന്ന നിലയിലല്ല പാട്ടിയമ്മ അവതരിക്കപ്പെടുന്നത്. മറിച്ച് മാധ്യമസംസ്കാരം നവീകരിച്ചെടുത്ത ഒരു കഥാപാത്രമായാണ്. മാധ്യമങ്ങളുടെ ഇടപെടൽ കുടുംബത്തിനകത്തെ വ്യക്തി ബന്ധങ്ങളിലുണ്ടാക്കുന്ന മാറ്റത്തെക്കുറിച്ചും കഥ

സൂചന നൽകുന്നുണ്ട്. ടെലിവിഷനിൽ സിനിമ കാണാൻ പോകാനുള്ള ഒരുക്കത്തിൽ ദാക്ഷായണി മകനെ മറന്നു പോകുന്നു. പനിച്ചൂടിൽ വിശന്ന് കിടക്കുന്ന മകന് സിനിമ കാണാൻ താത്പര്യമില്ല എന്നറിയിക്കുമ്പോൾ അതിനെ വകവെക്കാതെ മകനെയും കൊണ്ട് ദാക്ഷായണി പോകുന്നു. മകന്റെ കലാബോധമില്ലായ്മയിൽ അച്ഛനായ കേളു മകനെ പരിഹസിക്കുന്നുണ്ട്. സിനിമ കാണാനുള്ള അതിയായ ആഗ്രഹത്തിനു മുന്നിൽ മകന്റെ വിശപ്പോ, പനിയോ ഒന്നും ആ അച്ഛനമ്മമാർക്ക് പ്രശ്നമാകുന്നില്ല. യഥാർത്ഥ ജീവിത പ്രശ്നങ്ങളെ നിസ്സാരമാക്കി കാണാനും മാധ്യമങ്ങൾ സൃഷ്ടിക്കുന്ന വിനോദാഭിരതിയിൽ അഭിരമിക്കാനുമുള്ള പുതിയ കാലത്തിന്റെ പ്രവണതകളെ കൂടി സന്തോഷ് ഏച്ചിക്കാനം കഥയിലൂടെ വിമർശിക്കുന്നുണ്ട്.

ദൈനംദിന ജീവിതത്തെ സംബന്ധിക്കുന്ന എന്തും വിഷയമാക്കുന്ന തിരിച്ചറിവിൽ സൃഷ്ടിക്കപ്പെടുന്ന പുതിയ മാധ്യമമണ്ഡലത്തിന്റെ സമവാക്യങ്ങൾ പ്രതീതിലോകത്തെയും യഥാർത്ഥലോകത്തെയും തിരിച്ചറിയാൻ പറ്റാത്ത രീതിയിലുള്ള അനുഭവത്തെ ഉണ്ടാക്കാറുണ്ട്. റിയാലിറ്റി ടെലിവിഷന്റെ അത്തരം കയ്യേറ്റത്തെ വിമർശനാത്മകമായി പരിശോധിക്കുന്ന കഥയാണ് സന്തോഷ് ഏച്ചിക്കാനത്തിന്റെ "അഭിനയ മുഹൂർത്തങ്ങൾ". എം.ടി.വിക്കാരെ അനുകരിച്ച് ടെലിവിഷൻ നടത്തുന്ന തരികിട പരിപാടിയാണെന്ന് കരുതി ഒരു പെൺകുട്ടിക്ക് നേരെ നടക്കുന്ന കയ്യേറ്റങ്ങളെ നിസ്സംഗതയോടെ നോക്കി നിൽക്കുന്ന പൊതുസമൂഹത്തെയാണ് സന്തോഷ് ഏച്ചിക്കാനം "അഭിനയ മുഹൂർത്തങ്ങളി"ൽ അവതരിപ്പിക്കുന്നത്.

ചെറുപ്പക്കാരന്റെ മോശമായ പ്രതികരണത്തെപ്പറ്റി യാത്രക്കാരോട് പരാതിപ്പെടുന്ന പെൺകുട്ടിക്ക് ആൾക്കൂട്ടങ്ങളിൽ നിന്ന് സന്ദർഭോചിതമല്ലാത്ത പുകഴ്ത്തലാണ് ലഭിക്കുന്നത്. ആൾക്കൂട്ടത്തിന്റെ മാനസികനില മനസ്സിലാക്കാൻ സാധിക്കാത്ത പെൺകുട്ടി സ്വയംരക്ഷക്ക് വേണ്ടി ബസ്റ്റാൻഡിലൂടനീളം ഓടേണ്ടി വരുന്നു. ഇതുകണ്ട ജനക്കൂട്ടം ആർത്തുല്ലസിച്ച് രണ്ടുപേരെയും പ്രോത്സാഹിപ്പിക്കുകയും ചെയ്യുന്നു. യാഥാർത്ഥ്യത്തെ തിരിച്ചറിയാൻ പൊതുസമൂഹത്തിന് കഴിയാതെ പോകുന്നു.

"ചെറുപ്പക്കാരൻ പെൺകുട്ടിയുടെ കീഴടക്കിയ ശരീരത്തെ വാരി ചുമലിലിട്ട് ആൾക്കൂട്ടത്തിന് നേരെ കൈവീശി കാറിനടുത്തേക്കു നടന്നു" (2014 : 92). യാഥാർത്ഥ്യം, സത്യം, വസ്തുത, നിലപാട് തുടങ്ങിയ ഘടകങ്ങൾ ഇവിടെ അപ്രത്യക്ഷമാവുകയും അവക്ക് പകരം പ്രതീതിലോകത്തിന്റെ മായികബിംബങ്ങളും ആധിപത്യവും പൊതുസമൂഹത്തെ നയിക്കുകയും ചെയ്യുന്നു. അതുകൊണ്ടാണ് യാതൊരുവിധ ആൾക്കൂട്ട എതിരിടലുകളുമില്ലാതെ ചെറുപ്പക്കാരന് പെൺകുട്ടിയെ കൊണ്ടുപോകാനായത്. കച്ചവടവത്ക്കരിക്കപ്പെട്ട മാധ്യമമണ്ഡലങ്ങൾ വഴി പൊതുമണ്ഡലത്തിനുണ്ടാകുന്ന സ്വാധീനങ്ങൾ ഇത്തരം വിഷമാവസ്ഥകളെക്കൂടി സൃഷ്ടിക്കും എന്ന് "അഭിനയ മുഹൂർത്തങ്ങൾ" വെളിവാക്കുന്നു.

മാധ്യമമേഖലയിലുണ്ടായ വിപ്ലവങ്ങൾ കുടുംബ സാമൂഹ്യ വ്യവസ്ഥക്കകത്ത് പരിവർത്തനങ്ങൾ സൃഷ്ടിക്കുന്നതിന്റെ അടയാളങ്ങളെ ആധുനികാനന്തര കഥകൾ

രേഖപ്പെടുത്തുന്നുണ്ട്- ആഗോളവിപണന താല്പര്യങ്ങളെ പ്രോത്സാഹിപ്പിക്കുന്ന ഉപഭോഗ സംസ്കാരത്തിലേക്ക് സാമൂഹിക നവമാധ്യമങ്ങളുടെ ഇടപെടലിന്റെ ഫലമായി സമൂഹവും കുടുംബവും ചാലനം ചെയ്യപ്പെടുന്നതിന്റെ സൂചനകൾ സുഭാഷ് ചന്ദ്രന്റെയും സന്തോഷ് ഏച്ചിക്കാനത്തിന്റെയും കഥകൾ നൽകുന്നുണ്ട്.

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കേരളീയ കീഴാള ജീവിതത്തിന്റെ ചലച്ചിത്ര പ്രതിനിധാനങ്ങൾ

സ്റ്റാലിൻ ദാസ് പടിഞ്ഞാറേ പുരക്കൽ
അസോസിയേറ്റ് പ്രൊഫസർ, മലയാളവിഭാഗം, ഗവ. ആർട്സ് & സയൻസ് കോളേജ്, കോഴിക്കോട്

Caste-Life-Death
Cinematic representations of the Keralite Dalit Life

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പ്രബന്ധസംഗ്രഹം : *സജി പാലമേൽ സംവിധാനം ചെയ്ത ആറടി (2017) അതിസങ്കീർണ്ണവും ദയനീയവുമായ ഒരു കീഴാളാനുഭവത്തെ കേന്ദ്രവിഷയമായി അവതരിപ്പിക്കുന്ന സിനിമയാണ്. ഭൂമിയുടെ ഉടമാവകാശം, രാഷ്ട്രീയ പാർട്ടികളുടെ കപട ദലിത് നിലപാടുകൾ, നവഹൈന്ദവതയുടെ രക്ഷാകർതൃത്വാഭിനയം, പരാജയപ്പെട്ട കേരളീയ നവോത്ഥാനം തുടങ്ങി കേരളീയ ദലിത് ജീവിതവുമായി ബന്ധപ്പെട്ട നിരവധി വ്യവഹാരങ്ങളെ ആറടി ചർച്ചക്കെടുക്കുന്നുണ്ട്. സിനിമ പോലുള്ള സംസ്കാരിക രൂപങ്ങളിൽ പ്രതിനിധാനം ചെയ്യപ്പെടുന്ന പാർശ്വവല്കൃതരുടെയും ദലിതരുടെയും ജീവിതം ആധുനികാനന്തര വൈജ്ഞാനിക സന്ദർഭങ്ങളിൽ കീഴാള പഠനത്തിന്റെ (Subaltern Studies) പശ്ചാത്തലത്തിലാണ് പഠിക്കപ്പെടുന്നത്. ആറടി പ്രതിനിധാനം ചെയ്യുന്ന കീഴാള ജീവിതാനുഭവം കീഴാളചിന്തയുടെ പ്രതലത്തിൽ നിന്നു കൊണ്ട് പഠിക്കാനുള്ള ശ്രമമാണ് പ്രബന്ധം.*

താക്കോൽ വാക്കുകൾ : ചലച്ചിത്രം, ജാതി, സമൂഹം, പ്രതിനിധാനം, പാർശ്വവല്കരണം

***Abstract** : Aaradi(2017) Six Feet- A Movie Directed by Saji Palamel, illustrates a Pathetic and abstruse subaltern Experience as its central Theme. It Problematizes grave discourses related to Dalit Life in Kerala Such as Ownership of Land, Pseudo Dalit affectations of Political Parties, Hypocritical Patronage shows of the Neo Hindutwa, and a failed ineffectual Kerala Renaissance. The Life and Plight of the Marginalized and the Dalits represented in Cultural/ Art Forms such as Cinema are discussed under Subaltern Studies in the Post Modern academic/Literary contexts. This Paper attempts to deliberate on the Dalit life strives thematized in Aaradi, in the light of Subaltern thought.*

***Key words** : Cinema-Caste- Society-Representations-Marginalization*

വരേണ്യമായ ആശയസംഹിതകളോടും സവർണ്ണമൂല്യങ്ങളോടുമുള്ള ഗാഢമായ ബന്ധം 'രാജാഹരിശ്ചന്ദ്ര' (1913) തൊട്ടുള്ള ഇന്ത്യൻ സിനിമകളുടെ പ്രാരംഭകാലത്തേ കാണാൻ കഴിയും. അവർണ്ണനും അഹിന്ദുവുമായ ജെ.സി.ഡാനിയേൽ എന്ന സംവിധായകനാലും പി.കെ. റോസിയെന്ന ദലിതയായ നായികയാലും തുടക്കമിട്ടെങ്കിലും മലയാള സിനിമയുടെ ചരിത്രമെന്നത് സവർണ്ണാധികാര വ്യവസ്ഥയുടെ സൗന്ദര്യബോധത്തേയും ആശയലോകത്തെയും സാമൂഹികമായും സാംസ്കാരികമായും സംസ്ഥാപനം ചെയ്തതിന്റെ കൂടെ ചരിത്രമാണെന്നത് മലയാള സിനിമാ ചരിത്രത്തിന്റെ സൂക്ഷ്മ വിശകലനം വെളിപ്പെടുത്തും.

മുഖ്യധാരാ സാമൂഹ്യക്രമത്തിന് പാകമാകാത്തവരാണ് കറുത്തവരും കീഴാളരുമെന്ന പൊതുധാരണക്കനുസൃതമായാണ് ആദ്യ കാലം മുതൽ കീഴാളർ ചലച്ചിത്രങ്ങളിൽ അടയാളപ്പെട്ട പോന്നത്. ചലച്ചിത്രകലയുടെ അടിസ്ഥാനോപകരണമായ ക്യാമറയുടെ നിർവ്വഹണത്തിൽ തന്നെ കീഴാളവിരുദ്ധതയുടെ, കുറ്റപ്പിനോടുള്ള വിവേചനത്തിന്റെ അടയാളങ്ങൾ ഉളളടങ്ങിയിരിക്കുന്നതായി ചലച്ചിത്ര പഠിതാവായ റിച്ചാർഡ് ഡയർ സൂചിപ്പിക്കുന്നുണ്ട് (Richard 1979 : 26). വെളുത്ത നിറത്തിന്റെ ആലേഖനക്ഷമതയെ മാത്രം പരിഗണിച്ചായിരുന്ന ആദ്യകാലത്തെ ഫിലിംസ്റ്റോക്കുകളുടെ രാസസ്വഭാവങ്ങൾ. കറുത്തവന്റെ ഉടലിന് പ്രകാശനക്ഷമത നൽകുന്ന ഫിലിംസ്റ്റോക്കുകൾ വളരെ കഴിഞ്ഞാണ് സൃഷ്ടിക്കപ്പെടുന്നത്. ക്യാമറ രൂപപ്പെടുത്തുന്ന സൗന്ദര്യസങ്കല്പങ്ങൾക്ക് പുറത്താണ് കറുത്ത ഉടൽനിലകൾ എന്നതിനാലാണ് ആ ഉടലുകൾ പ്രദർശനയോഗ്യമല്ലാതായി കരുതപ്പെട്ടത്. ഇന്ത്യൻ സ്ക്രീനിനെ അടക്കി ഭരിക്കുന്ന ബ്രാഹ്മണിക് വരേണ്യബോധവും വംശീയാധിഷ്ഠിതമായ സങ്കുചിത ശരീരബോധവും അവർണ്ണരുടെ ഉടലടയാളങ്ങളെ അകറ്റി നിർത്തുകയും അസ്വീകാര്യമായി കരുതുകയും ചെയ്തു.

സവർണ്ണ പ്രത്യയശാസ്ത്രം പ്രത്യക്ഷവും പരോക്ഷവുമായ തലങ്ങളിൽ മലയാള സിനിമാ സന്ദർഭങ്ങളിൽ വിനിമയം ചെയ്യപ്പെടുന്നതിന്റെ താല്പര്യങ്ങൾ അടുത്ത കാലത്തായി വലിയ ചർച്ചകൾക്ക് വിധേയമായിത്തുടങ്ങിയിട്ടുണ്ട്. സാമ്പത്തിക താല്പര്യങ്ങളിൽ ഊന്നിയുള്ള വിനോദോപാധി എന്ന നിലക്കപ്പുറം സിനിമ പ്രക്ഷേപിക്കുന്ന ആശയാവലികൾ കേരളത്തിന്റെ സാംസ്കാരിക പൊതുമണ്ഡലത്തിൽ ചർച്ച ചെയ്യപ്പെടുന്നതിന്റെ പശ്ചാത്തലത്തിൽ കേരളീയ ദലിത് ജീവിതത്തെ പ്രമേയ കേന്ദ്രമായി സജി പാലമേൽ സംവിധാനം ചെയ്ത 'ആറടി' എന്ന ചലച്ചിത്രത്തെ കീഴാളപരിപ്രേക്ഷ്യത്തിൽ വിശകലനം ചെയ്യാനുള്ള ശ്രമമാണ് പ്രബന്ധത്തിൽ.

ഇന്ത്യൻ സാഹചര്യങ്ങളിലും കേരളീയ സാഹചര്യങ്ങളിലും കീഴാള ജീവിതാനുഭവങ്ങൾക്കും സൗന്ദര്യശാസ്ത്ര സങ്കല്പങ്ങൾക്കും ഇടം കിട്ടിത്തുടങ്ങി എന്നതിന്റെ അടയാളങ്ങളായി കീഴാള ജീവിതാനുഭവങ്ങൾ ചലച്ചിത്രവല്ക്കരിക്കപ്പെടുന്ന പ്രവണത മുൻപില്ലാത്തവിധം കാണാനാവുന്നതാണ്. ഫാൻടി (2013), കോർട്ട് (2014), കാക്കമുട്ടൈ (2015), കക്കുസ് (2017), പരിയേറും പെരുമാൾ (2018), അസുരൻ (2019), ജയ് ഭീം (2021) തുടങ്ങിയ മലയാളേതര ചിത്രങ്ങളും ചിതറിയവർ (2004), മഹാത്മ അയ്യങ്കാളി

(2013), പാപ്പിലിയോ ബുദ്ധ (2013), ഒഴിവു ദിവസത്തെ കളി (2015), കരി (2016), കമ്മട്ടിപ്പാടം (2016), മാൻഹോൾ (2017), ഉണ്ട (2019), നായാട്ട് (2021), ഫ്രീഡം ഫൈറ്റ് ആന്തോളജിയിലെ പ്രാ ത്ത മൂ (2022), പുഴ (2022) തുടങ്ങിയ മലയാളചിത്രങ്ങളും കീഴാള ജീവിതാനുഭവങ്ങൾക്ക് സമീപകാലത്ത് ലഭ്യമായിത്തുടങ്ങിയ ദൃശ്യതയുടെ സാക്ഷ്യങ്ങളാണ്. കേരളീയ ദലിത് ജീവിതങ്ങളുടെ ചലച്ചിത്രാഖ്യാനങ്ങളുടെ ഈ ശ്രേണിയിലാണ് സജി പാലമേൽ സംവിധാനം നിർവഹിച്ച 'ആറടി 'യുടെ സ്ഥാനം.

സവർണ്ണ ജാതി ഹിന്ദുക്കളെ കേന്ദ്രസ്ഥാനത്തു പ്രതിഷ്ഠിച്ചാദരിക്കുന്ന സാംസ്കാരിക പരിസരം നിലനിൽക്കുന്ന മലയാള സിനിമയിൽ കീഴാള ജീവിതാനുഭവങ്ങളുടെ ആഖ്യാനങ്ങൾ പരിമിതമായിപ്പോയത് സ്വാഭാവികം മാത്രമായിരുന്നു. സവർണ്ണനായകനു ചുറ്റും കറങ്ങുന്ന ഉപഗ്രഹങ്ങളായി മാത്രമേ ദളിതരും പിന്നാക്കക്കാരും സ്ത്രീകളും നമ്മുടെ ചലച്ചിത്രങ്ങളിൽ കടന്നു വരാറുള്ളൂ. ഭൃത്യരുടെയും ക്രൂരത മുറ്റിയ വില്ലൻമാരുടെയും തെരുവുഗുണ്ടകളുടെയും ശാരീരിക മാനസിക വെല്ലുവിളികൾ നേരിടുന്നവരുടെയും താണനിലയിൽ തമാശ പറയുന്ന കോമാളികളുടെയും വേഷങ്ങളാണ് മലയാള സിനിമ കാലങ്ങളായി ദളിതർക്കു മാറ്റി വെച്ചിരുന്നത്. കീഴാള പുരുഷന്മാരുടെ കർതൃത്യത്തെ നിർവ്വചിക്കാൻ ദുർന്നടപ്പുകാരന്റെയും തെമ്മാടിയുടെയും മുരടൻ വേഷം നിരന്തരം ഉപയോഗിക്കപ്പെട്ടുവെന്ന് ജെനി റൊവീന നിരീക്ഷിച്ചത് ഇവിടെ ശ്രദ്ധേയമാകുന്നു (ജെനി റൊവീന 2011 : 11). ദലിത് സ്ത്രീകൾ നമ്മുടെ ചലച്ചിത്രങ്ങളിൽ പ്രതിനിധാനം ചെയ്യപ്പെട്ടതിന്റെ ചരിത്രം വിശകലനം ചെയ്യുമ്പോൾ ജാത്യാധിഷ്ഠിതമായ വിവേചനത്തിന്റെ ബീഭത്സമായ മുഖം വെളിപ്പെടുന്നതു കാണാം. ദലിത് സ്ത്രീകളായി നമ്മുടെ ചലച്ചിത്രങ്ങളിൽ ആവർത്തിച്ചു പ്രത്യക്ഷപ്പെട്ടിരുന്ന സൂര്യ, കുക്കു പമേശ്വരൻ, സബിത ആനന്ദ് തുടങ്ങിയ പഴയകാല നടിമാർക്ക് ലഭിച്ച കഥാപാത്രങ്ങൾ അധികവും ലൈംഗികത്തൊഴിൽ ചെയ്യുന്നവരുടേയോ വേലക്കാരികളുടേയോ ആയിരുന്നുവെന്ന രേഖാരാജിന്റെ കണ്ടെത്തൽ ഇവിടെ കൂട്ടി വായിക്കേണ്ടതുണ്ട് (രേഖാ രാജ് 2021 : 103).

കീഴാളജീവിതത്തിന്റെ സമഗ്രാവിഷ്കാരങ്ങൾ അപൂർവ്വമായി മാത്രമെ നമ്മുടെ സിനിമയിൽ സംഭവിക്കാറുള്ളൂ. അത്തരമൊരപൂർവ്വതയാണ് 'ആറടി '. കുഞ്ഞിക്കോരു മാസ്റ്ററെന്ന ദളിതനായ സ്വാതന്ത്ര്യ സമര സേനാനിയുടെ മരണത്തെ തുടർന്ന് അദ്ദേഹത്തിന്റെ ഭൗതിക ശരീരത്തിന്റെ പൊതുദർശനത്തിന് സ്ഥലമൊരുക്കാനും മൃതദേഹം സംസ്കരിക്കാൻ ഇടം കണ്ടെത്താനുമായി അദ്ദേഹത്തിന്റെ കുടുംബത്തിന് നേരിടേണ്ടി വരുന്ന ദയനീയാനുഭവങ്ങളുടെ ആഖ്യാനമാണ് ആറടി. സാധാരണ ഗതിയിൽ അനായാസമായി നിർവ്വഹിക്കപ്പെടുന്ന ശവസംസ്കാരം ആറടിയിൽ അതിസങ്കീർണ്ണവും സംഘർഷഭരിതവുമായ ഒന്നായി മാറുന്നതു കാണാം. സർക്കാർ ആശുപത്രിയുടെ ദയനീയമായ അന്തരീക്ഷത്തിൽ മരണപ്പെടുന്ന മാസ്റ്ററുടെ മൃതദേഹം കൊണ്ടുപോകാനായി ആംബുലൻസ് ലഭിക്കാത്തതിനാൽ ചെറിയൊരു വാനിലാണ് കൂടുതൽ ദയനീയവും സംഘർഷഭരിതവുമായി മാറിയ അന്ത്യയാത്ര മാസ്റ്റർ ആരംഭിക്കുന്നത്. ഉചിതമായ പൊതുദർശനാവസരം ഇല്ലാതെ, സംസ്കരിക്കുവാൻ ആറടി മണ്ണ് എവിടെയും ലഭിക്കാതെ

രണ്ടു സെന്റിലെ കുടുസ്സു വീടിന്റെ അകത്തളത്തിൽ സംസ്കരിക്കപ്പെടുവോളം മാസ്റ്ററുടെ അന്ത്യയാത്ര അതിദയനീയമായി നീളുന്നു.

ജാതിയേയും വർണ്ണ സങ്കല്പത്തേയും പരസ്യമായെന്നതിനേക്കാൾ രഹസ്യമായി അനുവർത്തിച്ചു പോരുന്ന ഒരു സമൂഹമാണ് മലയാളികളുടേത്. പുരോഗമന സ്വഭാവമുള്ളത് എന്ന് കരുതപ്പെടുന്ന കേരള സമൂഹത്തിന്റെ സാമൂഹ്യഘടനയുടെ രാഷ്ട്രീയാന്തർഗതങ്ങൾ അങ്ങേയറ്റം ദലിത് വിരുദ്ധവും അതിനാൽത്തന്നെ മനുഷ്യ വിരുദ്ധവുമാകയാലാണ് കുഞ്ഞിക്കോരു മാസ്റ്ററെന്ന ദലിതന്റെ സമരതീക്ഷ്ണമായ ജീവിതത്തിന്റെ അന്ത്യ സന്ദർഭങ്ങൾ സംഘർഷഭരിതമാകുന്നത്. ഇ. സന്തോഷ് കുമാറിന്റെ ഒരാൾക്ക് എത്ര മണ്ണ വേണം എന്ന ചെറുകഥയെ അവലംബിച്ച് സൃഷ്ടിക്കപ്പെട്ട ആറടി ജാതിയേയും ജാതിബന്ധങ്ങൾ ഉല്പാദിപ്പിക്കുന്ന മനുഷ്യവിരുദ്ധതയേയും പ്രശ്നവൽക്കരിച്ചു കൊണ്ട് മലയാളസിനിമയുടെ പ്രമേയ പരിസരങ്ങളിൽ നിന്ന് ഒഴിച്ചു നിർത്തപ്പെടുന്ന സവിശേഷമായ ഒരു സംഘർഷമേഖലയിലേക്ക് വെളിച്ചമെത്തിക്കുന്നുണ്ട്.

ദേശീയ സ്വാതന്ത്ര്യസമര സേനാനിയും അദ്ധ്യാപകനും സംസ്കൃതപണ്ഡിതനുമായ കുഞ്ഞിക്കോരു മാസ്റ്റർ ജീവിച്ചിരുന്നപ്പോൾ സർവ്വരാലും ആദരിക്കപ്പെട്ടവനാണ്. കുഞ്ഞിക്കോരു മാസ്റ്ററുടെ ജാതിസ്വത്വം സൃഷ്ടിക്കുന്ന സംഘർഷങ്ങളും സന്ദിഗ്ധതകളും ജീവിച്ചിരുന്ന കാലത്തേക്കാൾ മരണശേഷമാണ് അദ്ദേഹത്തെ ഗാഢമായി പിന്തുടരാനാരംഭിക്കുന്നത്. അക്കാലം വരെയും അദ്ദേഹത്തെ വ്യാജമായി ആദരിച്ചിരുനവരുടെ യാഥാർത്ഥമുഖങ്ങൾ പതിയെ വെളിപ്പെട്ടു വരുന്നു. കീഴാള ജാതിസ്വത്വം ജീവിച്ചിരുന്നപ്പോൾ സ്വീകാര്യനായിരുന്ന ഒരാളെ മരണാനന്തരം അനഭിമതനാക്കുന്നതിന്റെ അടിത്തറയായി പരിണമിക്കുന്നു.

കേരളാധുനികതയിൽ പൗരത്വം, പൗരാവകാശങ്ങൾ എന്നിവയെല്ലാം സവർണ്ണ ജാതിസ്ഥാനവുമായി കൂടിക്കലർന്ന പ്രതിഭാസമാണെന്ന് ജെനി റൊവീന നിരീക്ഷിക്കുന്നതു കാണാം (ജെനി റൊവീന 2011 : 41). സവർണ്ണജാതി അന്തരീക്ഷത്തിനു പുറത്തുള്ള അപര ജീവിതങ്ങൾ പൊതുജീവിത പരിസരങ്ങളിൽ പാർശ്വവല്കരിക്കപ്പെടുകയും അപമാനത്തിന് വിധേയമാക്കപ്പെടുകയും ചെയ്യുന്ന ചരിത്ര സന്ദർഭമാണ് മരണാനന്തരം കുഞ്ഞിക്കോരുമാസ്റ്ററുടെ ഭൗതിക ശരീരം അഭിമുഖീകരിക്കുന്നത്. ഹിന്ദു സദാചാര പുരുഷന്റെ സവർണ്ണതയുടെ അപരസ്ഥാനത്ത് കുഞ്ഞിക്കോരു മാസ്റ്ററെപ്പോലുള്ള ദലിത് ശരീരങ്ങൾ നിശ്ചയിക്കപ്പെടുമ്പോഴാണ് കേരളീയസമൂഹം അർഹതയെക്കുറിച്ച് രൂപപ്പെടുത്തിവെച്ചിരിക്കുന്ന സാമൂഹ്യയുക്തികൾ പൂർണ്ണമായും പ്രവർത്തനക്ഷമമായിത്തീരുന്നത്.

മുഖ്യധാരാ രാഷ്ട്രീയപ്പാർട്ടിയുടെ ദളിത് വിഭാഗം പ്രാദേശിക നേതാവായ മകനൊപ്പം ഒറ്റമുറിപ്പുരയിൽ താമസിച്ചു വരുമ്പോഴാണ് മാസ്റ്റർ മരണപ്പെടുന്നത്. മരണാനന്തര ചടങ്ങുകൾ സംഘടിപ്പിക്കുവാനായി തന്റെ പാർട്ടിക്കാരുടെ സഹായം മാസ്റ്ററുടെ മകനായ സുനീഷ് തേടുന്നുണ്ടെങ്കിലും അവഗണനയാണു ഫലം. തുടർന്ന് മൃതദേഹം പൊതുദർശനത്തിനു വെക്കാനും സംസ്കരിക്കാനുമായി നാട്ടിലെമ്പാടും സുനീഷിന്

അലയേണ്ടി വരുന്ന കാഴ്ച സമകാലിക കേരളത്തിൽ ദലിതരനുഭവിക്കുന്ന വിവേചനത്തിന്റെയും അനീതിയുടെയും സൂക്ഷ്മരേഖയായി മാറുന്നു.

കൊട്ടിഘോഷിക്കപ്പെടുന്ന കേരളനവോത്ഥാനത്തിന് ജാതിയെ അടിസ്ഥാനപ്പെടുത്തിയുള്ള സാമൂഹിക ശ്രേണീകരണത്തിന്റെ അസംബന്ധയുക്തിയെ മറികടക്കാനായിട്ടില്ല എന്നതിന്റെ സാക്ഷ്യം കൂടിയാണ് ആറടി മണ്ണിനു പോലും അർഹതയില്ലാതായി മാറുന്ന മാസ്റ്ററുടെ ജീവിതവും മരണവും. ദേശീയസ്വാതന്ത്ര്യത്തിനായി നിറവേറ്റിയ സമരോജ്ജ്വല ജീവിതവും സംസ്കൃതപണ്ഡിതനെന്ന നിലയിൽ നേടിയ ആദരങ്ങളും ജാതിയെന്ന തീക്ഷ്ണ യാഥാർത്ഥ്യത്തിനു മുന്നിൽ വിലകെട്ടതായി മാറുന്നു. പ്രബലമായിരിക്കുന്ന സാമൂഹ്യ സാംസ്കാരികാംശങ്ങളെ ഉപജീവിച്ച് രൂപമെടുക്കുന്ന ദേശീയതാവ്യവഹാരം സ്വാഭാവികമായും അതിലുൾപ്പെടാത്തതിനെ നിരന്തരം അപരമായി കണ്ടു കൊണ്ടിരിക്കും എന്ന നിരീക്ഷണം ഇവിടെ ശ്രദ്ധിക്കത്തക്കതാകുന്നു (ഷാജി നെല്ലായി 2021 : 35). മതചിഹ്നങ്ങൾ, ഭാഷാശൈലി, വസ്ത്രം, ഭക്ഷണരീതി, ശരീരഭാഷ, ഉത്സവം എന്നിവയിലൊക്കെയുള്ള സവർണ്ണത അംഗീകൃത ദേശീയതയുടെ ഭാഗമായിരിക്കയാലാണ് കുഞ്ഞിക്കോരു മാസ്റ്ററെപ്പോലുള്ളവരുടെ പോരാട്ടങ്ങൾ അപരവല്ക്കരിക്കപ്പെട്ട് വിലമതിക്കപ്പെടാതെ പോവുന്നത്.

ചലച്ചിത്രപ്രതിനിധാനങ്ങൾ ദലിതരെക്കുറിച്ച് അനേകകാലമായി രൂപപ്പെടുത്തിയ വാർപ്പുമാതൃകകൾക്കനുസരിച്ചുള്ള ചലച്ചിത്രത്തിനകത്താണ് കുഞ്ഞിക്കോരു മാസ്റ്റർ വ്യാപരിക്കുന്ന സാമൂഹിക ഇടങ്ങൾ. അധ്യാപകനായും ദേശീയ സ്വാതന്ത്ര്യസമര നേതാവായും സംസ്കൃതപണ്ഡിതനായും മാസ്റ്റർ നേടിയത് അനർഹമായ പദവിയും ബഹുമാനവുമാണെന്ന് മരണാനന്തരം വിലയിരുത്തലുകളുണ്ടാവുന്നു. ദീർഘകാലത്തെ ശ്രമഫലമായി മാസ്റ്റർ തയ്യാറാക്കിയ വേദവ്യാഖ്യാനങ്ങൾ തെറ്റാണെന്ന് സവർണ്ണ പശ്ചാത്തലമുള്ള ഒരു കഥാപാത്രം ഉന്നയിക്കുന്നത് വേദങ്ങളടക്കമുള്ള വരേണ്യ ഈടുവെപ്പുകളെ സ്പർശിക്കുവാനുള്ള ദലിതരുടെ അനർഹതയെക്കുറിച്ചുള്ള സാമൂഹ്യബോധ്യങ്ങൾ ഉള്ളതിനാലാണ്. ദലിത് ശരീരം, ജീവിതം, തൊഴിലുകൾ എന്നിവയെക്കുറിച്ച് പൊതുസമൂഹം പുലർത്തുന്ന ധാരണകൾ നൂറ്റാണ്ടുകളായി ഉറച്ചു പോയ കീഴാളവിരുദ്ധ മനോഭാവങ്ങളുടെ തുടർച്ചകൾ തന്നെ. വേദം പഠിച്ച ശംബൂകൻ നേരിട്ട ദുരനുഭവങ്ങൾ വേദം വ്യാഖ്യാനിക്കാൻ ശ്രമിക്കുന്ന കുഞ്ഞിക്കോരു മാസ്റ്റർ മറ്റൊരു തരത്തിൽ നേരിടേണ്ടി വരുന്നു. ദലിതരും കീഴാളരും അവർക്കായി മാറ്റിവെച്ച കീഴാളസാമൂഹികസ്ഥാനത്തുള്ള പ്രവൃത്തികൾക്കപ്പുറത്തേക്ക് ഉയരുവാൻ ശ്രമിക്കുമ്പോൾ നിന്ദിക്കപ്പെടുകയും അപമാനിക്കപ്പെടുകയും ചെയ്യുന്ന ഒരു സന്ദർഭം മലയാള സിനിമയിലെ ആദ്യ നായികയായ പി.കെ. റോസിയുടെ ജീവിതത്തിൽ കാണാം. വിഗതകുമാരൻ പുറത്തു വന്ന ശേഷം സവർണ്ണ ഗുണ്ടകളാൽ ആക്രമിക്കപ്പെട്ട് നാടുവിട്ട് ഓടിപ്പോവേണ്ടി വന്ന റോസിയുടെ ജീവിതവഴികളെക്കുറിച്ച് അന്വേഷിക്കാനെത്തിയ ചലച്ചിത്ര ഗവേഷകനായ ചേലങ്ങാട്ട ഗോപാലകൃഷ്ണനോട് റോസി പെഴച്ചവളും ഒരുമ്പെട്ടോളുമാണെന്നും ആ വൃത്തികെട്ടവളുടെ കാര്യം അറിഞ്ഞിട്ട് ഒന്നും കിട്ടാനുമില്ല എന്ന് അയൽക്കാർ പറയുന്ന സന്ദർഭം ഇത്തരുണത്തിൽ ശ്രദ്ധേയമാണ് (ഡാർവിൻ 2008 : 41-42). കീഴാള

മനുഷ്യരോടുള്ള പുച്ഛത്തിൽ നിന്ന് മലയാളികളുടെ ലോകബോധം കാലമെത്ര കഴിഞ്ഞിട്ടും പുറത്തു കടന്നിട്ടില്ല എന്ന ദാരുണ യാഥാർത്ഥ്യത്തിന്റെ സാക്ഷ്യമായി മാറുന്നു കുഞ്ഞിക്കോരു മാസ്റ്ററുടെ വേദവ്യാഖ്യാനത്തിനുള്ള അർഹതയേയും അനർഹതയേയും കുറിച്ചുള്ള പ്രസ്താവനകൾ.

സാമൂഹിക സാംസ്കാരിക മേഖലകളിൽ ക്രിയാത്മകമായി ഇടപെട്ട മാസ്റ്റർക്ക് മരണാനന്തരം ലഭിക്കേണ്ട അർഹതപ്പെട്ട മൃതദേഹ പൊതുദർശന അവസരം നിഷേധിക്കുന്ന അദ്ദേഹത്തിന്റെ തന്നെ പ്രസ്ഥാനക്കാർ മുഖ്യധാരാ രാഷ്ട്രീയകക്ഷികളുടെ കപട ദളിത് അനുഭാവത്തെ തന്നെയാണ് പ്രകടമാക്കുന്നത്. മാസ്റ്ററുടെ അവർണ്ണ ശരീരം പാർട്ടി ഓഫീസിൽ പൊതുദർശനത്തിന് വെക്കാൻ അനുവദിക്കാതെ തങ്ങളുടെ പ്രസ്ഥാനത്തിന്റെ സവർണ്ണ താല്പര്യങ്ങളെ സംരക്ഷിക്കാൻ അവർക്ക് കഴിയുന്നു. സാമ്പ്രദായിക മൂല്യങ്ങളുള്ള രാഷ്ട്രീയ പ്രസ്ഥാനങ്ങൾ മാത്രമല്ല പുരോഗമന ഇടതുപക്ഷവും ജാതിയെന്ന സാമൂഹിക നിർമ്മിതിയെ അതർഹിക്കുന്ന വിധത്തിൽ അഭിസംബോധന ചെയ്യാതെ പോയതിനു പിന്നിൽ ആ പ്രസ്ഥാനങ്ങളുടെ നേതൃനിര വേദസംസ്കാരത്തിൽ ജനിച്ചു വളർന്ന അബോധത്തിൽ ആണ്ടു പോയതിനാലാണെന്നുള്ള കാഞ്ച ഐലയ്യയുടെ നിരീക്ഷണം (കാഞ്ച ഐലയ്യ 2017 :152) ഇവിടെ അനുസ്മരിക്കത്തക്കതായി മാറുന്നു . കുഞ്ഞിക്കോരു മാസ്റ്ററുടെ ഭൗതിക ശരീരത്തിനു നേരിടേണ്ടി വന്ന ദാരുണമായ പരിതോവസ്ഥ ദളിതർ അനുഭവിക്കുന്ന സ്വാതന്ത്ര്യം, സമത്വം, തുടങ്ങിയ ജനാധിപത്യ മൂല്യങ്ങളുടെ വിതരണത്തെ പ്രശ്നവൽക്കരിക്കുന്നുണ്ട്. ദലിതർ അനുദവിക്കുന്ന വിവേചനങ്ങൾ തുല്യതയിലധിഷ്ഠിതമായ സാമൂഹ്യമൂല്യങ്ങൾ സാംസ്കാരികമായി നിഷേധിക്കപ്പെടുന്നതുമൂലമാണെന്നു കാണാം.

അതിസങ്കീർണ്ണവും ദയനീയവുമായ ഒരു കീഴാളാനുഭവത്തെ കേന്ദ്രവിഷയമായി അവതരിപ്പിക്കുന്ന ആറടി ദലിത് ജീവിതവുമായി ബന്ധപ്പെട്ട നിരവധി വ്യവഹാരങ്ങളെ ശ്രദ്ധയിലെത്തിക്കുന്നുണ്ട്. ഭൂമിയുടെ ഉടമാവകാശം, രാഷ്ട്രീയ പാർട്ടികളുടെ കപട ദലിത് നിലപാടുകൾ, നവഹൈന്ദവതയുടെ രക്ഷാകർതൃത്വാഭിനയം, ജാത്യാധിഷ്ഠിത ജീവിതക്രമത്തിന്റെ തൊലിപ്പുറത്തു പോലും പോറലേൽപ്പിക്കാനാവാതെ പോയ കേരളീയ നവോത്ഥാനം ഒക്കെയും 'ആറടി' യിൽ പല വിതാനങ്ങളിൽ വിലയിരുത്തപ്പെടുന്നു. ജാതിയെ സംബന്ധിച്ച പ്രതിനിധാനപ്രയോഗങ്ങൾ നിരന്തരമായി നിർമ്മിക്കപ്പെടുകയും പ്രദർശിപ്പിക്കപ്പെടുകയും സ്ഥിരീകരിക്കപ്പെടുകയും ചെയ്യുന്ന മാധ്യമമാണ് സിനിമയെന്നതിനാൽ, ജാതിയേയും ജാത്യാനുഭവങ്ങളെയും കീഴാള പക്ഷത്തു നിന്ന് കാണാൻ ശ്രമിക്കുന്ന ആറടി പോലുള്ള ചലച്ചിത്രങ്ങൾക്ക് നിരന്തരമായ തുടർച്ച ഉണ്ടാകേണ്ടത് സാമൂഹിക നീതിയുമായി ബന്ധപ്പെട്ട ഒരാവശ്യം കൂടിയായി മാറുന്നു.

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പ്രബന്ധ സംഗ്രഹം: സ്വത്വ പ്രതിനിധാനത്തെ ഉറപ്പിച്ചെടുക്കാൻ .ആത്മാഖ്യാനത്തെ ഉപയോഗപ്പെടുത്തുന്ന രീതി ഇന്ന് നിലവിലുണ്ട് തത്തിലെ തീഷ്ണമായ അനുഭവങ്ങളെ എഴുത്തിലൂടെ ആവിഷ്കരിക്കുന്നതുവഴി ജീവി സമൂഹത്തിന്റെയും എഴുത്തിന്റെയും ലോകത്തിൽ തങ്ങൾക്ക് നിഷേധിക്കപ്പെട്ട ഇടങ്ങൾ പിടിച്ചെടുക്കുക എന്ന രാഷ്ട്രീയലക്ഷ്യം ആത്മകഥകൾക്കുണ്ട് . കേരളത്തിന്റെ സ്ത്രീമുന്നേറ്റചരിത്രത്തിൽ വിദ്യാഭ്യാസത്തിനുള്ള പങ്ക് വളരെ പ്രധാനപ്പെട്ടതാണ്സാമൂഹികവും രാഷ്ട്രീയ വുമായ പുതിയതലങ്ങളിലേക്ക് . സമൂഹത്തെ ഉയർത്താൻ സ്ത്രീകൾക്ക് വിദ്യാഭ്യാസം അനിവാര്യമാണെന്ന തിരിച്ചറിവാണ് അനൗപചാരിക വിദ്യാഭ്യാസ പ്രവർത്തനങ്ങൾക്ക് തുടക്കമിട്ടത് . സാക്ഷരതാ പ്രവർത്തനം സ്ത്രീകൾക്ക് പുതിയ കർത്തൃത്വങ്ങളെ തിരിച്ചറിയുന്നതിനുള്ള വ്യവഹാരമായി മാറിയതെങ്ങനെ എന്ന് റാബിയയുടെ സ്വപ്നങ്ങൾക്ക് ചിറകുകളുണ്ട് എന്ന ആത്മകഥയെ .വി.കെ മുൻനിർത്തി വിശകലനം ചെയ്യാൻ ശ്രമിക്കുകയാണ് ഈ പ്രബന്ധംറാബിയ . ‘ എന്ന ഭിന്നശേഷി വിഭാഗത്തിൽപ്പെട്ട ഒരു സ്ത്രീക്ക്സാമൂഹ്യപ്രവർത്തക’ എന്ന കർത്തൃത്വത്തിലേക്ക് ഉയരാൻ കഴിഞ്ഞത് സാക്ഷരതാപ്രവർത്തനത്തിലൂടെയാണ് എന്ന നിലപാടിൽ നിന്നാണ് ഈ പ്രബന്ധം സംവിധാനം ചെയ്തിട്ടുള്ളത്.

താക്കോൽവാക്കുകൾ - ആത്മാഖ്യാനം, സ്വത്വം.അതിജീവനം -കർത്തൃത്വം -

Abstract: Autobiography is used today to reinforce self-representation. Autobiographies fulfil their authors' political goal of occupying the spaces denied to them in society and the world of literature through the expression of intense lived experiences in writing. The role of education in the movement for women's progress in Kerala is quite significant. It was the realisation that women's education is essential for the uplift of society to new social and political levels that initiated non-formal education activities. This paper attempts to analyse how the activities associated with the literacy movement became a space where women recognised new avenues of agency and authorship based on KV Rabia's autobiography *Dreams Have Wings*. This paper has been designed from the position that KV Rabia, a differently-abled woman, was able to rise to the status of a 'social worker' through the activities connected to the literacy movement.

Keywords :- Autobiography Identity- Authorship-survival

സ്ത്രീ ആത്മാഖ്യാനങ്ങൾ

സ്വന്തം ജീവിതം എഴുതാനും അത് സാംസ്കാരികമായി കൈമാറ്റം ചെയ്യാനും .വദിക്കാനും ആത്മകഥനരീതി ഇന്ന് പ്രയോജനപ്പെടുത്തുന്നുണ്ട്പൊതുമണ്ഡലത്തോട് സം ജീവിതത്തിന്റെ വ്യത്യസ്ത മേഖലകളെ പ്രതിനിധീകരിക്കുന്നവരാണ് ഇന്ന് ആത്മകഥാകൃത്തുക്കൾ .ലൈംഗിക തൊഴിലാളികൾ, സ്വവർഗ്ഗാനുരാഗികൾ കള്ളന്മാർ, തുടങ്ങി സമൂഹത്തിന്റെ മുഖ്യധാരയിൽ നിന്ന് പല കാരണത്താൽ പാർശ്വവത്ക്കരിക്കപ്പെടുകയോ വിസ്മൃതമാക്കപ്പെടുകയോ ചെയ്ത ആളുകളുടെ സവിശേഷമായ ജീവിതാവസ്ഥകളാണ് ആത്മകഥയിൽ ഇന്ന് ഇടം പിടിച്ചത് . ''ഏതെങ്കിലും ഒരു മണ്ഡലത്തിൽ അംഗീകാരം നേടാൻ കഴിഞ്ഞിട്ടുള്ള ഒരു വ്യക്തി തന്റെ ജീവിതവും പ്രവർത്തനങ്ങളും സമൂഹത്തിന് മാർഗദർശകമായിത്തീരും എന്ന വിശ്വാസത്തോടെ ജീവിതാനുഭവങ്ങൾ സോദ്ദേശ്യമായി ആവിഷ്കരിക്കുമ്പോഴാണ് ആത്മകഥ ഉടലെടുക്കുന്നത് ജയകുമാർ ആത്മകഥാസാഹിത്യം) ".1982-3) അദൃശ്യവൽക്കരിക്കപ്പെട്ട് കിടക്കുന്ന ജീവിതം വെളിപ്പെടുത്തുകയാണ് ആത്മകഥാഖ്യാനത്തിന്റെ പൊതു ലക്ഷ്യം.

ൽ ഇടപെടാൻ സ്ത്രീകൾ സമൂഹത്തിൽ ഇറങ്ങി വ്യത്യസ്ത മേഖലകളി .തുടങ്ങിയതോടെ സ്ത്രീസാന്നിധ്യം സാഹിത്യത്തിൽ ശക്തമായിതങ്ങളുടെ അനുഭവങ്ങൾ തുറന്നുപറയാൻ സ്ത്രീകൾ മുന്നോട്ടുവന്നു. സ്ത്രീആത്മകഥകൾക്ക് പ്രസക്തി വരുന്നത് ഈ ഒരു സാഹചര്യത്തിലാണ്സ്വന്തം മനോവ്യാപാരങ്ങൾ ഏറ്റവും നന്നായി ആവിഷ്കരിക്കുവാൻ . നിലയ്ക്ക് ആത്മകഥക്കുള്ള പ്രാധാന്യം വിലയിരുത്തുമ്പോൾ കഴിയുന്ന മാധ്യമം എന്ന സ്ത്രീരചനകളുടെ കാര്യത്തിൽ ജീവചരിത്രത്തെക്കാൾ പ്രാധാന്യം ആത്മകഥയ്ക്ക് കൈവരുന്നു - സ്ത്രീആത്മകഥ :രമാദേവി)2002 -226).

സ്ത്രീആത്മകഥകളിൽ എഴുത്തുകാരി എന്ന സ്വത്വത്തെ മാത്രമല്ല സാമൂഹികമായ നിബന്ധനകളും അധികാരത്തിന്റെ ബല തന്ത്രങ്ങളും അവരുടെ സ്വത്വത്തെ ഏതെല്ലാം വിധത്തിൽ മെരുക്കുവാൻ ശ്രമിക്കുന്നു എന്നും വ്യക്തമാകുന്നുണ്ട്സാമൂഹ് .യരാഷ്ട്രീയ സാംസ്കാരിക മണ്ഡലങ്ങളിൽ ഇടപെടുന്ന സ്ത്രീ സ്വന്തം അനുഭവങ്ങളെ കുറിച്ച് എന്താണ് പറയുന്നത് എന്നുള്ളത് അവളെക്കുറിച്ചും സമൂഹത്തെക്കുറിച്ചും സമൂഹത്തിലെ സ്ത്രീ അവസ്ഥകളെക്കുറിച്ചും അറിയാനുള്ള ഒരു വഴിയാണ്സ്ത്രീകൾ എഴുതിയ ആത്മകഥകളുടെ . പഠനം ഇത്തരം അന്വേഷണങ്ങളിലേക്ക് വിരൽ ചൂണ്ടുന്നുണ്ട്അതുകൊണ്ടുതന്നെ . ചരിത്രത്തിന്റെ അരികുകളിൽ നിന്ന് എഴുതപ്പെട്ട അത്തരം സ്ത്രീചരിത്രപാഠങ്ങൾ ഇന്ന് ഏറെ ജീവിതം കൊണ്ട് വിസ്മയിപ്പിച്ച് പോരാട്ടം .ർഹിക്കുന്ന പഠനവിഷയമാണ്പ്രാധാന്യമ കൊണ്ട് സമൂഹത്തെ തിരുത്തിച്ച കേരളത്തിലെ നിരവധി സ്ത്രീകളിൽ പ്രമുഖയാണ് ഭിന്നശേഷിക്കാരിയായ പത്മശ്രീ കെഅവർക്ക് ആത്മകഥ .റാബിയ.വി. ആരുടെയും സമ്മർദ്ദമോ സഹായമോ ഇല്ലാതെ .അവരുടെ ജീവിതം തന്നെയായിരുന്നു തുറന്ന് പറയാനുള്ള അവസരമുണ്ടെന്ന തിരിച്ചറിവും മാറ്റിനിർത്തപ്പെട്ട താൻ എല്ലാം

പറയുന്നത് കേൾക്കാൻ താല്പര്യപ്പെടുന്ന വലിയ ഒരു വിഭാഗം ഉണ്ട് എന്ന തിരിച്ചറിവും സ്വപ്നങ്ങൾക്ക് ചിറകുകളുണ്ട് എന്ന ആത്മകഥ രചിക്കാൻ അവർക്ക് പ്രേരണയായി . പുറത്ത് നില്ക്കുന്ന റാബിയയുടെ സമൂഹത്തിന്റെ സവിശേഷമായ ജീവിതാവസ്ഥകൾക്ക് മാത്രമല്ല താനെന്ന വ്യക്തിയുടെ .ആത്മകഥ ഇന്ന് മുഖ്യധാരയിൽ ഇടം പിടിച്ചിരിക്കുന്ന മോചനത്തിനും ആന്തരികമായ വികാസത്തിനുമുള്ള മാർഗ്ഗമായി സാക്ഷരതാ പ്രവർത്തനത്തെ എങ്ങനെ ഉപയോഗിച്ചു എന്നത് റാബിയ ഈ ആത്മകഥയിൽ വ്യക്തമാക്കുന്നുണ്ട് .ഉയർന്ന സാമൂഹ്യാവബോധത്തിലേക്ക് സമൂഹത്തിലെ സ്ത്രീകളെ നയിക്കാൻ സാക്ഷരതാ പ്രവർത്തനത്തിലൂടെ അവർക്ക് കഴിഞ്ഞു .ശാരീരിക അവശതകൾ മൂലം ഔപചാരിക വിദ്യാഭ്യാസത്തിൽ നിന്ന് പുറംതള്ളപ്പെട്ട് പോകും എന്ന അവസ്ഥ നേരിട്ട ഗ്രാമീണയായ ഒരു പെൺകുട്ടി സാക്ഷരത എന്ന വ്യവഹാരത്തിലൂടെ ഉയിർത്തെഴുന്നേറ്റ ജീവിത രേഖയാണ് സ്വപ്നങ്ങൾക്ക് ചിറകുകളുണ്ട് എന്ന ആത്മകഥ.

സാക്ഷരതാപ്രസ്ഥാനത്തിന്റെ വളർച്ച

കേരളത്തിലെ സ്ത്രീകളുടെ ആത്മബോധരൂപീകരണത്തിൽ നവോത്ഥാന കാലത്തെ സാമൂഹിക സാംസ്കാരിക സാഹിത്യ പരിഷ്കരണങ്ങൾ നിർണ്ണായക പങ്കുവഹിച്ചിട്ടുണ്ട് . സ്ത്രീ .അച്ചടി മാധ്യമത്തിന്റെയും ആരംഭം ഇതിന് ആക്കം കൂട്ടി വിദ്യാഭ്യാസത്തിന്റെയും ശാക്തീകരണത്തിന് സഹായിച്ച പ്രധാന ഘടകങ്ങളിലൊന്ന് സാക്ഷരതാപ്രവർത്തനമായിരുന്നു" .സാർവ്വത്രിക വിദ്യാഭ്യാസവും സാമൂഹിക രാഷ്ട്രീയ പ്രവർത്തനങ്ങളിലെ പങ്കാളിത്തവും സ്ത്രീകളുടെ ആത്മാവിഷ്കാര സാധ്യതകളെ വിപുലപ്പെടുത്തുകയായിരുന്നു :രശ്മി ബിനോയ്) "2008-76) സാക്ഷരതായജ്ഞം സ്ത്രീകൾക്കുള്ള പ്രവർത്തനരൂപം മാത്രമല്ല സമൂഹസമത്വത്തിനു വേണ്ടിയുള്ള ചവിട്ടുപടി കൂടിയായിരുന്നു .കേരളത്തിലെ അനൗപചാരിക വിദ്യാഭ്യാസവുമായി ബന്ധപ്പെട്ട് വ്യവസ്ഥാപിതമായ മാർഗത്തിൽ സ്കൂളിൽ ചേർന്ന് വിദ്യ അഭ്യസിക്കാൻ കഴിയാതിരുന്നവർക്ക് അക്ഷരം പകർന്നു നൽകുവാൻ രൂപം കൊടുത്തിട്ടുള്ള വിദ്യാഭ്യാസ സംവിധാനമാണ് അനൗപചാരിക വിദ്യാഭ്യാസംഅനൗപചാരിക വിദ്യാഭ്യാസത്തിന്റെ . അക്ഷരമറിയാത്ത ഒരു വ്യക്തിയെ അഥവാ .ആദ്യ കളരിയാണ് സാക്ഷരതാക്ലാസ് രം പഠിപ്പിച്ച് അതിന്റെ സമൂഹത്തെ അനൗപചാരിക പ്രവർത്തനങ്ങളിലൂടെ അക്ഷ .പ്രയോക്താവാക്കി മാറ്റുന്ന പ്രക്രിയയാണ് സാക്ഷരതാ പ്രവർത്തനം

ഏറ്റവും അധികം സ്ത്രീസാക്ഷരതയുള്ള സംസ്ഥാനം കേരളമാണ്സമൂഹത്തിൽ ഏറ്റവും . അധികം ചൂഷണത്തിനും ലിംഗവിവേചനത്തിനും ഇരയാകുന്ന സ്ത്രീകൾക്ക് ശക്തിയും വിദ്യാഭ്യാസത്തിന്റെ പ്രാധാന്യം .ഊർജ്ജവും നൽകുന്നത് വിദ്യാഭ്യാസമാണ് എഴുതുവാനും വായിക്കുവാനും അക്കങ്ങൾ .മനസ്സിലാകണമെങ്കിൽ സാക്ഷരത നേടണം കൂട്ടാനും കിഴിക്കാനുമുള്ള കഴിവ് മാത്രമല്ല സാക്ഷരത .ഉയർന്ന സാമൂഹ്യാവബോധമാണ് സാക്ഷരതയിലൂടെ നേടേണ്ടത്കേരളത്തിലെ സർവ്വത്രിക വിദ്യാഭ്യാസത്തിന്റെയും . .ഭ്യാസത്തിന്റെയും സ്ത്രീശാക്തീകരണത്തിന്റെയും അടിത്തറ സാക്ഷരതയാണ്സ്ത്രീവിദ്യാ

ഏതൊരു രാജ്യത്തിന്റെയും സാമ്പത്തിക സാമൂഹിക വളർച്ചയെന്നത് ആ രാജ്യത്തെ സ്ത്രീകളുടെ സാക്ഷരതാ നിരക്കിനെ ആശ്രയിച്ച് ആയിരിക്കും നിലകൊള്ളുന്നത്.

കേരളത്തിലെ രാഷ്ട്രീയ മറ്റു സംസ്ഥാനങ്ങളിൽ നിന്ന് തികച്ചും ഭിന്നമായിരുന്ന ഇന്ത്യയിലെ .സാമൂഹിക സാമ്പത്തിക സാംസ്കാരിക മത വിദ്യാഭ്യാസ ഘടകങ്ങൾ സാക്ഷരതാ പ്രസ്ഥാനത്തിന് വളരാൻ അനുകൂലമായ പല ഘടകങ്ങളും ഇവിടെ ഉണ്ടായിട്ടുണ്ട്.ക്രിസ്ത്യൻ മിഷനറിമാരുടെ പ്രവർത്തനങ്ങളും തെക്കൻ കേരളത്തിലെ എൽ . എം. എസ്. കാരുടെ പ്രവർത്തനങ്ങളും മധ്യകേരളത്തിലെ സി. എം. എസ്. കാരുടെ പ്രവർത്തനങ്ങളും ഉത്തരകേരളത്തിലെ ബാസൽമിഷൻകാരുടെ വിദ്യാഭ്യാസ പ്രവർത്തനങ്ങളും ഇതിൽ പ്രധാനമാണ് .വ്യാപാരാർത്ഥം ഇന്ത്യയിൽ കാലുകുത്തിയ ബ്രിട്ടീഷുകാർ മതപ്രചരണം ലക്ഷ്യമാക്കി വിദ്യാഭ്യാസ പ്രവർത്തനങ്ങൾക്ക് തുടക്കം കുറിച്ചിരുന്നുവിതാംകൂറിലെയും കൊച്ചിയിലെയും രാജാക്കന്മാർ സാമൂഹ്യ പുരോഗതി തി . ലക്ഷ്യമാക്കിയുള്ള സാംസ്കാരിക പ്രവർത്തനങ്ങളിൽ ഉദാരമായ സമീപനം കൈക്കൊണ്ടിരുന്നു .തിരുവിതാംകൂറിലും കൊച്ചിയിലും മലബാറിലും ആയി രൂപം കൊണ്ട ഗ്രാമീണ ലൈബ്രറികൾ ക്രമേണ ഗ്രാമീണപാഠശാലകൾ ആയി മാറി .രാജഭരണത്തിന്റെ പ്രോത്സാഹനത്തിൽ ധാരാളം ഗ്രന്ഥശാലകൾ അന്ന് ആരംഭിച്ചു .അതോടെ ആരംഭിച്ച ഗ്രന്ഥശാലാപ്രസ്ഥാനവും കേരളത്തിലെ ഉയർന്ന സാക്ഷരതയുടെ വിജയത്തിന് കാരണമായി .മലയാള അച്ചടിയുടെ ആവിർഭാവവും മലയാള പത്രമാസികകളുടെ ഉദയവും സാക്ഷരത പ്രവർത്തനങ്ങൾക്ക് ആക്കംകൂട്ടിഒരു വിഭാഗം കേരളത്തിൽ ഗണ്യമായ . .നിരക്ഷരരായിരുന്നു1990 മുതൽ ദേശീയ സാക്ഷരതാ മിഷൻ മാർഗ്ഗരേഖകൾ അനുസരിച്ച് കേരളത്തിൽ സാക്ഷരതാ പ്രവർത്തനം നടത്തിയത് കേരള സാക്ഷരതാ സമിതിയാണ് . സാക്ഷരതാസമിതി സ്വയംഭരണ സ്ഥാപനം ആയി രജിസ്റ്റർ ചെയ്ത് പ്രവർത്തിച്ചത് വഴി സമ്പൂർണ്ണ .ന് കൈവരിക്കാൻ ആയിസമ്പൂർണ്ണ സാക്ഷരത എന്ന ലക്ഷ്യം കേരളത്തി സാക്ഷരതയ്ക്ക് ശേഷം തുടർവിദ്യാഭ്യാസത്തിനുള്ള സമഗ്രമായ ഒരു പദ്ധതിക്ക് രൂപം സ .കൊടുത്തുാക്ഷരതാമിഷൻ കേന്ദ്രമാനവവിഭവശേഷി മന്ത്രാലയത്തിന്റെ ആഭിമുഖ്യത്തിലുള്ള ദേശീയ സാക്ഷരതാമിഷനുമായി സഹകരിച്ചാണ് സംസ്ഥാന സാക്ഷരതാമിഷൻ പ്രവർത്തിച്ചിരുന്നത്തൊഴിലാളി പ്രസ്ഥാനങ്ങൾ അവരുടെ . .ആശയങ്ങൾ പ്രചരിപ്പിക്കാൻ ആരംഭിച്ചുനിശാപാഠശാലകളും നവോത്ഥാന പ്രസ്ഥാനങ്ങളുടെ ആവിർഭാവവും ഐക്യകേരളം രൂപീകൃതമാകുന്നതിന് മുമ്പ് തന്നെ സാക്ഷരതയിൽ കേരളം മുന്നിലെത്തുന്നതിന് സഹായിച്ചുഭാഷാടിസ്ഥാനത്തിൽ കേരളം . വിദ്യാഭ്യാസ സാമൂഹിക സാംസ്കാരിക പ്രവർത്തനങ്ങളിൽ ഒരു രൂപീകരിച്ചതിനെ തുടർന്ന് ഗ്രന്ഥശാലാസംഘം .മുന്നേറ്റം നടത്താൻ കേരളത്തിന് കഴിഞ്ഞിട്ടുണ്ട്, ശാസ്ത്ര സാഹിത്യപരിഷത്ത് തുടങ്ങിയ സന്നദ്ധസംഘടനകൾ സാക്ഷരതാ നിർമാർജ്ജന പ്രവർത്തനങ്ങളിൽ മുഖ്യപങ്കാളികളായിരുന്നുബ്ലോക്ക് പഞ്ചായത്തുകൾ ., നഗരസഭകൾ, ഗ്രാമപഞ്ചായത്തുകൾ തുടങ്ങി എല്ലാ തലങ്ങളിലും ജനപ്രതിനിധികൾ നേതൃത്വം നൽകുന്ന സാക്ഷരതാ സമിതികൾ ഉണ്ടായിരുന്നുസാക്ഷരതാ . മിഷൻ തുടർവിദ്യാഭ്യാസ

പ്രവർത്തനങ്ങൾ നടപ്പിലാക്കിയത് വിദ്യാകേന്ദ്രങ്ങളിലൂടെയാണ് പ്രേരകിന്റെ . ലയംനേതൃത്വത്തിൽ സാംസ്കാരികനി(വിദ്യാകേന്ദ്രം ഓർഗനൈസർ), വായനശാല, ഗ്രന്ഥശാല, തൊഴിൽപരിശീലന കേന്ദ്രം കലാകായികവിനോദകേന്ദ്രം, വിജ്ഞാന വ്യാപനകേന്ദ്രം തുടങ്ങി നിരവധി പ്രവർത്തന പരിപാടികൾ അന്നുണ്ടായിരുന്നു . സമൂഹത്തിന്റെ മുഖ്യധാരയിൽ നിന്ന് വിട്ടുനിൽക്കുന്ന സ്ത്രീകളെ വിദ്യാകേന്ദ്രങ്ങളുമായി ഭ്യാസത്തിന്റെ ഗുണഭോക്താക്കളാക്കാനുള്ള ചുമതല ബന്ധപ്പെടുത്തി അവരെ തുടർവിദ്യാ .മഹിളാസംഘടനകൾ ഏറ്റെടുത്തുസർക്കാർതലത്തിൽ ആകർഷിച്ച കർഷകപ്രവൃത്യുന്മുഖ സാക്ഷരതാപരിപാടിയും അനൗപചാരിക വിദ്യാഭ്യാസപരിപാടിയും ഗ്രാമീണപ്രത്യുന്മുഖ സാക്ഷരതാപരിപാടിയും ബഹുജന പ്രത്യുന്മുഖപരിപാടിയും കേരളത്തിലെ സാക്ഷരതാ പ്രവർത്തനങ്ങൾക്ക് ഉണർവ് നൽകി'' .ജനകീയ ആസൂത്രണത്തിലൂടെ വികസനത്തിന്റെ പാതയിൽ മുന്നേറിക്കൊണ്ടിരിക്കുന്ന കേരളത്തിന് സാക്ഷരതാമിഷൻ തുടർവിദ്യാഭ്യാസ പ്രവർത്തനങ്ങൾ നിർണായക പങ്ക് വഹിച്ചിട്ടുണ്ട്''. (പ്രൊഫ :അച്യുതവാര്യർ.എസ്.2003-232.)

ൽ സ്ത്രീകൾ നേതൃനിരയിലേക്ക് വരുന്നത് പങ്കാളിത്തം കൊണ്ട് സാക്ഷരതാ മേഖലയി അനേകം സ്ത്രീകൾ സാക്ഷരതാ പ്രവർത്തനത്തിന്റെ നടത്തിപ്പുകാരായി .കാണാം മാറിയിട്ടുണ്ട്ശാരീരിക അവശത മൂലം ജീവിതത്തിന്റെ ഓരങ്ങളിലേക്ക് . മാറേണ്ടിയിരുന്നവളായ റാബിയ തന്റെ ജീവിതത്തെ മുറുകെപ്പിടിച്ച് നാടിന്റെ വെളിച്ചമായി ക വൈകല്യത്തെ അതിജീവിച്ച് സ്വന്തം നാട്ടിൽ സാക്ഷരതാ പ്രവർത്തനവും ശാരീരി .മാറി സാമൂഹിക പ്രവർത്തനവും നടത്തിയ റാബിയയുടെ ആത്മകഥ വായനക്കാർക്ക് പ്രചോദനം നല്കുന്നതാണ്.

.കെവി .റാബിയയുടെ ആത്മകഥയിൽ സമൂഹവും സാമൂഹ്യപ്രസ്ഥാനങ്ങളും അക്ഷരാഭ്യാസമില്ലാത്ത സാധാരണക്കാരും അവരുടെ പ്രാരാബ്ധങ്ങൾ നിറഞ്ഞ ജീവിതാവസ്ഥകളും ആണ് കേന്ദ്ര പ്രമേയംതന്റെ ഭൂതകാലം ചരിത്രപരമായി വലിയ . പ്രാധാന്യമുള്ള ഒന്നാണെന്ന് റാബിയകരുതുന്നു .അത്തരം സാമൂഹ്യ സാഹചര്യങ്ങളിൽ ഭിന്നശേഷിക്കാരിയായ തനിക്ക് സമൂഹത്തിന് ചെയ്യ കൊടുക്കാൻ പറ്റുന്ന ഒരു പ്രത്യയശാസ്ത്രത്തെയാണ് റാബിയ മുറുകെ പിടിച്ചത് .അനുഭവകാണ്ഡങ്ങൾക്ക് വിസ്തൃതി ഏറുമെങ്കിലും സവിശേഷ മേഖലകളുടെ വിവരണങ്ങളാണ് ഈ ആത്മകഥയിൽ ഏറെ ഭാഗവുംവളരെ ച .െറിയ ക്യാൻവാസിൽ സങ്കീർണവും വിപുലവുമായ ഒരു ജീവിതത്തിന്റെ ചിത്രം വരയ്ക്കുന്നതുപോലെയാണ് ആത്മകഥയുടെ രൂപഘടനസ്വകാര്യ ദുഃഖങ്ങളെ . മൂഹിക സ്വത്വങ്ങളാണ് സാക്ഷ്യപ്പെടുത്തലിന്റെ ആഖ്യാനം എന്ന മറികടന്നു വളരുന്ന സാ ,രാമകൃഷ്ണൻ.വി.ഇ)വി രാമകൃഷ്ണന്റെ.ഇ2004, മാതൃഭൂമി (വിലയിരുത്തൽ റാബിയയുടെ ആത്മകഥ ശരിവെക്കുന്നു.

കേരളത്തിന്റെ സാംസ്കാരികതയിൽ പൂർണ്ണമായും മുഴുകിയാണ് റാബിയ ആത്മകഥ ൽ മുമ്പിൽ നിൽക്കുന്ന അപൂർവ്വം സാക്ഷരതാപ്രവർത്തനങ്ങളി .എഴുതിയിരിക്കുന്നത് വനിതകളിൽ അവർ കേരളസാക്ഷരതാ പ്രവർത്തനത്തിന്റെ നെടുംതൂണാണ്റാബിയയുടെ .

ആഖ്യാനം തികച്ചും ലളിതമാണെന്ന് വ്യക്തിജീവിതം വരച്ചിടുന്ന ഏടുകളിൽ നിന്ന് നമുക്ക് മനസ്സിലാകുന്നുവെള്ളിലക്കാട് എന്ന ഗ്രാമത്തിന്റെ സാമൂഹ്യപരിസ്ഥിതി . നോടൊപ്പം ജനനം മുതൽ സാക്ഷരതാപ്രേരക്കായി പ്രവർത്തിക്കുന്ന കാലം വരച്ചിടുന്നതി മ .വരെയുള്ള കഥകളാണ് ആത്മകഥയിൽ വിവരിക്കുന്നത്ിക്ക ആത്മകഥകളെയും പോലെ ബാല്യം മുതൽക്കുള്ള സംഭവങ്ങൾ ആഘോഷങ്ങൾ ഐതിഹ്യങ്ങൾ തുടങ്ങിയവയെല്ലാം വളരെ സൂക്ഷ്മതയോടെ ഹൃദ്യമായി അടുക്കും ചിട്ടയോടും കൂടി അവതരിപ്പിക്കാൻ റാബിയക്ക് കഴിഞ്ഞിട്ടുണ്ട്റാബിയക്ക് എന്നും തുണയായത് വീടും . ഒരു .വീട്ടുകാരും സുഹൃത്തുക്കളും ആയിരുന്ന കഥ പറഞ്ഞ് പോകുന്നത്ര ലളിത സുന്ദരമായിട്ടാണ് ഈ ആത്മകഥയുടെ ആഖ്യാനം

ബാല്യകാലജീവിതം

പ്പിൽ തിരൂരങ്ങാടി കടലുണ്ടിപ്പുഴക്ക് അരികെയുള്ള വെള്ളിലക്കാട് ഗ്രാമത്തിൽ കറിവേ മൂസക്കുട്ടിയുടെയും അല്ലിപ്പറ ബീയാച്ചുട്ടിയുടെയും ആറ്പെൺമക്കളിൽ രണ്ടാമത്തവളായി 1966 ഫെബ്രുവരി 25ന് ഒരു കൂട്ടുകുടുംബത്തിലാണ് റാബിയ ജനിച്ചത്ചക്രകസേരയിൽ . ജീവിതം തളച്ചിടേണ്ടിവന്ന പെൺകുട്ടി തന്റെ ജീവിതം സമരം ആക്കിയപ്പോൾ രാജ്യം .ഒന്നായ പത്മശ്രീ നൽകി ആദരിച്ച അവൾക്ക് പരമോന്നത ബഹുമതികളിൽ

.മൈസൂരിൽ പലചരക്ക് കച്ചവടക്കാരൻ ആയിരുന്ന റാബിയയുടെ പിതാവ് ചിത്രശലഭത്തെ പോലെ പാറിക്കളിച്ചും കടലുണ്ടിപ്പുഴയിൽ കൂട്ടുകാരോടൊപ്പം നീന്തികളിച്ചും മധുരമൂറുന്നതായിരുന്ന റാബിയയുടെ ബാല്യകാലംപഠനത്തിൽ മിടുക്കി . അന്നേ കാലിന് .പകരുടെ സ്നേഹത്തിന് പാത്രമായി റാബിയആയിരുന്നതുകൊണ്ട് അധ്യാ .ചെറിയൊരു വൈകല്യം റാബിയയക്ക് ഉണ്ടായിരുന്നുവെള്ളിലക്കാട് നിന്ന് രണ്ടു കിലോമീറ്റർ അപ്പുറത്തുള്ള തിരൂരങ്ങാടി ഗവൺമെൻറ് ഹൈസ്കൂളിലേക്ക് നടന്നു പോയിരുന്നതാണ് റാബിയഒമ്പതാം ക്ലാസ്സിലെ വേനൽ അവധി കഴിഞ്ഞ് . ആവേശത്തോടെ പത്താം ക്ലാസിലേക്ക് പുറപ്പെട്ട ആദ്യദിവസം തന്നെ അതിരുകവിഞ്ഞ .റാബിയയുടെ കാലുകൾ വഴിയിൽ വെച്ച് തളർന്നു ക്ലാസിൽ എത്തിയ റാബിയ കൂട്ടുകാരികളുടെ തോളിൽ തൂങ്ങിയാണ് വീട്ടിലേക്ക് തിരികെ പോയത്നടന്നു . എന്നാൽ .പോകാൻ ആവില്ല എന്ന് മനസ്സിലായപ്പോൾ റാബിയ ഏറെ വിഷമിച്ചു ടെ പഠനം മുടക്കില്ല എന്ന ദൃഢനിശ്ചയത്തിനു മുന്നിൽ വീട്ടുകാർക്ക് പോലും റാബിയയു പരസഹായത്താൽ .അടിയറവ് പറയേണ്ടിവന്നുസൈക്കിളിൽ ഉരുണ്ട് സ്കൂളിൽ പോയി ഉയർന്ന മാർക്കോടെ എസ്എസ്എൽസി വിജയിച്ചു .തുടർന്ന് വളരെ സാഹസികമായിട്ടാണ് പ്രീഡിഗ്രിക്ക് പി .ത്കോളേജിൽ പോകാൻ തുടങ്ങിയ.ഒ.എം.എസ്. ഔപചാരികമായ വിദ്യാഭ്യാസം നിലച്ച റാബിയ വീട്ടകത്തേക്ക് ചുരുങ്ങേണ്ടി വന്നു.

സ്വപ്നങ്ങൾക്ക് ചിറകുമുളയ്ക്കുന്നു

തോൽക്കാൻ മനസ്സില്ലായിരുന്ന റാബിയ ആരുടെയും സഹതാപത്തിനു വേണ്ടി മറ്റുള്ളവർ കോളേജുകളിൽ പോയി അറിവ് നേടിയപ്പോൾ അവൾ .കാത്തിരുന്നില്ല .കാണാൻ ശ്രമിച്ചു പുസ്തകങ്ങളിലൂടെ ലോകംചിറകറ്റ എന്ന് കരുതിയ സ്വപ്നങ്ങൾക്ക്

വീണ്ടും ജീവൻ വെക്കാൻ തുടങ്ങിബൃഹത്തായ വായനയിലൂട.െ കരസ്ഥമാക്കിയ സർട്ടിഫിക്കറ്റില്ലാത്ത അറിവിന് പരിമിതമായ പഠനത്തിലൂടെ ലഭിക്കുന്ന സർട്ടിഫിക്കറ്റിനേക്കാൾ വിലയുണ്ടല്ലോ എന്ന് റാബിയ സമാധാനിക്കുന്നുണ്ട് .പുറം) .37) വീടിനോട് ചേർന്ന് വെള്ളിലക്കാട് കുട്ടികൾക്ക് ട്യൂഷൻ എടുക്കാൻ ഒരു ഷെഡ് ഉണ്ടാക്കി . ധാരാളം വിദ്യാർത്ഥികൾ അവിടെ ട്യൂഷന് വേണ്ടി എത്തിയിരുന്നുജീവിതത്തിന് വീണ്ടും . ഇതിനിടെ ബാപ്പ മൈസൂരിലെ .ചില്ലകളും ഇലകളും പൂക്കളും ഫലങ്ങളും വന്നു തുടങ്ങി .ലെ റേഷൻ കടക്കാരനായി മാറികച്ചവടം നിർത്തി നാട്ടി

പ്രത്യാശയുടെ ആദ്യ അക്ഷരങ്ങൾ

1990 ലാണ് കേരളസർക്കാർ സമ്പൂർണ്ണ സാക്ഷരതാപദ്ധതി പ്രഖ്യാപിച്ചത്ട്യൂഷനും . പഠനവുമായി ഒതുങ്ങി ജീവിക്കുന്ന കാലത്താണ് സമ്പൂർണ്ണ സാക്ഷരത എന്ന മഹത്തായ ടെ സുബൈർ എന്ന കോളേജ് വിദ്യാർഥിയു .യജ്ഞത്തെ കുറിച്ച് അറിഞ്ഞത് സഹായത്തോടെ ഇൻസ്ട്രക്ടറായി അക്ഷരങ്ങൾ പഠിപ്പിക്കുകയും പഠിപ്പിച്ചു കൊടുത്ത അക്ഷരങ്ങൾ നിത്യജീവിതത്തിൽ ഉപയോഗപ്പെടുത്തുകയും കൂടുതൽ കാര്യങ്ങൾ അറിയേണ്ടത് അനിവാര്യമാണ് എന്ന ചിന്ത പഠിതാക്കളിൽ ഉണർത്തുകയും ചെയ്തതിലെ ചാരിതാർത്ഥ്യം റാബിയ ആത്മകഥയിൽ പങ്കുവെക്കുന്നുണ്ട്.

റാബിയയുടെ ചിന്ത സാക്ഷരതാ പ്രവർത്തനത്തിന്റെ വഴിക്കായി .അക്ഷരം അറിയാത്തവർക്ക് ആദ്യാക്ഷരം കുറിച്ചു കൊടുക്കാൻ വീട്ടുമുറ്റം തന്നെ വേദിയാക്കികൂശവ . കോളനിയിലെ സാധാരണ ജനങ്ങൾ മുതൽ ഉമ്മയും ഉപ്പയും വരെ റാബിയയുടെ സാക്ഷരതാ കേന്ദ്രം കേവലം അക്ഷരങ്ങളിൽ മാത്രം .പഠിതാക്കളായി .ഒതുങ്ങിയില്ല ഗ്രാമത്തിന്റെ സാമൂഹിക സാംസ്കാരിക പൊതുപ്രവർത്തന കേന്ദ്രമായി മാറി ആ ട്യൂഷൻ സെന്റർമനുഷ്യരെ ജീവിതം കൂടി പഠിപ്പിക്കുന്ന പാഠശാലയായും ഗ്രാമീണരുടെ . വീട്ടിലെ പ്രശ്നങ്ങൾ മുതൽ അയൽപക്ക തർക്കങ്ങൾ വരെ പരിഹരിക്കപ്പെടുന്ന വേദിയായും ട്യൂഷൻ സെന്റർ മാറി .പഠിതാക്കളുടെ ജീവിതം തന്നെ മാറിമറിയാൻ ഈ ഗ്രാമീണ പാഠശാല വഴിയൊരുക്കിസാക്ഷരതാ പ്രവർത്തക .ർ ആത്മാർത്ഥമായി രംഗത്തിറങ്ങിയാൽ ജീവിതത്തിന്റെ വിവിധ മേഖലകളിലുള്ള വ്യക്തികൾ ഒരുമിച്ച് എടുക്കുന്ന ജോലികൾ സാക്ഷരത പ്രവർത്തകർക്ക് തനിയെ ചെയ്യാനാകും എന്ന ചിന്ത റാബിയക്ക് ഉണ്ടായിരുന്നു .ജനശക്തി സമാഹരിക്കുകയും വികസനത്തിനായി ഉപയോഗിക്കുകയും ചെയ്യുന്ന മാനസികാവസ്ഥ വളർത്തിയെടുക്കലായിരിക്കണം സാക്ഷരതയിലൂടെ നാം സാധിക്കേണ്ടത് എന്നവർ വിശ്വസിച്ചു .പുറം)101).

വെള്ളിലക്കാട്ടെ വെളിച്ചം

.കൾ കടന്നുവെള്ളിലക്കാട് സാക്ഷരതാ കേന്ദ്രത്തിന്റെ കീർത്തി ദേശാതിർത്തി അന്യനാടുകളിൽ നിന്നും .റേഡിയോയിലും പത്രങ്ങളിലും വാർത്തകളും കഥകളും പരന്നു ആളുകൾ റാബിയയെ കാണാൻ എത്തി .അധികാരികൾ നിത്യസന്ദർശകരായി മാറി . റോഡും വെളിച്ചവും ഇല്ലാതിരുന്ന ആ ഗ്രാമത്തിൽ ഇതെല്ലാം അനായാസേന വന്നെത്തി . ഗ്രാമീണ വനിതകളുടെ ആരോഗ്യത്തിലും വിദ്യാഭ്യാസത്തിലും സാമൂഹിക ജീവിതത്തിലും

ധാരാളം പുരോഗതികൾ ഉണ്ടായി .മഹിളാ സമാജങ്ങൾ അവരുടെ നേതൃത്വത്തിൽ രൂപം കൊണ്ടുഗ്രാമത്തിന്റെ വികസന കാര്യങ്ങളിൽ ഇടപെടാൻ ജനങ്ങൾക്ക് ധാരാളം . വനിതകളെ സ്വയംതൊഴിൽ .അവസരങ്ങൾ ഇതിലൂടെ ഉണ്ടാവുകയായിരുന്നു ൾ പരസ്പരം ചർച്ച ചെയ്യ പരിഹരിക്കാനും വനിതാ പരിശീലിപ്പിക്കാനും അവരുടെ പ്രശ്നങ്ങ .വേദി ഉണ്ടാക്കിജോലി ചെയ്യുന്ന ഗ്രാമീണ വനിതകളെ തന്നെ ഓഹരി ഉടമകളാക്കി സ്വയംതൊഴിൽ പാക്കേജുകൾ നടപ്പിലാക്കി .വിജ്ഞാന വേദി, സാംസ്കാരിക വേദി, വനിതാ ലൈബ്രറി, ജനവിദ്യാ കേന്ദ്രം തുടങ്ങി വെള്ളിലക്കാട് എന്ന ഗ്രാമത്തിന്റെ പുരോഗതിയുടെ ലക്ഷ്യം കൈവരിക്കാൻ റാബിയയുടെ വീട് തന്നെ വേദിയായിഒപ്പം . പരിമിതികളെ തോൽപ്പിച്ച് ഇച്ഛാശക്തിയോടെ സ്ത്രീശാക്തീകരണത്തിന് വേണ്ടി റാബിയ പൊരുതി .ചക്രകസേരയിലിരുന്ന് ഗ്രാമത്തിന്റെ വെളിച്ചമായി മാറിയ റാബിയയുടെ ജീവിതകഥ എല്ലാവർക്കും പ്രചോദനമാണ്‘‘ .നിറമുള്ള സ്വപ്നങ്ങൾ ഉള്ള മനുഷ്യരേ വിജയത്തിലെത്തു സ്വപ്നങ്ങളില്ലാത്ത ജീവിതം ലക്ഷ്യമില്ലാത്ത യാത്ര .പോലെയാണ് എന്ന് റാബിയ കൂട്ടിച്ചേർക്കുന്നുണ്ട് .പുറം)63) റാബിയയെ അടുത്തറിയാൻ ഗവേഷണം ചെയ്യാൻ വിദേശികൾ വരെ അവിടെയെത്തിവനിതാവികസനം സാക്ഷരത പ്രവർത്തനം തുടങ്ങിയ . ലക്ഷ്യം വെച്ച്1994 ൽ-സ്ഥാപിതമായ ചലനം ചാരിറ്റബിൾ സൊസൈറ്റി ചലനമറ്റവർക്ക് കൂടി ഒരു ആശ്രയമായിരുന്നുവി .കലാംഗ ക്ഷേമപ്രവർത്തനങ്ങൾക്കും റാബിയയുടെ വീട് കേന്ദ്രമായി .മലപ്പുറം ജില്ലയിലെ വിവിധ പ്രദേശങ്ങളിലേക്ക് ചലനത്തിന്റെ പ്രവർത്തനങ്ങൾ വ്യാപിപ്പിച്ചു .ഭിന്ന ശേഷിക്കാർക്ക് ഉള്ള സ്കൂളുകളാണ് ആദ്യം തുടങ്ങിയത് . അത് പിന്നീട് കുടുംബാധിഷ്ഠിത പുനരാധിവാസ പദ്ധതികളും ഗ്രാമീണ സ്ത്രീകൾക്കുള്ള തൊഴിൽ പരിശീലന പദ്ധതികളും ആരോഗ്യ ബോധവൽക്കരണ പരിപാടികളും തുടർ വിദ്യാഭ്യാസ പരിപാടികളും തീരദേശ വികസന പദ്ധതികളും സാധാരണ ജനങ്ങളിൽ സമ്പാദ്യം ശീലം വളർത്തിയെടുക്കാൻ ആവശ്യമായ ലഘു നിക്ഷേപ പദ്ധതികളെല്ലാമായി വികസിച്ചുരക്തദാനസേന വരെ ചലനത്തിന്റെ മേൽനോട .ിടത്തിൽ ജില്ലയിൽ ആകെ സംഘടിപ്പിക്കപ്പെട്ടു .ചലനത്തിന്റെ പ്രവർത്തനങ്ങൾക്ക് ധനസമാഹരണം നടത്താൻ കണ്ടെത്തിയ മാർഗ്ഗം പോലും നിർമ്മാണാത്മകമായിരുന്നു .ചലനം പബ്ലിക്കേഷൻ നൂറോളം പുസ്തകങ്ങൾ പുറത്തിറക്കി .ഇതിനിടെ ക്യാൻസർ ബാധിച്ച റാബിയ മരണത്തെ മുഖാമുഖം കണ്ടു .പക്ഷേ ആത്മീയത കൊണ്ട് ചിട്ടപ്പെടുത്തിയ ആത്മധൈര്യം അവരെ ജീവിതത്തിലേക്ക് പതിയെ കൊണ്ടുവന്നു .2004 ആകുമ്പോഴേക്കും ജോലിയിൽ തിരിച്ചെത്തിയെങ്കിലും മുപ്പത്തിയെട്ടാമത്തെ വയസ്സിൽ കുളിമുറിയുടെ തറയിൽ തെന്നി വീണ് നട്ടെല്ലിന് സാരമായ പരിക്കുപറ്റി കഴുത്തിന് താഴെ ഭാഗികമായി തളർന്നു.

കൃത്യമായ ജീവിതനിഷ്ഠയുള്ള റാബിയയെ തേടി സർവ്വ അംഗീകാരങ്ങളും വന്നു . ഇൻറർനാഷണൽ അവാർഡ്, നാഷണൽ യൂത്ത് അവാർഡ്, സംസ്ഥാന സാക്ഷരതാ മിഷൻ അവാർഡ്, കണ്ണകി ശ്രീശക്തി അവാർഡ്, ഐഎംഎ അവാർഡ്, വനിതാരത്നം അവാർഡ്, പരമോന്നത ബഹുമതിയായ പത്മശ്രീ തുടങ്ങിയവ നാടുമുഴുത്തുകാരിയായ റാബിയക്ക് ലഭിച്ചു. ഇരുപതോളം അവാർഡുകളാണ് അവർക്ക് ലഭിച്ചിട്ടുള്ളത്.

വ്യത്യസ്തമായ സ്വത്വപ്രകാശനം

മനുഷ്യജീവിതത്തിലേക്ക് .ജീവിതഗന്ധിയായ പുസ്തകങ്ങളാണ് റാബിയ എഴുതിയത് അതിലുപരി തളരാതെ .ഊർജ്ജവും പകരുന്ന എഴുത്തുകൾ ആയിരുന്നു അവ വെളിച്ചവും നടത്തിയ പോരാട്ടങ്ങളുടെയുംതനിക്ക് ഏൽക്കേണ്ടിവന്ന സ്നേഹആശ്ലേഷണങ്ങളുടെയും കഥയാണ് സ്വപ്നങ്ങൾക്ക് ചിറകുകളുണ്ട് എന്ന ആത്മകഥഇംഗ്ലീഷിലേക്ക് വിവർത്തനം . ചെയ്ത കൊണ്ടിരിക്കുന്ന ഈ ആത്മകഥയും മൗനനൊമ്പരങ്ങൾ, അക്ഷര ഹൃദയം, അവളുടെ കഥ പറയുന്നു എന്നിങ്ങനെയുള്ള നാല് പുസ്തകങ്ങളും എഴുതിയിട്ടുണ്ട് .റാബിയ ചലിക്കുന്നു' എന്ന ജീവചരിത്രചിത്രം ധാരാളം പേർക്ക് പ്രചോദനമായി തീരുന്നു'' .പാരത്രിക വിശ്വാസത്തിലൂടെ ഭൂമിയിൽ സ്ഥിരോൽസാഹമുള്ള കർമ്മയോഗികളെ വാർത്തെടുക്കുക . സംഭാവന ഇതാണ് എന്ന ജീവിത ദർശനത്തിൽ ഇസ്ലാം ഭൂമിക്കു നൽകുന്ന .പുറം) ''.അധിഷ്ഠിതമായിരുന്നു റാബിയയുടെ ജീവിതം39) മനഷ്യജീവിതം പ്രാർത്ഥനയാണ് പ്രയത്നവും എന്ന് ചിന്തിക്കുന്ന റാബിയ ജീവിതത്തിന്റെ നാനാ തുറകളിലുള്ളവരുടെ സ്നേഹം കൊണ്ട് പോരാളി ആയവളാണ്തളർന്ന ശരീരത്തിനുള്ളിൽ . അതിന് രാജ്യം നൽകിയ .ക്കിയാണ് അവർ സഞ്ചരിച്ചത്തളരാത്ത മനസ്സും ഉണ്ടാ തന്റെ ഭൂതകാലം ചര .ആദരമാണ് പത്മശ്രീ ിത്രുപരമായി വലിയ പ്രാധാന്യമുള്ള ഒന്നാണെന്ന് റാബിയ കരുതുന്നതന്റെ സമൂഹവും സാമൂഹ്യപ്രസ്ഥാനങ്ങളും . അക്ഷരാഭ്യാസമില്ലാത്ത സാധാരണക്കാരും അവരുടെ പ്രാരാബ്ധങ്ങൾ നിറഞ്ഞ എല്ലാമാണ് ഈ കൃതിയിലെ ജീവിതാവസ്ഥകളും കേന്ദ്രപ്രമേയംഅത്തരം സാമൂഹ്യ . സാഹചര്യങ്ങളിൽ ഭിന്നശേഷിക്കാരിയായ തനിക്ക് സമൂഹത്തിന് ചെയ്തുകൊടുക്കാൻ പറ്റുന്ന ഒരു പ്രത്യയശാസ്ത്രത്തെയാണ് റാബിയ മുറുകെപ്പിടിച്ചത് .അനുഭവ കാണ്ഡങ്ങൾക്ക് വിസ്തൃതിയേറുമെങ്കിലും സവിശേഷ മേഖലകളുടെ വിവരണങ്ങളാണ് ആത്മകഥയിൽ ഏറെ ഭാഗവും വളരെ ചെറിയ ക്യാൻവാസിൽ സങ്കീർണവും വിപുലവുമായ ഒരു ജീവിതത്തിന്റെ . ചിത്രം വരയ്ക്കുന്നത് പോലെയാണ് ഈ ആത്മകഥയുടെ രൂപഘടന.

കാലുകൾ കൊണ്ട് നടക്കാൻ കഴിയില്ലങ്കിലും ആത്മവിശ്വാസവും ഇച്ഛാശക്തിയുമുണ്ടെങ്കിൽ എല്ലാം സാധിക്കും എന്ന് തെളിയിച്ച അസാധാരണ വ്യക്തിത്വത്തിനുടമയാണ് റാബിയ . ചുറ്റും കാണുന്ന തുറന്ന ലോകത്തിലെ പ്രകൃതിയെയും ജീവജാലങ്ങളെയും തന്റെ ജീവിതത്തിലേക്ക് അവർ ആവാഹിച്ചു.

സാക്ഷരതാ പ്രവർത്തനരംഗത്തും സാമൂഹ്യപ്രവർത്തന രംഗത്തും നേതൃത്വം വഹിച്ച ഒരു സ്ത്രീ .നംഎന്ന നിലയ്ക്കാണ് കേരളീയ പൊതുസമൂഹത്തിൽ റാബിയക്കുള്ള സ്ഥാ ''കർമ്മപഥത്തിൽ നിന്ന് കർത്താവെന്ന നിലയിലേക്ക് സ്ത്രീ മാറുന്നതിന്റെ ചിത്രങ്ങളാണ് സ്ത്രീകളുടെ ആത്മകഥയിൽ പറയുന്നത് :ശാരദക്കുട്ടി) ''2007-51)എന്ന നിരീക്ഷണം റാബിയയുടെ ഈ ആത്മകഥ ശരിവെക്കുന്നുജീവിതത്തിൽ വേദന അനുഭവിക്കുന്നവർക്ക് . ധർമ്മത്തിനും നീതിക്കും വേണ്ടി പോരാടുന്നവളായും മുന്നിലെ ആശയമായും സത്യത്തിനും .റാബിയ പ്രവർത്തിച്ചുസ്ത്രീ കൂട്ടായ്മകളിലും ആരോഗ്യവിദ്യാഭ്യാസ പ്രവർത്തനരംഗങ്ങളിലും

അവർ വ്യാപൃതയായിസ്റ്റീഫൻ ഹോക്കിംഗ് ., ജോൺ മിൽട്ടൺ, ഹെലൻ കെല്ലർ, ത്വാഹാ ഹുസൈൻ, അസീസിബിനു ഷബാസ് ബീഥോവൻ തുടങ്ങി പലരംഗത്തും ശോഭിച്ചിരുന്ന മഹാപ്രതിഭകളെ ആയിരുന്നു റാബിയ അധ്യാപകരുടെ സ്ഥാനത്ത് പ്രതിഷ്ഠിച്ചിരുന്നത്. ഇവരിൽ നിന്നും, പ്രകൃതി നിരീക്ഷണത്തിൽ നിന്നും,പരന്ന വായനയിൽ നിന്നും ആർജ്ജിച്ചെടുത്ത മതസൗന്ദര്യ ദർശനങ്ങൾ ആയിരുന്നു ജീവിതത്തിന് റാബിയ - ശാസ്ത്രീയടുത്തിയെടുക്കുന്ന രീതിയിലായിരുന്നു അവർ ജീവിതത്തെ ചിട്ടപ്പെ .ആധാരമാക്കിയത് പഠിതാക്കൾക്കായി ആസൂത്രണം ചെയ്ത പാഠ്യപദ്ധതിഉറച്ച മതവിശ്വാസിയായ റാബിയ . ആണധികാര വിമർശനങ്ങളെയെല്ലാം ..തന്റെ കർമ്മ പന്ഥാവിൽ വേറിട്ട ഒരുവളാണ് ആത്മകഥയുടെ ഒരു ബഹുലോകത്ത് സ്വന്തം .മുനയുള്ള ഭാഷ കൊണ്ട് അവർ നേരിട്ടു നത്തിലൂടെ സമൂഹത്തിലേക്ക് ഒരു വലിയ ആശയത്തെ അവർ ജീവിതാ ഖ്യാ പരിമിതികളെ മറികടന.സന്നിവേശിപ്പിച്ചു്ന് സാമൂഹ്യ പ്രവർത്തക ഏന്ന കർത്തൃത്വ പദവിയിലേക്കു ഉയരാൻ അവർക്ക് സാധിച്ചു.

അതിജീവനത്തിന്റെ സത്യസന്ധമായ ആവിഷ്കരണമാകുന്നു ഈ ആത്മാഖ്യാനംമാറുന്ന . ഖ്യാന പരിസരത്തിൽ കെ വി റാബിയയുടെ ആത്മകഥാനിർമ്മിതികളുടെ അനുഭവാ സ്വപ്നങ്ങൾക്ക് ചിറകുകളുണ്ട് എന്ന ആത്മകഥ സവിശേഷ ജീവിത പശ്ചാത്തലത്തിന്റെ ഭാവുകത്വത്തെ സംവാദാത്മകമായി അടയാളപ്പെടുത്തുന്നു.

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