

# Literary Voice

A Peer Reviewed Journal of English Studies

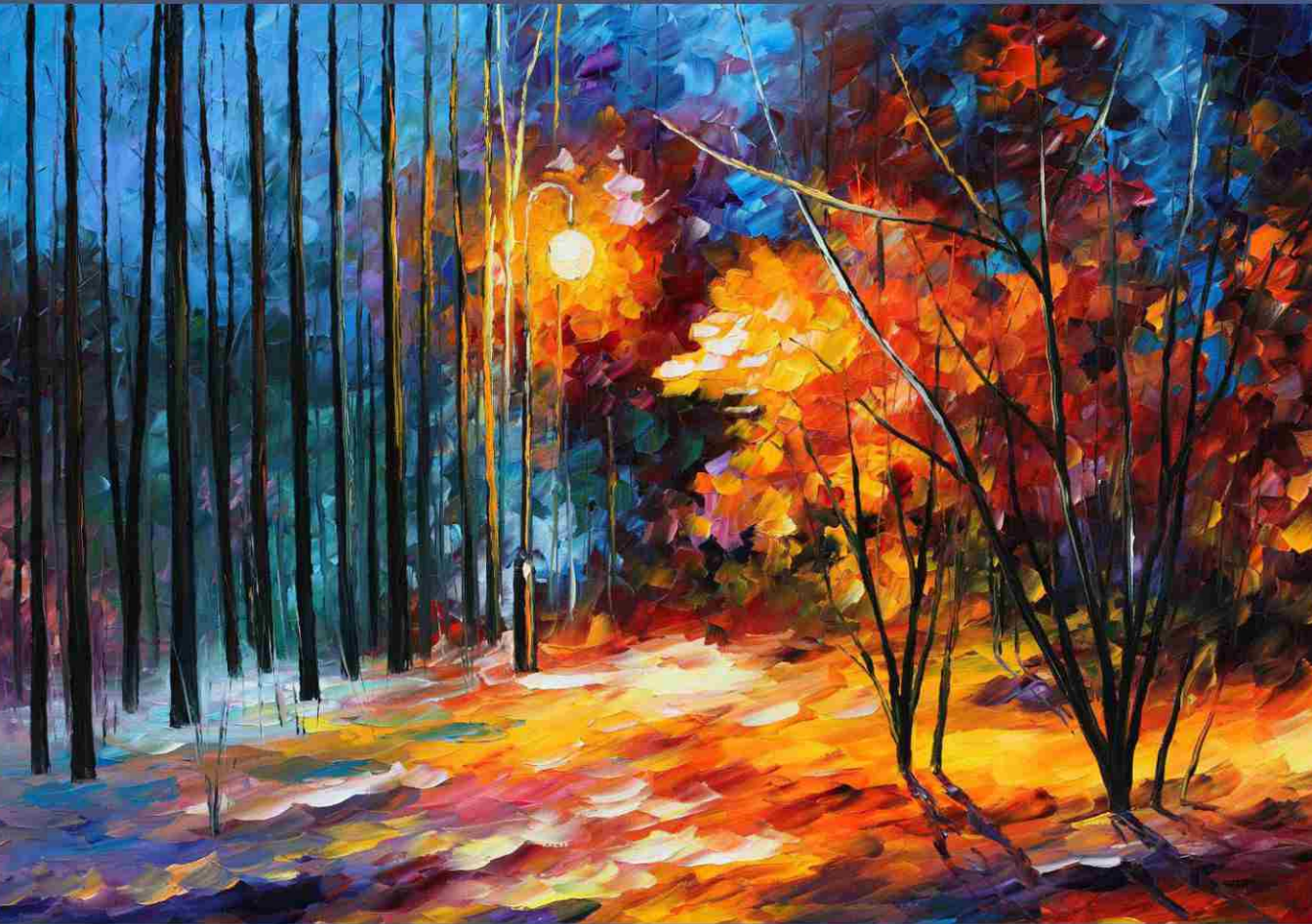
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Number 9

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September 2018



**Editor : T.S. Anand**



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# Literary Voice

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## FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

*Literary Voice* September 2018 offers a melange of cerebral stuff, ranging from the linguistic theories of style and stylistics and deconstructivist reading of literature--to the newly anointed Nobel laureate, Kazuo Ishiguro's skilful exploration of the porous borders of both history and memory, and individual and collective repression in *The Remains of the Day*--to critiquing of Mahasweta Devi's *Draupadi* through the prism of postcolonialism so as to identify various devastations caused by violent intrusions of colonialism to the colonized victim's land, culture, routine and mind--to Monica Ali's *Brick Lane* and Bharati Mukherjee's *Miss New India* negotiating the dilemmas of the diasporic identities as they undergo transformations with the passage of time and become hybrid and subvert the preconceived patriarchal notions of gender, power and sexuality and seem to fit into the icon and identity of the neo-liberalised category of the new Indian woman perfectly--to the arduous journey of Indian woman from silence to speech as in Anees Jung's *Beyond the Courtyard*--to the study of indigenous ecological sensitivity and ethical responsibility about human role in the natural world as in J.M. Coetzee's *Life and Times of Michael K*--to Barbara Gowdy's *The White Bone* underscoring the need to evolve from an anthropocentric to a biocentric in order to develop a dialogical and communicative relationship with earth-others that would provide an adequate ethical response to the non-human world--to two Bollywood movies, *Black* and *Taare Zameen Par* seeking to study the student-teacher bonding in the context of attachment theories which basically question the assertion of conventional psychoanalytical theories that the mother is the primary care-giver. It is the teachers who serve as primary care-givers, guides, path finders, friends as well as critics for the children with special needs--to Andrea Levy's *Small Island* focusing on the Postcolonial conflict of assimilation and identity through both the black and the white perspectives on the great immigration period of black people into England--to Mohsin Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* exploring how Muslim identity gets questioned collectively as a race, thus unjustifiably depriving them of the basic goodness of humans--to Harry Potter series alluding to the similarities between the ancient *Varna* System and the Sorting procedure based on the disposition of the learners and not the learner's ancestry--to Jayant Mahapatra's *Life Signs* and Mamta Kalia's *Tribute to Papa* negotiating the eternal conflict between the forces of tradition and modernity with sharp focus on the father-son and father-daughter relationship--to Anita Desai's *Fasting, Feasting* presenting water as a predominant symbol to portray subtle and deep emotional turmoil of her characters' desires, wishes, longings and dreams and their liberation from fears, confusions and dilemmas--to enunciation of Mao's Revolutionary Aesthetics in Ngugi's *The Black Hermit* and *I Will Marry When I Want*--to alienated subjectivities in Leslie Marion Silko's *Ceremony*--to discovering the viable use of modern day technology for training the students for developing communication skills for better employment prospects.

The present number is capped by Interviews with two emerging voices in Poetry and Fiction. Ms. Jasmine Anand interacted with Shabnam Kaur whose seven anthologies of verses catapulted her into limelight. Recalling her travails as a budding writer, Shabnam shares moments of dismay and fulfilment during her poetic odyssey which offers penetrating insights about her evolution as a poet who is conscious of a very intimate connection between her speaking and her writing voice, and articulates her passionate and powerful voice to represent all the real spaces inhabited by real women as against the unrealistic binaries that exist in patriarchal domains. Dr Ashoo Toor-Gill's Tête-à-tête with Dr N.K. Neb brings out the rigours of creativity, sensitivity and integrity which empower the writer to portray an array of emotions of convincing, living and breathing characters in *The Flooded Desert*.

The Review of Prof. Basavaraj Naikar's recent book on Nirad Chaudhury's creative *oeuvre* is another highlight of the current issue. Besides, the Poetry Column offers interesting vignettes of the current Indian English poetry through the seasoned poets as Prof. R.K. Bhushan and Dr. Lalit Mohan Sharma and the new voices of Dr. Manpreet K. Sodhi and Rohit Singh Bedi.

*Emerging Trends in Literature in 21st Century* will be the umbrella theme for March 2019 issue of *Literary Voice*.

**T. S. Anand**

## ***Vulcan Bides in Moonlight, the Poetics of Inner Altercations and Mythical Appreciation*** **A Dialogue with Shabnam Kaur**



*Shabnam Kaur* received a commendation prize at the All India Poetry Competition 2013 of the Poetry Society (India) for her poem 'Ode to English;' and the poems 'Ode to English' and 'Life and Death' were published in the 2014 poetry anthology of the Poetry Society (India), *Poetry India: Enchanting Echoes*. Her poems have also been published in the art and poetry magazines *Art Refurbish* and *The Machinery*. She has independently published seven collections of her poetry, and currently works as an Assistant Professor of English in Chandigarh, India.

*Mrs. Jasmine Anand*, M.C.M. D.A.V. College for Women, Chandigarh interacted with Shabnam Kaur to draw her out on her evolution as a poet, myriad influences on her poetic persona and her dilettantish flirtations with science and philosophy which inform her oeuvre.

**JA:** How did the anthology *Vulcan Bides in Moonlight* come together as a collection?

**SK:** The rudiments of *Vulcan Bides in Moonlight* go back to when I first started to find my poetic voice around 2012. I first started posting my poems publicly on Instagram in 2014 under the *noms de plume* 'Eurydice' and 'Vulcan.' While 'Eurydice' encapsulated the more tenuous and melancholic of my voices, 'Vulcan' represented the more ironic and intrepid of my voices. Giving myself *noms de plume* was just my way of distinguishing between and keeping a track of all the different poetic voices that were developing inside me. Although, I don't think that literary voice is necessarily a static thing, from that nebula of voices I chose to foreground 'Vulcan.' I borrowed the epithet from my readings of the works of the American astrologer Linda Goodman. She described Vulcan (a planet hypothesised to exist in an orbit in between Mercury and the Sun) as the true ruler of the sign Virgo (my sun sign), as against its current ad hoc ruler, Mercury. She proposed that the discovery of the planet Vulcan would affect the personality of Virgos, perhaps, making them bolder and less uptight. Vulcan is the Roman god of fire, volcanoes, and metalworking. To me, the name stood as a symbol of the inner fire and of the alchemy of destruction, transformation, and rebirth, of the continual process of changing and becoming. 'Vulcan' became a kind of *nom de guerre*, the war paint I smeared on before firing my words. It liberated and emancipated me from the confines of propriety, and allowed me to compose verses more freely. I had amassed a sizeable collection of poems by 2016, so I decided to publish them as five

Kindle ebooks. In 2017, I published these as paperbacks, plus two more volumes of poems. I have since withdrawn the ebooks from publication. At the end of 2017, I combined all seven volumes into a single anthology, *Vulcan Bides in Moonlight*.

**JA:** Did you encounter any surprises in the publishing process?

**SK:** I explored and studied all the different routes of publication before going down the path of print-on-demand self-publishing. There was much to learn along the way and surprises at every step, of course, since I was a tyro discovering the juggernaut of publishing piecemeal. It became clear very early on that traditional publishing was almost a non-existent option for unsolicited writers, and completely unheard of for poets. It was impossible to find a literary agent. The second route was paid publishing. There are many advantages of self-publishing your book through paid services, or of getting your book published through the paid-publishing branches of the traditional publishing houses, as everything from editing to marketing would be handled by professionals. But only if you have no pecuniary concerns. I did not have any money to pay for editing/formatting services or for full-blown paid-publishing services, and so that option went out the window very quickly too. My stint on Instagram gave me a glimpse of the world of indie publishers, chapbook and broadside publishers, that lay outside my reach. The U.S. is rife with a wide range of such indie and alternative publishing options, but there aren't many such options available in India, especially for English poetry. So, at last, Kindle Direct Publishing, came as a blessing. I did not hire any services for editing, formatting, or marketing, so the monetary investment on my part was zilch. But the same cannot be said of time. It was a long process of compiling, editing, and formatting my poems into various manuscripts. I did everything from scratch myself. And finally published them as ebooks, and later as paperbacks.

**JA:** Have you done anything to promote your anthology since publication?

**SK:** I did not hire any advertising services or promote my books in any big way. It was mostly word of mouth. I publicised them on Instagram, Tumblr, and Wordpress. Copies were mostly bought by my friends and by the followers of my poetry on social media in India as well as in the U.S.

**JA:** Since you do poetry readings, what is the relationship between your speaking voice and writing voice?

**SK:** I feel there is a very intimate connection between my speaking and my writing voice. Although, versification and intonation are complex and fluid processes, and there isn't always a correspondence between stylistic and grammatical punctuation. I would like to do more spoken poetry performance in the future, and I would also like to release audiobooks of my poetry books in the future.

**JA:** You are the author of 7 poetry collections. Do they get easier or harder as you go along?

**SK:** It becomes harder to maintain the novelty. But stylistically, it gets easier. Rhythms seem to fall into place less awkwardly.

**JA:** Are there any particular themes that draw your attention as a poet, things you feel you would like to write about?

**SK:** Yes, I feel passionately against the reluctance of our society to accord a woman an identity of her own which is not contingent on her father and her husband, and also against the denial of sexuality to women. I want to represent all the real spaces inhabited by real women (as against the unrealistic binaries that exist in patriarchal



domains). I want to incorporate this more into my poems and also to transition into other genres such as prose, stories, and maybe even novels.

**JA:** Do your poems tend to come out of books or people's life than out of your own life?

**SK:** The main ingredients are my personal experiences and the experiences of those around me and close to me, but the seasoning and condiments come from all that I have read and watched, from pop culture, and from music.

**JA:** Share something about your early influences- literary and musical that you feel have shaped your sensibility as a poet?

**SK:** My earliest influences come from the verses from Gurbani that my grandmother drilled into me and the stories of the Gurus that she told me at bedtime, and from the myriad of fairytales, folktales, and myths that I devoured as a child. My favourites were the sakhis of Guru Nanak with his companions Bala and Mardana, the Panchatantra, the Jataka, the fairytales of Hans Christian Andersen and the Grimm brothers, and Greek myths. Music is also very important to my process of writing poetry. I like to listen to music before writing poetry in order to imbibe rhythms so as to make my words flow in easier, less forced rhythms. I make many allusions to the songs I love and many titles of my poems are inspired from songs. These are a few among the many artists whose music and lyrics have influenced and shaped my poetry consciously and subconsciously, Bon Iver, Daughter, Ella Fitzgerald and Louis Armstrong, Kings of Leon, Arctic Monkeys, MØ.

**JA:** One amateur poet you know of and think more people should know of?

**SK:** I viscerally admire the writings of Aakriti Kuntal. I discovered her works on Instagram and was floored. Although there are many amazing poets on Instagram, it is very easy for their voices to be drowned out by the overwhelming sea of astoundingly mediocre and underwhelming pop poets with their bromide one-liners and unimpressive tautologies. The writings of Aakriti, among others, were very refreshing to me. She can be found on Instagram @blue\_hemisphere and on Wordpress at aakritikuntal.wordpress.com

**JA:** Which form of poetry do you practice? What attracts you to this form over others?

**SK:** I write in impressionistic montages. Most of them, I think, are a sort of word paintings lain bare before the reader to absorb and internalise as they will. The human brain and senses are very imprecise and yet very efficient. We create impressions by piecing together all the patches of information that we gather from our imperfect senses and our even more imperfect memories. It is all one giant patchwork of emotions and impressions. And my poems, I feel, are just a microcosm of that.

**JA:** Your poetry has many tropes from myths and science along with a philosophical bend. Has combination of poetry and philosophy helped you to see aspects of the world that others can't?

**SK:** Yes, I guess I do have a very metaphysical style. I have eclectic taste and a feverish curiosity of knowledge and my dilettantish flirtations with science, philosophy, etc. have seeped into my writings. But I would not be so vain as to presume that I have attained a higher vision, a third eye to set me apart from others. They are at best, probably, just the poetic *weltanschauungen* of an eccentric young woman.

**JA:** Love is often left out of the philosophical debates surrounding the emotions in juxtaposition to poetry. As there is confluence of emotions and philosophy in your poetry. What contributions do you think increased philosophical bend in your poetry

results in?

- SK:** Poetry and Philosophy are two sides of the same coin. And their goal is not the attainment of Truth. That is the job of Science. Poetry and Philosophy are the warp and woof which together weave a tapestry of life. And the beauty is that it can be any fabric one likes. It can flow like satin, or be staccato as cotton, or be highly textured like silk. The beauty and meaning lie solely in the act of weaving without the need to strive for some grand Truth or big solution. Poetry and Philosophy (and I count Religion/spirituality among these) are the small, personal consolations of life. Through these we build some sense out of the chaos of the overwhelming stimuli with which life provides us: our own little personal truths to help get us by.
- JA:** Poetry seems closely related to phonic and visual arts like music and painting than its immediate kin- prose, essay, drama. What do you have to say?
- SK:** Poetry is a numinous thing. One could think of it as an elusive noumenon which we try to concretise in the phenomena of verse, prose, drama, painting, etc. Poetry stands apart from all of these and yet is pervasive in all of them. But, I think you may be right when you say that poetry might be more kindred to music and painting than anything else. I've always thought that if I had been a decent artist (which I am not by a long margin) I would probably have liked to paint more than to write poetry. And if I'd had any training in music I'd have liked to be a singer-songwriter. There seems to be more immediacy of expression in these media. But my dream job would've been to be a comic-strip artist, wherein I could've perfectly blended wit and aesthetics in one perfect art-form.
- JA:** Every writer responds to the cultural milieu in which s/he exists. Which of your poems is specifically an attempt to showcase that?
- SK:** Yes, I think no good poet can help but be a reflection of their milieu, even if it might not be patent in their poetry at first glance. Even though I don't write explicitly political poetry, one's private politics, the deepest battles of one's soul seep in. As they should. To quote Emily Dickinson, "If I read a book and it makes my whole body so cold no fire can warm me, I know that is poetry. If I feel physically as if the top of my head were taken off, I know that is poetry. These are the only ways I know it. Is there any other way?" That is how poetry should move. It can only do that if it has sincerity. And it can only be sincere in that manner if it comes from a profound pain within one's soul. By sincerity I don't necessarily mean sincerity of tone. The tone can be ironic, humorous, or even facetious. But it must emerge from a deep spring of emotion within one's self. Many of my poems such as 'Aphrodite #WokeUpLykDis,' 'Black Light View,' 'Block Party in Three Acts,' 'Girls' Night,' 'Supermodel,' etc. satirise the artificiality of my generation: their obsession with looking a certain way, relentless partying, drinking irresponsibly, and appearing a certain way on social media, etc. While poems such as 'Cherokee Roses,' 'Jism,' 'Mulazim,' 'Photoshop Love,' 'Safety Razor,' 'Sink or Buoy' etc. talk of the taming, subjugation, and domestication of women's minds and bodies.
- JA:** A Punjabi girl on a travel trail due to your father's job position, do you find any seeds of inspiration in Punjab's culture and its ethos?
- SK:** I have hardly lived in Punjab. And I regret not having been closer to my mother tongue. Very early in life it was replaced with my foster mother-tongue--English. But this foster mother has been kind to me and given me more joys than I could've imagined. My main link with my mother-tongue (Punjabi) and my culture was my paternal

grandmother. And even though I grew apart from the culture, religion, and language of my ancestors in many ways, I always tried to preserve the nexus with my grandmother. Just as English was a substitute mother-tongue to me, my grandmother was a substitute mother. I have paid her tribute in many poems. And she is a permanent part of me. A part I will always hold on to. I would like to quote my poem 'Zifr,' which reflects all these sentiments:

“Grandmother stands  
A bovine behemoth  
With asexual teats,  
The nourishment of a race,  
Flowing through generations' veins,  
A cow bent of age  
But sacred, always sacred  
Even in her puerility,  
Venerable and white -  
Toupee to whiskers to womb,  
All bled out.  
Eighty seven years of imbibed ink  
Has not fatigued her grey grooves  
And yet she frets when  
She can't remember  
A telephone number.  
Grandmother, I don't have a single  
Telephone number on my tongue,  
And you have the mnemonic burden  
Of nearing nine decades!  
Let it go, grandmother!  
You always said:  
'If only I'd learnt two more letters of the alphabet . . .'  
And taught me a hundred alien words  
In the grandmother of my mother tongue  
To recite in thanksgiving of an Alien.  
Rest easy, grandmother.  
You have doled Flesh and Word.  
You have served my Alien well.”

**JA:** Your major chunk of poetry came into being when you shifted to Chandigarh. Has 'City Beautiful' coloured your writing metaphorically or tone wise?

**SK:** It was when I was living and studying in Guwahati that I first started producing copious poetry. I think there was a darker and more melancholy atmosphere to those poems (some bordering on moroseness), maybe because of the overcast sky, damp air, mossy walls, and dense vegetation. I think I developed a lighter, more ironic tone after moving to Chandigarh. Even though it was Guwahati that kindled the poet in me, it was Chandigarh that brought me more into my own element. Chandigarh was where I was born; it has and will always be in my blood. When I was a child, my father would tell me the names of the plants and birds that can be found in the city and our evening walks in the city's gardens are particularly memorable to me. I think I imbibed these

into some of my poetry.

**JA:** Do 'Alchemical Soul' and 'Red and Green' as individual poems from your anthology coincide somewhere?

**SK:** 'Alchemical Soul' and 'Red and Green' come from completely diverse places. 'Alchemical Soul' is my idiosyncratic derivation of the Jungian philosophy of Individuation. Whereas, 'Red and Green' is about the grittiness of womanhood, and my own personal philosophy of how Nature, women, and poetry are imbued with the same spirit of wild abandonment:

“ . . . you have to be a woman  
Or a butcher to really know  
The smell of rust;  
That iron is the element  
Of life, and love, and labour –  
The green of the flora,  
The red of the fauna;  
They only see how you bleed,  
They cannot see  
It is the young and vital  
That bleed, that rust . . . ”

**JA:** What made you experiment with haiku, tell me something about your writing experience of the seven you wrote?

**SK:** I don't remember how and when I first became acquainted with the haiku. But, haiku, senryu, and tanka, came to represent to me perfectly the very gist of the art of poetry, which is its epigrammatic economy and sublime terseness. I have written many haiku but decided to publish only a handful because I am not yet satisfied in my art of writing haiku. I hope to get better at it and publish more of them in the future. Of the seven that I have published my favourite is:

“I will always trace  
On divesting walls, and tea-  
Cup bottoms, your face.”

**JA:** Your anthology is mostly about love and contemporary visceral outbursts looming around philosophy or having latin titles. But amidst them there is a sprinkle of few hindustani titles like 'Jism,' 'Mulazim,' 'Numaish,' 'Mandala,' and 'Sunya,' any specific motivation behind them or their weave as a thought?

**SK:** Words are delicious things, each with a rich, flavourful aura of its own. The titles come into my head – and they come from diverse languages (Hindustani, Punjabi, Latin, Greek, Japanese, French, Spanish)–and just compel themselves into existence. Probably because of my fascination with etymology since childhood.

**JA:** Which are your favourite poems? Tell me something about their making?

**SK:** I feel a sense of ineffability about describing the process of their composition and it would be exhausting to attempt to do so, but I can name some of my favourites: 'Absolution,' 'Alchemical Soul,' 'Andreiphronesia,' 'Arctic Dreams,' 'Bequest,' 'Betrothal,' 'Borodino,' 'Catechism,' 'Chronicity,' 'Crackle Till We Pop,' 'Decade,' 'Dogbane,' 'Eurydice and Orpheus,' 'Ex Nihilo, Ad Nihilo,' 'Holiday,' 'Jism,' 'La Vie En Rose,' 'Lycanthropisation,' 'Obsianus Lapis,' 'Ouroboros,' 'Pacific,' 'Scavenging for Love,' 'Schrödinger's Cat,' 'Spontaneous Combustion,' 'Taper,' 'Term at School,' 'To My

Animus,' 'Tranche de Vie,' 'Turgid,' 'Vegetable,' 'Verglas and Vener,' 'Westerly,' 'Wonderland,' 'Zifr,' 'Zombies and Crows'.

**JA:** Does knowing that your poems are published and out there in the world validate your being a poet or are you content knowing they're out of your system?

**SK:** No, publication does not validate them. In this context I'd like to share one of my favourite quotes from Haruki Murakami's *Kafka on the Shore* because I cannot put it better myself, "The process of writing was important. Even though the finished product is completely meaningless." In the end it doesn't mean much. I don't know where the words come from and how important the medium, that is the poet, really is. The autocorrect on your phone could string words into sequence, and humans, with their apophenic and hermeneutic tendencies, would find a way to analyse and validate even that as poetry/literature. I wish I had a more optimistic message, but in the end I don't really know what it amounts to. Although, I'm glad I put these poems out there for those to whom it may bring some enjoyment or solace accordingly as it pleases them. I would like to quote from Sir Philip Sidney's *Astrophil and Stella*:

"'Art not ashamed to publish thy disease?'

...

'What idler thing, than speak and not be heard?  
What harder thing than smart, and not to speak?

...

Thus I write while I doubt to write . . ."

**JA:** What do you see as the role of poet in modern day society?

**SK:** In my opinion, poetry has no grand role to play. It is the opposite of pragmatics. I believe in art for art's sake, and poetry for poetry's sake. It is a state of structured abandonment, a controlled wilderness, a reigned madness. Not quite chaos, and not quite civilisation. It is the delicate balance in between, feared both by the madman and the pragmatic, but basked in by the artist, the poet, and the musician. The role of the poet is to shake us free from the fetters of language manifested in the many registers and codes proper to the different modes in civilised society, ironically through the music of language itself.

**JA:** What will be your piece of advice to the budding poets?

**SK:** My advice to budding poets is to recognise what poetry-writing means to them and to act accordingly. We live in blessed times where there are endless opportunities. You can choose to write with many different purposes. You can compose poems just for the sheer love of composing and remain true to your voice, no matter how niche, or you may choose to span your wings and soar to the horizons of fame and glory, even if it means tailoring your words to the popular demands of an audience/readership. There is no shame in either. But one must first know what one wants. You could write poetry on sticky notes and leave them in public places for random people to read, you could use the medium of poetry for political activism, you could post your poems on social media, or send them out to literary magazines, you could have personal readings for friends and family, or just secret them in your journal for your own private eyes only, or aim big and get your poems published as a book. Sky's the limit!

## A Tête-à-tête with Dr N.K. Neb



*Dr. N.K. Neb, an Associate Professor of English, D.A.V. College, Jalandhar and Editor-in-Chief of Pragati, a bi-annual literary journal, has authored Culture in Transition: A Study of Contemporary Indian-English Fiction; Contemporary Literary Criticism: A Select Study and Insight; and A Critical Study of the Poetry of Kulbhushan Kushal, and edited critical works on various facets of Indian English literature. With the publication of his maiden novel, **The Flooded Desert**, he has emerged as a potent new voice in the burgeoning pantheon of Indian English novel. Driven with a passion to weave stories out of feelings that often lie buried in human consciousness, he has captured in words an array of emotions of convincing, living and breathing characters who wrestle with the dilemmas of life and complexities of human relationships.*

*Dr Ashoo Toor-Gill of Punjab Agriculture University, Ludhiana, in a Tête-à-tête with Dr NK Neb, brings out the rigours of creativity and the sensitivity and integrity which empower the writer to portray the complexities of human relationships.*

**Toor:** It is amazing that with all your preoccupations, you found the time to write an exquisitely powerful narrative. What factors initiated you into the literary world?

**N.K.Neb:** In fact, everyone has his or her preoccupations that keep one busy in routine things. Despite all this, our interest in certain things makes us find time for them. It is my inherent liking for literature and the way it adds to our perception of the world around that has initiated me into the literary world.

**Toor:** The role of a writer is to shine light into the darker crevices of the society, raising awareness, calling them to action. Which vices have you aimed to bring to the front?

**N.K.Neb:** My attempt in this novel has been to draw attention to the vices in our society that threaten basic human goodness. The novel touches a number of social problems. However, it focuses mainly on the discriminations prompted by caste, class and gender inequality. It also exposes the evil of commercialization of religion and the way it is being used for purposes other than the spiritual. A heightened sense of individual success that makes people insensitive to human relationships along with a misplaced sense of values that tends to displace established social code, form another thematic concern of the novel.

**Toor:** A male author and a female protagonist! What prompted you to delineate a woman's story from a sympathetic male point of view?

**N.K.Neb:** Every sensitive person is alive to the problems faced by the oppressed and the miserable people. The sympathy of such a person is not limited to men or women. I feel, the sympathetic point of view that emerges in the novel is related to men also. There are men like Gurnek, Anamika's husband, who suffer due to the over ambitious and selfish behaviour of women. As the narrative is mainly concerned with the lot of the female protagonist, it may give the impression that it is sympathetic to women only.

**Toor:** Do you think your book is a statement on the awakened feminist consciousness?

**N.K.Neb:** The novel brings out how women are gradually becoming aware of their right to freedom and equality in society. It also fictionalizes the way new found sense of liberty coupled with the introduction of liberal laws and changes in the material reality, have brought a change in the world around. In doing so, the purpose is to register the way women respond to these new developments and not to make a statement on the awakened or awakening feminist consciousness.

**Toor:** One cannot miss the dominant tone of conflict, an exploration in the novel. Would you agree that through Devika, the female self is on a voyage, an exploration of the new self?

**N.K.Neb:** The novel traces a middle class traditional Indian woman Devika's journey from her oppressed position in a society deaf to her expectations and rights as a woman to a world of freedom and new possibilities. Her path is replete with external and internal conflicts. All her actions and the behaviour of a number of other women in the novel come forth as a voyage for a new self for women. As the narrative unfolds, it also reveals the limitations and implications that entail women's search for a life free from all forms of oppression and suppression. The uncertainty informing Devika's life certainly points out female self's search for a viable new self instead of a well defined goal.

**Toor:** Do you feel that patriarchy resides more solidly in Punjabi matriarchs?

**N.K.Neb:** Patriarchy, I believe, is not limited to any specific region or society. It marks its presence almost in all corners of the world in one way or the other. As my novel is situated in Punjab, it concentrates on the aspects of Punjabi life that inform a role of the matriarchs in perpetuating the hold of patriarchy. It should not lead us to presume that patriarchy resides more emphatically in the Punjabi matriarchs only.

**Toor:** Do you feel that the chick-lit women of the new women's cult are making a mockery of their new found liberated status?

**N.K.Neb:** The way some of the modern women characters in the novel indulge in strange and startling ways of life, no doubt, makes one feel that these highly liberated women are making a mockery of their new found freedom. There are women in the novel who celebrate leaving their family and husband just for the sake of selfish pleasure or to lead more luxurious life. They do such things in the name of women's liberation. But at the same time their behaviour can also be treated as a mark of their protest against male hegemony. It is for the reader to decide and make his/her own opinion.

**Toor:** In the light of the dynamics of the social change, what is your message to Gen-X?

**N.K.Neb:** The novel, I think you will agree with me, does not carry a particular message for the people in clear and direct terms. I personally feel that the change in the world around us involves a shift in our understanding of values. It implies that we have to adopt a liberal outlook for a better adjustment in the new world. It should not make Generation X, think that the values have disappeared altogether. Therefore, while making attempts to succeed in life, they have to be conscious of their responsibility towards society also. We are and have to be answerable to our family and society. We cannot ignore them to achieve individual success and happiness. A reckless pursuit of luxuries and individual success is not going to provide true happiness.

**Toor:** What do you augur for the coming times? Can we anticipate gender equality on the pattern of the West which we are so keen to ape?

**N.K.Neb:** To me, the concept of equality is related to the way we make sense of life. It relates to the cultural reality of the society. Our own culture has already been impacted by the western culture to a large extent. But aping or mimicking a culture is different from developing that culture. We are proud of our centuries old culture that propagates a life of accommodations and adjustments providing room for gender equality. I think we neither can nor should try to follow the west in matters related to gender equality.

**Toor:** The most striking feature of your narrative style in *The Flooded Desert* comes out in the form of evocative details. Did you evolve these elements with some particular purpose and do you think they have served the purpose?

**N.K.Neb:** The matters related to narrative structure and other features of the style in the novel I feel, are more a concern of the critics. They are to examine how and what purpose these details serve and whether they function as an effective narrative device or not. However, as a creative writer I have my own views about fiction and other modes of creative writing. My understanding is that recitative value is a fundamental feature of poetry that adds to its charm and makes poetic creations effective and artistic. In the same way, evocative details and picturesque narration add to the romance of reading fiction. These elements extend the process of writing fiction from mere telling of a story to creating it in the mind of the reader.

At the same time, let me add, the inclusion of such details is something spontaneous and not calculated and planned deliberately. Seen from this perspective, you may consider it a characteristic feature of my narrative style and associate with my natural ability to do so.

**Toor:** You have mentioned in the dedication that the people of your village move around in the novel 'in the form of different characters'. Does it mean that the fictional characters in your novel represent the real people of your village?

**N.K.Neb:** I really did expect this question from an avid reader and critic. Of course, the characters in this fictional narrative bear some resemblance with the people with whom I have lived for more than 25 years. This novel is, in fact, a result of my close observation of the people around and the life experienced with them. But it is not a representation of their life in fictional terms. In fact, some of their whims



and fancies helped me imagine different details to weave a fictional narrative. Apart from this, the specific traits of the characters, particularly from the rural background, that I have depicted are not exclusively limited to them only. Consequently, these people don't remain individuals and become representatives of a large section of Indian society.

**Toor:** What do you think to be the mark of success of a work of art, particularly novel?

**N.K.Neb:** First of all, I consider it a very complex question that involves a number of things before we reach a final answer. The success or failure has to be judged from some particular perspective. A work of art that does not qualify for some award or fails to achieve the mark of sales may not be treated as successful, if we treat these things as the parameters for judgement. Even this kind of judgement involves two different frameworks for judgement.

So far as I am concerned, I think the main purpose of a fiction writer is to engage the reader in creative pastime. The reader, first of all, has to spare his time to go through the whole book. And the work of art that succeeds in engaging the reader achieves the first significant mark of success. The message of the book, if any, its artistic achievements and the impact it may have on sensitizing the people to different social issues form another set of perspectives to judge the success of writing.

**Toor:** Should we expect a sequel to the novel? Will you weave a new tale on our contemporary times?

**N.K.Neb:** At present, I'm not sure whether it will be possible for me to write a sequel to this novel. However, I keep on thinking about the things presented in *The Flooded Desert*. I hope it takes some concrete shape.

## More English than English History, Memory and the Aggregate of *The Remains...*

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What exactly are the memories of a nation? Where are they kept? How are they shaped and controlled?

Kazuo Ishiguro

In an early interview post *The Remains of the Day*, Ishiguro talks of the inherent irony about a young Japanese looking writer with a Japanese name writing a super-English, a “more English than English” novel. The “more English than English” is an interesting claim. It is obviously a claim by someone whose Englishness is not natural, but acquired. In this case a cultural outsider, writing about a bygone generation. *The Remains of the Day* illustrates how contexts, cultures and histories are not by definition domains of interrogation for those who *always already* belong; how they can be learnt, inhabited and comprehended; and most importantly, how fiction can effectively create an artifice of a “more English than English” Englishness even if it is borne of a sensibility other than English.

Apart from his stated position as the cultural outsider, Ishiguro claims a position of alterity vis-à-vis what he calls the mythic tradition of the quintessential Englishness of a bygone era in *The Remains of the Day*. His creation is as credible and as rich in detail as Fowles' *The French Lieutenant's Woman*, but unlike the latter he does not consciously unravel his pastiche in terms of direct interventions. The ironies in this case, are unraveled through implied inferences rather than direct statements.

*The Remains of the Day* locates itself in the late 1940s and it unfolds as a first-person account of the reminiscences of Mr. Stevens, former butler to the influential Lord Darlington, whom he serves for over thirty years. He is currently retained in his position by the new owner of Darlington estate, the American millionaire Mr. Farraday. Stevens lives his life ensconced in the environs of the Darlington estate through the two most tumultuous decades in English history, the period between the two world wars and after. Conversations influencing England's foreign policy, especially in terms of its appeasement of Germany in wake of the Versailles treaty take place well within his earshot while he serves his master and the latter's guests. He focusses on his work, and considers the gentlemen's conversations a distraction he cannot afford. He lives the prime of his life, serving an order of authority, witnessing momentous decisions and a dramatic change of guard. He ostensibly, refuses to even attempt making any sense of it for himself. All that goes on around him is displaced by an obsession for staff plans, impeccably polished silver and

perfectly hosted dinners. The same applies to his personal life. He cannot even bring himself to have a conversation with the woman he loves, unless there is a perfectly legitimate professional reason for it.

Naturally then, this butler is a curious chronicler: articulate yet diffident, eager yet unwilling. Much of the obfuscation in the narrative and the often discussed 'unreliability' of the narrator is assumed to result from Stevens' misplaced sense of dignity and loyalty. One could, however, argue that the obfuscation is deliberate but it emanates not from the will to mislead but from his sense of guilt over his own limitations. His entire personality is characterized in terms of a consistent, deliberate denial and withholding. This thematic trope is iterated in the narrative strategy. The narrative works through reluctant admissions and deliberate silences. Conversations are cryptic and often suspended, and meanings, held back. The story unfolds retrospectively, through reminiscence: a lot has already happened, or perhaps not. All that is eventually left is to glean memories for the remains.

Embedded in the mesh of Stevens' private, selective memories, lies the explosive subtext of the political discourse in the countdown to World War II, much of which is influenced by what transpires in the corridors of Darlington Hall. While most references to the political situation are studiously avoided and sidestepped; the compelling subtext erupts into the text time and again, exposing the narrator's discomfiture and reticence.

*The Remains of the Day* is a novel about memory and history, and as such, it is an intervention in collective memory, about an aberration in British history. It deals with how collective memory is constituted and explores the gaps between what James L. Lang calls "public memories and private histories". As it pushes the boundaries of a more or less unanimous public memory, it reveals the uneven, messy edges of a difficult bit of history.

The novel is about the world of old school English gentlemen, their political naiveté, and the quality and content of their influence in the build up to the second world war. Ishiguro picks Darlington, an extinct earldom title from British peerage for his 'mythic' order of England. The title Darlington per se, has historic significance and association, but not in the time frame that Ishiguro picks for his novel. The Lord, speculatively, could be modelled on Wilfrid Ashley, 1<sup>st</sup> Baron of Mount Temple, in that the latter was also a World War I veteran, who believed that the treaty of Versailles was unfair and ought to be revised. He was known to be close to Herr Ribbentrop, and in a particular instance was also referred to as an 'amateur' in politics and a 'particularly silly one.'

Among Lord Darlington's visitors and friends are Herr Ribbentrop, Lady Nancy Astor, Lord Halifax, Sir Oswald Mosley, Bernard Shaw and indeed Sir Winston Churchill. All these characters are based on historical personages. Joachim von Ribbentrop was appointed the German ambassador to Britain in 1936 by Hitler, who expected him to broker an Anglo-German alliance. Ribbentrop interacted with English aristocracy and politicians, many of whom believed his claim that Germany wanted only peace, and for that it needed to strengthen itself. Ribbentrop tried to ingratiate himself to King Edward, hoping to get him to dictate the British parliament about the alliance. When none of this materialized, he turned a rabid British hater and drafted a charter for Hitler denouncing England as Germany's enemy number one. Lady Nancy Astor, Viscountess Astor, was the first woman MP in Britain to take her seat. She was one of the founders of the much-maligned Cliveden

Set and heavily involved in the German appeasement policy. Lord Halifax (Edward Wood, 1<sup>st</sup> Earl of Halifax) was British foreign secretary between 1938 to 1940, also one of the main architects of the appeasement policy. Sir Oswald Mosley, baronet, was another WWI veteran turned politician who in the thirties founded the British Union of Fascists. He had a strident if tumultuous career. After WWII, he was interned, but never criminally charged, just as none of the other British fascists were. His political career was, however, finished. Sir Winston Churchill the British PM between 1940-45. He was a statesman, army officer and was considered by Halifax as the right PM candidate to lead Britain into the war. Churchill interestingly favoured brokering peace between Germany and France in the 1920s, but by 1931 began to oppose Germany's rearmament. He is also said to have held very ambiguous views on Fascism. The text also mentions writer George Bernard Shaw as one of the guests hosted by Lord Darlington, and Shaw's presence in such a group may be attributed to his friendship with Lady Astor, with whom he differed considerably on most matters despite his friendship.

The reason this rather unlikely crowd of varied political persuasions and agenda was perhaps linked together at one particular historical moment, was the fact that they all influenced England's appeasement policy towards Germany in their own ways. What brings them together in the space of the text in their very own names, is perhaps the idea that in a historical moment, when things are transitioning rapidly, a lot of the people who support something like the appeasement are not necessarily Nazi sympathizers or anti-Semitic, Hitler supporters. Some genuinely believe that the Versailles treaty gave Germany a very raw deal. Some are genuinely taken in by the propaganda of Ribbentrop and his allies.

The text illustrates how the idea of Britain as a unified, principled opposition to Nazi Germany is more of a post WW II myth. This myth, in order to succeed needs to cast all identifiable German sympathizers in Britain as some kind of traitors responsible for Britain's entry into the War, which is what happens in the case of Lord Darlington. Judgements can draw neat lines, but living through difficult times can be fairly confusing. Such judgements, especially the overwhelmingly unanimous ones, are retrospectively constructed. In the flux of 'now', things are a lot less certain, especially when one is manipulated and misled, or doesn't know enough.

The text captures the resonances and complexities of the historical moment with remarkable cryptic brevity, in a matter of some stray suggestions and passing references. This is managed, as stated earlier, largely by turning the entire historical context and the people in it into a subtext in Stevens' story. The inherent irony in the text at one level, is simply this subordination of a historically enormous narrative to the private narrative of an ordinary man, who remains by and large invisible in a grand house. He is the ordinary, left-over surplus, representing the legions of the invisible and unnoticed underclass, which constitutes the before-and-beyond of the momentous histories that it lives through and survives. His reticence robs this public, historic narrative of its enormous volubility.

Stevens' own personal narrative is mediated and typified by the larger narratives not of his choosing. His personal choices, or the lack thereof, deserve some consideration. His abject surrender to the paternalistic, aristocratic order of significance, represented both

by his father and Lord Darlington is so complete, and his sense of identity is so reliant on his role and his perception of it; that it has no space for any other kind of subjectivity. He is gentleman's gentleman: and that's it. Obsessed as he is with notions of discipline and dignity, he fails to see them for the entrapments they are. These much-haloed notions are simply so because the slightest letting up would be completely disruptive to his sense of self and indeed survival. He is a butler, and acquiescence is the first condition of his existence. He does not necessarily lack the imagination to contemplate a different life, he just knows how severely limited his chances are.

Mr. Stevens' father, William Stevens is supposed to have been a legendary butler in his fifty four years of service. It has been his entire life and his legacy. Stevens admires his father, demands that due deference be paid to him, but he has no relationship with him. He cannot even manage to address him directly. Mr. Stevens chooses his work above tending to his dying father, claiming that his father would want him to.

Lord Darlington is his former lord and master. He is a well-meaning gentleman but his political gullibility has very serious consequences. Stevens' lifelong ambition has been to serve him well, so that he might vicariously fulfil his role in the affairs of the world. Stevens judges Lord Darlington purely on the merit of his personal 'honour'. He chooses not to question him ever. Not when he is asked to dismiss the Jewish girls employed in housekeeping, nor when Reginald Cardinal warns him about how the Nazis are manipulating him.

His relationship with Miss. Kenton is flawed from the beginning. He admires her as a professional, likes her a great deal, but does not allow himself the liberty of admitting his feelings. Miss Kenton is more forthright and less obsessive, hence she can see the limitations of his aging father; know a decision taken by Lord Darlington to be wrong when it is so; and act on her feelings for Stevens himself since she likes him. "Why, Mr. Stevens, why, why, why do you always have to pretend?" (162), Miss. Kenton asks him in a moment of exasperation, wondering why he could not admit to being distressed about Ruth and Sarah's dismissals; but pretend he must in keeping with his dignity.

Journey is an important trope in the narrative in the exploration of the nature of alterity: Journey into Englishness by a supposed cultural outsider; journey back to a time of old school English gentlemen; and finally the journey Stevens undertakes beyond the pale of Darlington Hall. Stevens embarks on a journey outside of Darlington Hall, with the ostensible purpose of bringing back the suitable housekeeper without whom he is lost. The vacation however also involves confronting the vast heterotopia that lies without. Interestingly, he barely confronts this heterotopia even when it confronts him. He is clearly distressed by the prospect of extensive conversations. All his avowed pride in his position vis-à-vis that of his former master, captured in detail in reflection after reflection throughout the journey, withers away in the face of the slightest scrutiny. Stevens is not himself here. For all his notions of greatness and dignity, his interactions reveal how utterly inadequate he feels when dealing with people as equals. He has trouble omitting 'sir' in his conversations with other men.

The insularity of Stevens' assumed old school Englishness, entrenched in dignity and loyalty is thrown in sharp relief to the emergent, modern, democratic, politically

conscious Englishness at large. The text illustrates how the highly constraining circumstances of a butler's profession must inevitably lead to utterly circumscribed individual perceptions. For instance, the spirited Harry Smith at Mascombe village suggests that dignity for ordinary people is to be found in their willingness to voice their opinions and in accepting their responsibility to vote. Stevens simply cannot understand how that can be of value to ordinary village folk.

The journey culminates in the seaside town of Weymouth, where Stevens is scheduled to meet Miss. Kenton. For all his obsession with the woman, he is his formal, dignified self when she is actually before him, addressing her at all times as Mrs. Benn. She makes an effort to reach out to him, but is met with the same studied distance that drove her away in the first place. She admits to having left Darlington purely to annoy him, and that her discontent may be resulting from the knowledge that her life might have been different if she had been with him. Stevens for a while, says nothing to her, but makes the following confession to himself: "Indeed – why should I not admit it? -- at that moment, my heart was breaking." (252) He nonetheless collects himself and bids her goodbye, with wishes of health and happiness, and almost the promise that they would never meet again.

It is after this unhappy closure, that he breaks down before a complete stranger and eventually brings himself to reveal his identity as butler to Lord Darlington of the Darlington Hall. In his lengthiest testimony ever, he speaks of his former master and himself in the following way:

Lord Darlington wasn't a bad man. He wasn't a bad man at all. And at least he had the privilege of being able to say at the end of his life that he made his own mistakes.

...

As for myself, I cannot even claim that. You see, I *trusted*. I trusted in his Lordship's wisdom. All those years I served him, I trusted I was doing something worthwhile. I can't even say I made my own mistakes. Really – one has to ask oneself – what dignity is there in that? (255-56).

Stevens, in this moment of revelation realizes that in his quest of fulfilling his duties and minding his place, he abdicated all his responsibility to think and act individually.

Yet, it is not this depressive note on which Steven ends his reflections. He contemplates the beautiful Weymouth evening by the illumined pier, notices the casual banter among the people gathered, picks himself again and decides to instruct himself in the art of bantering so that he may amuse his new master better. That may be his tragedy, but that is also his redemption. His resilience is the pre-condition for his survival, true; but this survivor, having confronted the sum total of his judgement's failure, has stumbled upon a new attitude. He looks forward to cultivating bantering for amusement now. The idea of implicit *Trust* is not part of the equation any more.

#### Notes and References

From Kazuo Ishiguro's Nobel speech, available online at [www.nobelprize.org](http://www.nobelprize.org).

Kazuo Ishiguro was awarded the Man Booker for *The Remains of the Day*, first published by Faber and Faber in 1969. The edition used in this article is the 2005 Faber and Faber reprint.

All subsequent references are to this edition.

Ishiguro in an interview with Allan Vorda and Kim Herzinger states "It's like a pastiche where I've tried to create a mythical England. Sometimes it looks like or has the tone of a very English book, but actually I am using that as a shock tactic of this relatively young person with a Japanese name and a Japanese face who produces this extra English novel, or perhaps I should say, a super English novel. It is more English than English." 138-139

Issues of narration are explored by Katheleen Wall's "*The Remains of the Day* and its challenges to Unreliable Narration" and Zuzana Foniokova's "The Butler's Suspicious Dignity: Unreliable Narration in Kazuo Ishiguro's *The Remains of the Day*".

Ishiguro in the interview with Allan Vorda and Kim Herzinger remarks: "The language I use tends to be the sort that actually suppresses meaning and tries to hide away meaning rather than chase after something just beyond the reach of words. I am interested in the way words hide meaning" 135-136.

James M. Lang "Public Memory, Private History: Kazuo Ishiguro's *The Remains of the Day*"

Robert Vansittart the Foreign office Under Secretary, noted in a memo that neither the Prime Minister nor the Secretary of State should meet Lord Mount Temple. He complained of the "eternal butting in by amateurs" like the Lord in question as quoted by Geoffrey Waddington in "'An Idyllic and Unruffled Atmosphere of Complete Anglo-German Misunderstanding': Aspects of the Operation of the *Dienststelle Ribbentrop* in Great Britain 1934-1939" pp. 59-60.

The Cliveden set refers to a largely aristocratic, politically influential group of individuals, who were believed to have sought friendly relations with Nazi Germany in the aftermath of World War I, and were responsible for the German appeasement policy. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cliveden\\_set](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cliveden_set).

The general information cited about all the above personages has been picked from *Encyclopedia Britannica* entries and in one or two cases a Wikipedia entry. The citations for all the references are individually listed in the references.

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## Interdependence of Land and the Embodied Soul: A study of J M Coetzee's *Life and Times of Michael K*

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Cheryll Goltfelty, in her introduction to *The Ecocriticism Reader* insists that “all ecological criticism share the fundamental premise that human culture is connected to the physical world, affecting it and affected by it. Ecocriticism takes as its subject the interconnectedness between nature and culture . . .” (xix).

From the outset, ecocriticism was characterized by the desire to preserve the radical impulse which propelled the early Environmentalist movement. Over the past decade, however, ecocriticism has acquired all the leanings of literary and cultural studies. Though in a larger framework it has failed to develop a cultural theory distinctly its own, it has fairly compensated for this lack by a set of ethico-political commitments that lend a sufficient amount of programmatic coherence to the whole enterprise. In the field of environmental ethic two major approaches are being followed. The first argues for the preservation and management of the environment to satisfy human wants and survival needs. A second more radical environmental ethic is to consider the interests of the environment and the non-humans when taking actions that may affect them, independently of the consequences to humans. The ethic that has developed as a result of this viewpoint is articulated in Leopold's land ethic maxim: “A thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability and beauty of the biotic community. It is wrong when it tends to otherwise” (217). In this perspective the whole is important morally and not just the parts that make it.

First documented in 1949, land ethic rests on two scientific cornerstones, namely evolutionary, and ecological biology set in the background of Copernican astronomy. Evolutionary theory provides the conceptual link between ethics and social organization and development. It provides a sense of kinship with the fellow creatures in the journey of evolution, thus developing a diachronic link between the humans and the others. Ecological theory builds a synchronic link, thereby advocating social integration of humans and nature. The Copernican perspective of earth being a small planet in the scheme of universe reinforces the sense of community and interdependence with fellow denizens of the planet. Mainstream ethical theories have been psychocentric; they have been radically and intractably individualistic or atomistic in their fundamental theoretical orientation. However, in the face of recent ecological developments, these theories have been losing their ground. Land Ethic advocates an ethic that facilitates social cooperation, larger inclusiveness and a symbiotic relationship with earth; where the health of the human race is dependent on the health of the land. Donald Worster explains, “We are facing a global crisis today, not because of how ecosystems function but rather because of how our ethical systems function. Getting through the crisis requires understanding our impact on nature as

precisely as possible, understanding to reform them." *The Wealth of Nature: Environmental History and the Ecological Imagination*. (Pg 6)

During a long history of colonization, the relationship between land, animals and African tribes had undergone many twist and turns. The use and misuse of land for mining and agriculture by the Europeans had created a breach of trust towards land in the minds of African tribes. Their sacred land had conspired with the colonizers to oust them from their original homes. This distrust still stalks the present day South Africa, one that is enduring grave threats in the form of illegal acquisition of genetic materials by multinational corporations; excessive deforestation to meet the Western demands of timber; uprooting of local people and soil to accommodate tourist 'footprints' and variable climatic conditions making survival impossible.

J. M. Coetzee's literary style is an attempt to defeat the possibility of western ideologist hegemony. He tries to stimulate genuine ethical thought in other people, while attempting to defeat any ersatz ethical posturing in his reader. He positions himself as the voice of the protagonist, gradually insinuating his ecological thought in the mid of the reader. His works highlight a future possibility of environmentalism in forms of an ethics of ecological diversity that aims to maintain multispecies interconnectedness and encourage multispecies considerateness.

His novel's eco-ethical thrust is clear from the start. Michel K is a gardener who works for the "Parks and Garden division of the Municipal services of the City of Cape Town as a gardener, Grade 3 (b)" (4). He is among the deprived and the less privileged people of South Africa, constantly being rebuked and reprimanded for their poverty. To avoid the perils of Civil War, he finds refuge in the expansion of nature. He, along with his sick mother Anna K move to a farm in Prince Albert, fleeing from a future South Africa torn by Civil War where "the careless violence, the packed buses, the food queues, arrogant shopkeepers, thieves and beggars, siren in the night, the curfew, the cold and wet" spoil people's lives. They return to the country side where "if she was going to die, she would at least die under the blue skies" (8). She does die on the way and K proceeds to the farm with her cremated ashes. He is detained for a time in a labour camp and then arrives at the farm, located near the town of Prince Albert. He buries his mother's ashes on the farm, taking the earth as his symbolic mother, and begins his life as a vegetable gardener. This existence is disrupted by the arrival of a grandson of the farm's owner, who attempts to make K his servant. K hides in the mountains, barely surviving by eating roots and insects. Near starvation, he walks to Prince Albert and is arrested and taken to Jakkalsdrif, a resettlement camp. K escapes and returns to the farm in Prince Albert to cultivate a new crop of pumpkins and melons. This time, his task of cultivation is disrupted by the arrival of a small revolutionary force from the mountains, though K remains undetected. He lives in a burrow in the earth, planting and tending his garden at night. Again near starvation, K is discovered and arrested by soldiers who mistakenly assume he has been supplying food to rebel guerrillas. K is interned in the Kenilworth camp and is taken care of by a military officer who becomes obsessed with K and attempts to impose charity upon him. K passively resists until he escapes from the camp. Later, Michael K encounters some pimps and whores who also treat him as an object of charity. Alone at the end, K envisions a scene in which he helps a derelict old man obtain water from a water puddle with the help of a spoon by saying "one

can live" (184)

A predominant motif in the novel is the protagonist's strong association with Nature. Coetzee uses the metaphor of place (land) to lend multiple connotations to the character of Michael K. The journey that K undertakes is a journey not only into the heart of South Africa but also a journey into the heart of his self. His need to connect with the wilderness of Prince Albert is a way of overcoming his feelings of alienation and otherness imposed on him by the civilized world. Robert Haas, an ecocritic claims, "The basis for genuine ecological understanding, lies in the local" (*Sense of Place* 28). Paul Shepard has claimed categorically, "knowing who you are is impossible without knowing where you are" and the relationship to the place serves to "both reflect and create an inner geography by which we locate the self" (*Sense of Place* 29). Neil Evernden has similarly insisted that "there is no such thing as an individual, only an individual-in-context, individual as a component of place, defined by place" (*Sense of Place* 29). In *The Empire Writes Back*, Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin identify "place and displacement" as "a major feature of postcolonial literatures" (8). However, the idea of environmental belonging and the positioning of the self in relation to the natural world is inevitably problematic for a nation characterised by a violent past, racial segregation and land disputes. In the introduction to *Toxic Belonging? Identity and Ecology in Southern Africa* (2008) Dan Wylie asserts, "In a region scarified by centuries of pre-colonial migration, colonial invasion, internecine conflicts across every conceivable ethnic, gender, political and geographical frontier, massive industry-fuelled migrancy, apartheid-era removals and dislocations, and accelerated blurring of almost all formerly accepted categorisations through globalisation, the notion of belonging becomes ever more fraught – and ever more important" (3).

In *Life and Times of Michael K* the notion of 'belonging' is interwoven with questions regarding the ethics governing the adequate distribution and conservation of natural resources. Coetzee articulates a localised understanding of self-in-nature which is equally aware of the complex entanglement between social injustice and the aggressive containment of natural environment by the political set-ups. In a review of *Life and Times of Michael K*, titled "The Idea of Gardening", Nadine Gordimer considers that "the unique and controversial aspect of this work is that while it is implicitly and highly political, Coetzee's heroes are those who ignore history, not make it" ("The Idea" 3-4). On the contrary, in the novel, Nature is not presented as a passive alternative to the realm of social injustice, but rather questions the moral fundamentals of the crooked apartheid politics. Coetzee uses the idea of gardening to comment on apartheid South Africa, putting to trial its legitimization of oppressive ideological systems. In the context of Coetzee's critique of the plaasroman in *White Writing* (1998), the refuge of gardening is symbolic of man's proximity to the earth. It seems not so much a retract from politics as a chosen engagement with the realm that inks the story of the individual's relationship with the land. Coetzee, unlike other writers of the plaasroman, refuses to present an empty praise of nature or a romanticised account of South African politics, but desires to write a historically determined account of an individual's relationship with the land.

To fully understand the eco-ethical undertone of the novel, it is important to pay attention to the way history of gardening in South Africa is interconnected with the region's colonial and racialized past. From the earliest moments of Dutch settlement in Southern Africa, the Cape of Good Hope was cast as Paradise regained. The VOC garden at the Cape,

which was initially founded as a provision garden, and the subsequently established Rondebosch garden are the first examples of botanical gardens in South Africa. The notion that natural resources can be inscribed as signifiers of colonial control can also be found in Beth Fowkes Tobin's *Colonizing Nature* (1992). She asserts that indigenous plants that were meant to provide food clothing and shelter were kept in greenhouses to showcase the uniqueness of the species. By invoking this intricate historical web of land distribution, oppression and power relations, Coetzee is able to offer a critique of segregational policies practiced in colonial rule. At the same time, he is quick to point to an uncertainty in this interaction between self and environment, especially in the face of such restrictive ideologies.

Coetzee's gardening protagonist gradually becomes aware of the various restrictions he imposed on himself and his environment, and ultimately rebels against these physical and imaginary boundaries through a radically ascetic and a non-linear approach to cultivation. Michael K is initially uncritical of his complicity in a tradition of cultivation in which his own oppression is ultimately rooted. He performs his daily tasks as a municipal gardener with the purposelessness of an automaton: "Sometimes on Saturdays he failed to hear the boom of the noon gun and went on working by himself all through the afternoon" (4). Michael K experiences confinement and discrimination allowing him to interrogate his relationship with land. When K veers from the road in order to rest on an adjacent farm, he is warned off the land by an old man. Looking across the outstretched farmland, K considers that he could understand that people should have retreated here and fenced themselves in with miles and miles of silence, he could understand that they should have wanted to bequeath the privilege of so much silence to their children and grandchildren in perpetuity (though by what right he was not sure); he wondered whether there were not forgotten corners and angles and corridors between the fences, land that belonged to no one yet (47). Here K's questioning of the right to land conferral echoes Coetzee's critical work on lineal consciousness in *White Writing*, particularly his concern with the farm novels (plaasromans) of Afrikaans author C.M Van den Heever and their representation of Afrikaner family farms as "the seats to which their lineages are mystically bound, so that the loss of a farm assumes the scale of the fall of an ancient house, the end of a dynasty" (*White Writing* 83). Coetzee's Michael K stands in direct opposition to this particular version of lineal consciousness.

However, as soon as Michael K escapes the narrow corridors of power, he gets to concentrate on the life forms that others choose to ignore. He significantly affirms that animals and plants are oblivious of war. He realizes that the grass does not stop to grow and that leaves do not stop to fall in parks because of ongoing war (67). By linking war with nature, or by contrasting ecology and human indifference, Coetzee is presenting the dichotomy of human-nature relations. War is transient, but nature is an enduring, generative force that continues to sustain and support mankind beyond any realms of dominance. Coetzee uses the images of sheep "packed so tight that some stood on their hind legs" (36) to evoke a potential critique of dominant structures. He is drawing an ethical pattern that moves against the anthropocentric treatment of nature. South African environmental ethics is based on the principle of intrinsic value of nature. As opposed to the western ethical perspectives that assign an intrinsic value to human beings alone, South African ethics believe in the concept of Oikos, where land, man and spirit are woven into a strong filial relationship. According to Selvamony this phenomenon is termed integrative

Oikos which integrates the sacred, nature, and the humans in a complex kinship even as a family of kith and kin (Selvamony 314).

Once K arrives in Prince Albert, he occupies a deserted farm which he believes to be his mother's childhood home. Here K establishes a vegetable garden, planting melons and pumpkins from leftover seeds found in the abandoned shed. Although motivated by a desire to settle on the ancestral farm, to "live where [his] mother and grandmother lived," K practices a form of cultivation that is deliberately at odds with the approach of the farm's previous occupants, the Visagie family (99). His refusal to construct a new kingdom out of the deserted wreckage also suggests the rejection of a model of cultivation which is dependent on right over land. Coetzee juxtaposes Visagie and Michael K, thereby, presenting two different eco-ethical ideologies. To Visagie, farm is just a place of adventure, while, Michael K draws pleasure from the act of cultivation; his vegetable garden is maintained primarily for sustenance and has little aesthetic value. In fact, K could not imagine himself spending his life driving stakes into the ground, erecting fences, dividing up the land. He thought of himself not as something heavy that left tracks behind it, but if anything as a speck of ant-feet, the rasp of butterfly teeth, the tumbling of dust (97). He shuns the farmhouse in favour of a hovel in the ground close to his vegetable patch and is careful to use only bio-degradable materials for his daily tasks. Michael K's distancing of himself from the legacy of the Visagie family can be read as a critique of the anthropocentric treatment of nature. This desire to live lightly off the land gradually evolves into a discipline which amalgamates certain principles of deep ecology and Buddhist and Hindu practices of "prakriti," a belief system that holds the principle energy and nutrition can be obtained from the sun and air. The deep ecology movement endorses "biospheric egalitarianism," the view that all living things are alike in having value in their own right, independent of their usefulness to others. It respects this intrinsic value of nature, independent of its instrumental value to man. It rejects atomistic individualism, an idea that a human being is such an individual possessing a separate essence. Arne Næss, a deep ecologist, counter attacks the radical separation of the human self from the rest of the world. He asserts that to make such a separation not only leads to selfishness towards other people but also induces human selfishness towards nature.

Michael K's need for nourishment gradually fades as he becomes increasingly immersed in cultivating his pumpkin garden:

As he tended the seeds and watched and waited for the earth to bear food, his own need for food grew slighter and slighter. Hunger was a sensation he did not feel and barely remembered. If he ate, eating what he could find, it was because he had not yet shaken off the belief that bodies that do not eat die.

What food he ate meant nothing to him. It had no taste, or tasted like dust (101).

Finally, K is not merely living harmoniously on and from the land, but becomes one with his natural environment. He is seemingly endowed with a kind of arcane knowledge which allows him to avoid poisonous plants, an ability which is tentatively attributed to a mystical soul tied with the animal world: "He also ate roots. He had no fear of being poisoned, for he seemed to know the difference between a benign bitterness and a malign one, as though he had once been an animal and the knowledge of good and bad plants had not died in his soul" (102). Many other ecologists have also vouched for this feelings of

merger with nature. Edward Abbey, for example, describes an extended stay alone in Havasu Canyon during which he gradually lost a sense of the identity of his human body and began to see a leaf when looking at his hand (*Desert Solitude* 250-251). Aldo Leopold portrays a merger of his body with the surrounding marsh landscape in one of his sketches, as does Gary Snyder in his poem "Second Shaming Song" (*No Nature* 56).

Michael K develops a bond with nature where "Leaves provide a bed for K" and he finds a warm refuge in "natural shelters like riverbeds and caves in the mountains" (65). It is interesting to see that while in the wake of the war, many social relationships are shown turning distraught, a nurturing attachment with nature can be still maintained. The novel's ecology shows that by spreading his mother's ashes over the land, Michael K achieves a symbolic unity with mother Earth. However, he never feels his right over the land. He takes only what is required for survival. This defying logic counters the mapping and ownership imposed on the land under apartheid. Here, the representation of the Earth as a mother figure and human beings as children of the Earth evokes James Lovelock's Gaia hypothesis, which sees the Earth as a self-regulating entity capable of healing itself. Lovelock's *The Revenge of Gaia* (2006) predicts that continued abuse of the Earth's resources by humans will result in the earth becoming uninhabitable to human beings, what Michael K describes as "the earth ... grow[ing] hard and forget[ting] her children" (109).

*Life & Times of Michael K*, then, hints at the possibility of an approach to the natural world which exists apart from everyday wars, a return to nature as children of the earth. However, a non-invasive return to nature must not only acknowledge the power of Gaia to turn on her abusive children, but also be aware of the brutal political history which has hampered such an uncomplicated engagement with the environment in order to exceed it. Despite K's final assurance that one can live from only 'a teaspoon of water', this promise is undermined by the fact that such a way of life is ultimately presented as unattainable, if the weight of history is lifted. Coetzee most explicitly attempts to separate K from any political agenda and focus on the graver intention of restoration of nature, in a much cited scene in which a group of rebel soldiers pass through K's farm. K briefly considers joining their group, but finally decides not to make his presence known on the basis that some men must avoid war in order to continue the idea of gardening, "Yet in the same instant that he reached down to check that his shoelaces were tied, K knew that he would not crawl out and stand up and cross from darkness into firelight to announce himself. He even knew the reason why: because enough men had gone off to war saying the time for gardening was when the war was over; whereas there must be men to stay behind and keep gardening alive, or at least the idea of gardening; because once that cord was broken, the earth would grow hard and forget her children. That was why" (109).

Coetzee's determination to restore the bond between K and the land speaks volumes about the need for engagement with nature to overcome the rootlessness that affects the disenfranchised majority of South Africa.

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## Literary Symbolism of Water in Anita Desai's *Fasting, Feasting*

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**Water**, doubtlessly, is the elixir of life. Since the beginning of life on this planet, no one has been ignorant and hence, indifferent to the significance of the liquid, called **water**, whether “hunter-gatherer societies, tribes, chiefdoms, states and civilizations ...nomads, pastoralists and agriculturalists”, although “fewer studies have analysed the pervasive role which water has always had and still has in society and religion” (Oestigaard, 11). It is not merely a physical substance, a resource or a biological requirement, but an integral part of human identities, their cultures, religious sentiments about life on Earth as well as life after death. “Water in its many facets matters for humans, while the social, cultural, ideological and religious roles of water include deep ontological relations and identities ranging from personal perceptions and gender relations, to rainmaking and fertility rites for the benefit of the whole society as well as perceptions of cosmological realms and religious beliefs” (Oestigaard, 11).

Literature itself is either an expression of or a reflection on human identities, cultures, their social conditions and religious ideologies, and more than anything, their lives. As water is central to life, life is central to literature, hence water forms a dominant feature in literature: serving as a background, setting, environment and a major theme in literary works. It is also employed as a metaphor to convey various emotions, ideas, thoughts and desires of human beings. The image or/and symbol of water is the most recurrent and prominent one in literature, which, owing to its essentialist nature in life, is quite obvious and not surprising at all. “Water is, of course, mutable and sublime, sustaining and destructive, and throughout literature water serves as a representation not only of birth but of death, not merely of placidity but of violence. Water transports the hero to his great adventures and carries him home. Water holds the promise both of freedom and of enslavement, its shimmering surface inviting, its depths mysterious and daunting” (Brown).

The significance of water for English novel can be assessed from the fact that there are many English novels that contain the word 'Water' in their title, such as: Bapsi Sidhwa's *Water*, Paula Hawkins' *Into The Water*, Yannick Murphy's *This is The Water*, Wally Lamb's *We Are Water* Ian McGuire's *The North Water*, Linda Sue Park's *A Long Walk to Water*, Paolo Bacigalupi's *The Water Knife* etc. In Indian English novel too, water forms a dominant and major component of story-line, subject-matter, and more than that it is used as a literary device – a symbol or an image, employed by the authors to convey deeper feelings of their characters, their social, cultural, religious, geographical and individual identities as well as ideologies. Ludmila Volná's article 'Water as Symbol: Transformation and/or Re-Birth in the Indian Anglophone Novel' delineates water as a symbol of transformation and re-birth in Indian English Novel in general. It emphasises on “the Hindu cosmological imagery of water as presented in the Indian novel in English.” Right from R K Narayan to Salman



Rushdie, Arundhati Roy, Chitra Divakaruni and Anita Desai, water has either been a symbol of individual and cultural identities of the characters or an image of manifesting and representing woman's conditions and other themes of the novels.

A Symbol is the use of an object or action that means something more than its 'literal meaning'. It is a literary device, which consists of many and different layers of meaning that may not be discernible at first look or reading. The object or action used as symbol is normally representative of many other and different concepts, or qualities than those that are found or noted in merely the literal translation of the word. Anita Desai is an esteemed Indian English novelist, who has been writing since 1960s. She manifests the troubled mental states of her characters through a powerful figurative language, which is rich in imagery and symbolism. She concentrates more on the inner world of her characters than the outer world, as the turbulence and restlessness within the characters comes from outside, and their contact with the outer world. Deepshikha Kumari, in her scholarly paper 'Use of Symbolism in the Fiction of Anita Desai: A Psychoanalytic Study' aptly writes: "The psychological portrayal of characters through the use of symbolism and dream are some of the important fictional techniques that have been used by Anita Desai in her novels" (070). The present paper is a study of the use of Water as a prominent symbol in Anita Desai's *Fasting, Feasting* to reveal the psyche, broodings, longings, wishes and reflections of the characters. It also explores the novel as a psychological novel.

Desai's *Fasting, Feasting* was short-listed for the 1999 Booker Prize. Gerald Kaufman, Chairman of the Booker Prize 1999, declares: "If we could have a runner-up, we undoubtedly have given the runner-up award to Anita Desai and *Fasting, Feasting*, a most beautiful novel, very moving, very funny, terribly illustrative of what happens to women in different parts of the world" (Jacket, *FF*). These words in bold are an adequate statement on the predominant theme of the novel, and it is not an exaggeration to assert that this "what happens to women in different parts of the world" is disclosed and explicated by the novelist through an overpowering use of symbols, especially 'Water'. The different parts of the world in the novel are: India and America, and the women characters are: Uma and Melanie.

The novel begins almost towards the end of the story and the flashback story is narrated in a non-linear manner. Uma is the eldest of the three siblings of a typical middle class Indian family. She is a simple girl with 'plain' features, who is not good at studies, yet she has always wished to continue her studies, as she loves going to the convent school. But, she is forced to discontinue her studies by her mother, Mama, in order to look after her newly born brother, Arun. She suffers rejection by her suitors and endures an unsuccessful marriage (as the man was already married and he married her for only for the sake of money and dowry). Prabhat Kumar Pandeya writes: "In the character of Uma, Anita Desai has presented a very dismal picture of Indian marriages" (110). Desai probes deep into Uma's psyche and comes out with shocking revelations. There are other characters, too, who share a unique relationship with water, and the novelist has depicted the uniqueness of their relationship in the novel.

As a child Uma has always loved, rather eagerly waited for Mira-masi's visit to her parents' home, but the "best part of Mira-masi's visit would be the obligatory trip to the river" (*FF*, 43). Though, the trip was never permitted to the children by the parents, Mama and Papa, saying "it was too hot, too dangerous, too dusty, too diseased, too crowded - in every way inadvisable", but to Mira-masi, it was "a taste of paradise", hence they allowed

her to take the children with her, when she went for her ritual dip" (FF, 43). She warns the children "not to go near the water, keep a watch out for crocodiles and death by drowning" (FF, 43). Thus, despite the mortal dangers posed by the river; it has religious significance for the elderly widow, Mira-masi. The water of the river offers her the comfort, peace and feel of paradise. Chhote Lal Khatri contends in this concern that owing to her parents' neglect, Uma "pines for love somewhere else . . . Her plunge in the hard water of the holy river and her feeling of thrill in being carried away in the current can be interpreted in the same way" (115). Ballinger-Dix holds the similar opinion regarding Uma's extraordinary and abnormal, in fact paranormal relationship with water and river: "Throughout the novel, submersion in water represents freedom from the constraints of society, family, and the self. As a child restricted and unappreciated by her family and society, Uma feels drawn to the water's edge where she sees Mira-masi bathing in the 'sacred' river that runs through the village." She further asserts: "At a time in her life when there are no more prospects of education or marriage, nor any other feasible escape from Mama and Papa, Uma feels both neglected and trapped. She is drawn to the river, to the feeling of sinking, as if drawn to death as her only escape." These two viewpoints do not suffice to explain and assess Uma's rare and intensely intimate bond with water. There is something more to this closeness and familiarity, which is unfathomable and inexplicable, as it lies somewhere between psychological and spiritual experience.

To Uma, river and its water is a means of sustenance, survival and revival. Although, she is a child, too, like Aruna and Arun; she is neither scared of river water nor bothered about its dirt and filth. Desai writes:

Only Uma tucked her frock up into her knickers and waded in with such thoughtless abandon that the pilgrims, the washermen, the priests and boatmen all shouted, 'Watch out! Take care, child! And pulled Uma back before she sank up to her chin and the current carried her away. It had not occurred to her that she needed to know how to swim, she had been certain the river would sustain her. (FF, 43)

She was saved by a boatman, by being pulled on to the sandy bank where she laid "gasping and flopping and trickling like a grounded fish" (FF, 43). All through this Mira-masi had been oblivious of everything around and what happened to Uma, being "too immersed in her devotions to notice. Knee-deep in water... pouring water over herself, chanting the Lord's name in ringing triumph" (FF, 43). Thus, though both the women, Mira-masi and Uma forget themselves while being close to/immersed in water; yet they have different experiences. To Mira-masi water has religious importance and it is through water that she feels close to her god, but to Uma water has some mysterious quality and she has a deep sense of belongingness with it. It sustains her, makes her survival possible and revives her. Desai acquires ironical tone too, when she writes that Aruna and Arun did not go further than the top of the stone steps leading down to the river, "looking down at its sluggish flow and line of washer-men and pilgrims and boatmen with disdain" and no one of them thought of putting a foot into river water, as "they were too mindful of their health and safety" (FF, 43). Thus, river water plays three major roles: water transportation, cleansing, and religious rites.

Later on, Uma accompanies Mira-masi to a distant ashram, where again she loves walking along the river banks, spending her mornings and evenings "wandering down to

the river" (FF, 58). She used to return late in the evening "after hours of walking barefoot through the sand along the river" ((FF, 58). Uma shares a mysterious relationship with river and its water. There is an irresistible intimacy and immediacy to mingle into it and be one, which she feels, whenever she approaches river and its water. After Aruna's marriage, her mother-in-law and her husband's relatives also came along with her, as they wanted "to bathe in the holy river" (FF, 108). So, whole family along with the guests went to the river. Uma enjoyed the trip on the river in the flat-bottomed big boat hired for taking the ritual bath. Uma was simply 'excited' as "Mama had never permitted her family this dangerous rite" as according to her, there was no need to put "one's life in danger to prove one's religious belief which could surely be taken for granted" (FF, 110). The boatman took them to the point, "where the water ran shallow in the very centre of the great green depths" and advised them "against stepping off the bars and against currents" (FF, 110). All were in high state of excitement and the women, especially, were holding each other in 'pleasurable panic, but Uma was in a state of elation, "thrilled by this licence," she "simply sprang off the prow and plunged in without hesitation, as if this were what she had been preparing to do all her life" (FF, 110).

Uma's action naturally is an expression of her newly gained freedom, excitement, elation and adventurous spirit. But there was something more than this. The water had something mysterious for her. Something that fascinates her, allures her, invites her and suddenly takes hold of her: her body, mind, heart, every bit of her. Hence, "Immediately she disappeared into the water, having leapt not onto the sandbar where the others stood splashing but into the deep dark river itself. She went down like a stone" (FF, 110). Again, she was pulled out of the water by someone present there and she rose "gasping for breath, struggling, flailing her arms" (FF, 111). Aruna warned Uma against having a fit, as she had become hysteric during her stay at ashram with Mira-masi. Uma promised her with her serene look that it was not a fit. It was simply inexplicable, beyond nomenclature, language and human comprehension, something deep, mysterious, reviving that could only be felt and not communicated to anyone:

What it was that when she had plunged into the dark water and let it close quickly and tightly over her, the flow of the river, the current, drew her along, clasping her and dragging her with it. It was not fear she felt, or danger. Or, rather, these were only what edged something much darker, wilder, more thrilling, a kind of exultation - it was exactly what she had always wanted, she realized. Then they had saved her. The saving was what made her shudder and cry ... (FF, 111).

Uma had been living a monotonous life with her parents, who tended to be insensitive to her emotional needs and too self-centred to think about their daughter and express their love to her. They denied any privacy and space to her and always kept her busy doing things for them and taking care of their needs. Uma had the vision of an escape, a refuge only in the form of

a huge and ancient banyan tree ... Down below there was a river where the sand glistened and a trickle of water gleamed (not the broad, deep, inexorable river running by their own town that had once parted to take her in and draw her away and from which she had been violently torn (FF, 131).

Although her vision of the escape did not include the experience of mingling with the river water that she once had, but was kept devoid of by being pulled off the water; yet she was sure that river water had cured her hysteria and fits: “she no longer had fits: it was as if the plunge into the river had caused the fits and hysterics to be carried off by the currents, ... She knew they would never come on her again” (FF, 138). Thus, water, here, signifies cure and purification.

It is when they (Uma, her parents and Anamika's parents) visit river for Anamika's death rites that Uma reconciles with her past, poisonous memories and heartbreaks, and also with her parents, on seeing tears in Mama's eyes, who clasps Uma's hands tightly while immersing Anamika's ashes in river water. Water becomes the symbol of reconciliation and transformation, here. True to what Ludmila Volná affirms in her paper that the Indian English writers “show a great interest in water as a means of depicting a transformation and/or re-birth of both the Indian society and the individuals in it relying on the water as symbolizing a beginning of a new life/identity in the Hindu cosmology.” Desai depicts the significance of water in the transformation and rebirth of Uma as an individual by realizing, for the first time in her life the love of her parents, especially, her mother.

Melanie too suffers from hysteria loveless-ness, neglect and psychological problems. She keeps herself immersed in bathing tub to safeguard her from depression. Arun, during his stay with the Pattons, repeatedly finds Melanie “into the bathroom ... and shut the door. The sounds of the saxophone and trumpets and a lead singer in distress are pounding upon the door, hammering it with all its fists. But the door stays shut... In between songs, Arun can hear, through his open door, water furiously rushing” (FF, 203). Thus, water acts as a purifying agent for Melanie. It is Arun, who very aptly reflects on Melanie's condition and can relate her suffering to his own sister, Uma, in India. He finds “a resemblance to the contorted face of an enraged sister who, failing to express her outrage against neglect, against misunderstanding, against inattention to her unique and singular being and its hungers, merely spits and froths in ineffectual protest” (FF, 214). Ballinger-Dix declares the same: “Melanie is also entrapped – by her emotional turmoil, her eating disorder, and her inattentive parents. She spends long nights in the bathtub to escape.”

The same is true about Arun, while living in the States. He finds himself “trapped even in America by the memories of his family and the self-restraint he has developed throughout his life as a survival mechanism. The only instance in which Arun feels peace is toward the end of the novel, when he swims for the first time in his life in a pond outside the Patton's house. There, he feels calm, as if freed from reality” (Ballinger-Dix). Arun needs water to refresh him, as he sweats heavily after a long walk to the swimming hole, but he “wonders if it is clean. He wonders what animal life might lurk in it. He cannot help eyeing it with the greatest suspicion” (FF, 221). But when he finds Mrs Patton casually removing her sunsuit, he wastes no time and “Rather than see her stripped, he puts out his arms like a man fleeing and plunges hastily into the water, bracing himself for the cold splash, and falling on his stomach noisily and painfully just as he remembers doing all through his school years” (FF, 222). Though strange, yet true that after sometime he feels undiminished vigour. “Surprisingly, it is due to the water, an element that removes him from his normal self, and opens out another world of possibilities” (FF, 222).

Water is symbolic of purification, sustenance, survival, revival, union, mystery, escape, adventure, transformation freedom, refuge and reconciliation, especially for the

women characters of the novel, along with being a means of transportation, entertainment, daily rites of cleansing and religious rites and opening up new possibilities. It simply liberates various characters and helps getting rid of their fears, confusions and dilemmas. It is not only a fluid essential for physiological activities of living world, but also an element deeply associated with the emotional, psychological, intellectual and spiritual life of humans; it is something that has different forms, which depend on the personal perception and vary from individual to individual.

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## A Postcolonial Critique of Mahasweta Devi's *Draupadi*

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As Gayatri C. Spivak states in her foreword that she is translating this literary piece, much for the sake of the story's antagonist Senanayak, rather than overtly focusing on the protagonist Draupadi, as she finds in Senanayak, the characteristic of a true scholar of the First world influence, who is in search of the Third world. Post-colonialism attacks the core issue of Eurocentrism which establishes Europe as the center. So when the process of colonialism started taking its roots, the justification of the Western colonizers was that they were carrying out a 'civilizing mission'. Homi Bhabha in his essay underlines that the colonial power creates "a class of interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern- a class of persons Indian in blood and colour but English in tastes, in opinions, in morals and in intellect" (Bhabha 128). Senanayak takes the help of Western literature like Hochhuth's *The Deputy* and David Morrell's *First Blood* to understand his own nation's indigenous community and he, thus, falls under this category of mimic mediators and he is "the author's careful presentation as a pluralist aesthete." (Spivak, 381). In the dark days of colonialism, as mentioned in Edward Said's *Crisis*, the Western metropolis being at power, the western literature were given privilege and priority. Driven by the force of the imposed binary of the Self and the Other, the Self-portrays the Other as pagan, barbaric and uncivilized, it even terms the 'Other' customs and people with negative connotations when they fail to decipher the intricacies of a particular indigenous community.

"Draupadi" first appeared in Agnigarbha, a collection of loosely connected, short political narratives. In the Foreword, Spivak gives background information about the situation of Bengal and its division in the post-independent India as West Bengal and East Pakistan. She further highlights Bengal's inclination to Leftist intellectualism and ideology. Here, the postcolonial concept of 'nation or nation-state' appears in the picture. For example, when the British were ruling over India, it was the people of the 'middle class' that emerged as prominent national leaders. In his book *Modern India 1885-1947*, Sumit Sarkar defines middle class as the new English-educated group of people who started emerging as a distinct section of the Indian society during the nineteenth century. This middle class in the process of creating resistance against the British established themselves as national leaders,

they represented for the nation as a whole, encapsulating populations of different caste, creed, and race, thus making the discourse of the middle class as the discourse of the nation. But there was a slow unraveling of the middle class leading to nationalism in the writings of Franz Fanon where he states that, though the middle-class plays an active role in initiating and executing the anti-colonial struggle, they swap the power into their hands, once the nation becomes independent which leads to neo-colonialism. Thus, the middle class acts as a mediator, through which the colonizing process still gets channelized and they get their share of the loot. As stated by Aikant, "In colonial times, the middle class, which emerged in India, was trying to find an identity for itself by a complex process of negotiation, which Bhabha has called "colonial mimicry" (189).

Mahasweta Devi weaves the story around the culturally, socially endangered indigenous tribes on whom the extreme form of political domination is exerted. The beginning section of the story marks an underlying thread of colonialism: the story begins with an open declaration by the authorities of the nation-state of one hundred rupees to the person who finds 'Dopdi Mejhen'. This can be seen in connection to Tagore's definition in *Nationalism in the West*, of a nation state where he describes it as a scope of the political and economic union of people, when a whole population assumes that it is organized for a mechanical purpose, as confirmed by Spivak "Nation-state politics combined with multinational economies produce war." (Spivak 390) One can notice the prevalence and dominance of political and economic agencies in the statement of the second livery where he states, " ... Surja Sahu's wife gave her the name" (Draupadi 392) which highlights the subordinate position that the colonized subaltern occupy bereft of any socio-political agencies where the 'superior' colonizers decide for the colonized. Identity anchors an individual to his self, but when one's identity is defined by the dominant class, one loses its true essence. The ability to name a person is in itself an act of power exertion. The story foregrounds the event of 1971 that sowed the seeds of colonialism when three villages were cordoned off was machine-gunned, leading to a mass massacre where, very cleverly, the couple Dulna and Dopdi, feigned death and later on escaped. The framing of this scene highlights the drastic physical effects of misuse of power and colonialism. In the hierarchy of structures of power, Surja Sahu can be termed as the representative of the neoclassical middle-class and Senanayak as the mediator, oscillating between the *colonizer* and the *colonized*.

The couple's flight to the darkness of Neanderthal can be interpreted as their attempt to escape and find shelter in the darkness to hide and save their indigenous culture and traditions from the plague of colonization. The author states two reasons for it: the first being the couple's skill in self-concealment, which can be interpreted as Dopdi and Dulna's earnest attempt to save their indigenous culture and the people till their very last and second reason effectively portrays the discrepancy of the system where the authorities who try to control the 'primitive' and 'uncivilized' Santals are themselves, victims of cultural and social ignorance.

As the narrative progresses, the author sketches an image where "the black-skinned couple" i.e., Dopdi and Dulna are singing jubilantly in a "savage" tongue. In the colonial realm, the Self encapsulates all the civilized characteristics and is seen in the shadow of the 'Other' which acts as a negative of 'Self' and is termed barbaric, uncivilized and 'savage'. And as stated in the introduction by Chakravarty, "The aboriginal voice is

being dredged and released through apodictic poetry and mise en abyme, to restore the connection of aboriginals with their land, kinship, and community” (xviii)

The author introduces to the readers the character of 'Captain Arjan Singh' who represents the class of intellectual middle class embellished in Western education, and the latter's influence makes him unable to understand these indigenous tribes and they appear to them as barbaric and 'strange'. As Lawrence and Dua state with reference to LaRoque's writing from an indigenous perspective, "As LaRoque's writing highlights..., racism is a central aspect of colonialism; it cannot be abstracted away from a colonial context" (Lawrence et. al 17), the 'escaped corpses' haunt him with their savage and strange blackness, which in turn damages his psychological as well as physical state and thus is compelled to take a "premature and forced retirement", and is replaced by Mr. Senanayak.

Senanayak is a lot different from Arjan Singh. Unlike the latter, he tactfully tries to deal with the situation and brings the *Army Handbook* as a point of reference. He tries to build a military coercion leading to bloody physical colonization and imposition of power over the indigenous tribes who must be annihilated when seen with primitive weapons. Senanayak seems to mold himself according to the authority and establish in the periphery of 'Self' so that he can "survive with honor", thus establishing the native tribes as the 'Other' who are the 'victims' of his violent colonial subjugation.

Later in the narrative, we come across the second instance of resistance when the author appries the readers that Dopdi and Dulna, having escaped Bakuli, serve in almost every landowner's house just to inform their tribal 'soldiers' about their next target and they also announce themselves as soldiers, in both "rank and file" as they are saving their own indigenous community, their own cultures, rituals, people, and practice. Finally, the colonial force in order to subjugate and demolish this 'savage' community, surrounded the impenetrable forest of Jharkhani and guarded their only source of drinking water. The violent uprising began with the death of Dulna by the armed forces when he was drinking water from the spring and he died by uttering "Ma-ho" which perplexed the 'civilized' Department of Defense.

The desperate search of the word "Ma-ho" by the tribal specialists foregrounds their failure to comprehend the indigenous community as a whole, and thus, anything ambiguous or mysterious must be uprooted from the core as they deviate from the standard established. Stefano Mercanti explicates this as:

an "alterNative" discourse overcoming the master narrative of the dominator system by locating their stories on the following grounds: 1. A sense of community... 2. The choice to integrate native traditions, folklore, orality and myth as a mode of narration distinctively indigenous in form and matter 3. The nativization of the colonial language by using the language and idiom of the villagers (220).

In the latter narrative, the author establishes the distinction between a hunter and a soldier. The defense sector of the nation including the army and the soldiers who are meant to ensure protection to the subjects of the nation rather than 'protecting' like a soldier, are victimizing them like the hunters. This sort of an armed rebellion justifies the process of colonization:

(1) Colonization begins with a forced, involuntary entry; (2) the colonizing power alters basically or destroys the indigenous culture; (3) members of



the colonized groups tend to be governed by representatives of the dominant group; and (4) the system of dominant-subordinate relationship is buttressed by a racist ideology. (Kortright)

Other than the physical and political form of colonization, they were exercising a violent manipulative psychological form of colonization. The second section of the story revolves around the protagonist Dopdi who is in constant resistance to the colonizer's forces. Here in this section of the story the narrator retraces us to the past and foregrounds the incident that happened with the natives and Surja Sahu who was the only person to have an unlimited water supply at his house in the time of drought. The relation of a colonizer and the colonized can be established here, where Surja Sahu imposed canal tax on the natives and denied water to the untouchable - this instance serves an intermingling of the tools of colonization with that of caste and class, where the higher class obtain superiority and the lower caste are denied of any privileges which imply social colonization. Even Surja Sahu, representing the middle class, obtained free labor from Dulna just because the latter's great-grandfather took a bit of paddy from him. This exploitation of human labor, establishing control unjustly points to the inhuman exercise of colonialism. As a reaction to which, the natives surrounded his house and Surja Sahu was brutally attacked. So, we can consider the indigenous natives as the 'subaltern' who symbolize to the disempowered groups of the society without the support of any form of political or economic agency. Historian Ranajit Guha regards the term 'subaltern' in close contrast with 'elite'. So, for Guha, the elite did not just include the European colonizers, but also the dominant native groups who had direct or indirect access to the hegemony with their association with the colonial government, in case of big landowners or mercantile bourgeoisie owing to their wealth. Thus, this inability of a group of people who are marginalized and are unable to create a discourse about their own needs, problems and self-identity are characterized in the subaltern position. So this observation as to the inability of the subalterns to generate discourse acts as a trigger for ethical intervention, therefore, the elites try to speak for the subaltern, but end up speaking for their own interests. Similarly, when the village was struck with drought, the voices of the subalterns were not heard by the government, and Surja Sahu, representing the elite tried to speak for the subalterns, his discourse embellished with his own interests and desires.

The last section of the story depicts the successful execution of the plan and capturing of Dopdi by the colonizers. After many failed attempts to find a clue about other tribe members through her, at Senanayak's order they "did the needful" and continuously raped her. In this scene, she is mercilessly colonized as a tribe, as a lower caste woman. This incident nullifies the claims of protection, nationality, and responsibility of the government officials towards their subjects: first, by failing to address indigeneity, secondly:

by erasing indigeneity and thirdly, as a result of this exclusion, Aboriginal people cannot see themselves in or through the perspectives of postcolonial theorizing. (Lawrence et. al 13)

The prejudiced eye of the colonizer sees her as the 'Other' who is primitive, pagan, silent and polluted, these characteristics makes an aboriginal woman to be easily 'used', 'devoured' and 'raped', as she's just an object contradicting to her earlier claim of possessing a "pure, unadulterated black blood of Champabhumi." Thus the process of colonization is not one-fold, but has multiple dimensions and affects in multiple ways, as in, politically,

culturally, socially, physically on the basis of race, caste, class, and gender. The last part of the narrative appears to give an answer to Gayatri Spivak's essay "Can a Subaltern Speak?", after being tragically mutilated by a number of strangers, and losing the last shred of integrity she had, instead of behaving as a helpless victim, she strutted and walked naked towards her oppressor Senanayak and compelled him to see the treacherous state in which he had pushed her into and exposed the blatant reality between them. Rape is considered to instill fear in women by subjugating her by the patriarchal, colonizing society, but here, instead of being afraid, she shakes the very consciousness of Senanayak: instead of projecting herself as a 'damsel-in-distress', she takes a stand for herself reverting the power structures, where she becomes the powerful and Senanayak appears powerless and drastically shaken, thus dismantling the notions of subalternity, as Bala writes:

She unlike other passive rape victims, Devi doesn't let her heroine "Draupadi" suffer in silence. With unconquerable spirit, the naked and bleeding Draupadi faces all her rapists defiantly, out resisting the sexual flouting of her body. Mahasweta Devi gives voice to the voiceless unfortunate of the earth, her literary output is an attempt to shake the conscience of the citizens, to make them notice, identify and analyze what goes unnoticed, unheard by the naked eye. (16)

This story contributes to our understanding of the postcolonial situation in two ways: firstly, by pointing out the various traces of colonization, depicting the tribal natives as 'subaltern', apprising us about the colonial baggage that we still carry, even in the post-independence era and our seemingly lesser efforts to change it. Secondly, the narrative of the tribal whose space has been destroyed and have been continuously referred as negatives and uncivilized, questions the narrative of postcolonial freedom and existence.

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## Foregrounding the Non-Human in Barbara Gowdy's *The White Bone*

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During the long course of history, quickening with the conquest of the New World and the industrial revolution, and accelerating much more after World War II, the Human Centre has all but overtaken the whole, displacing into the peripheries of invisibility all that is 'uncivilized'. As the centre has expanded, the world has become increasingly humanized, tame and more predictable. Civilized humanity leaves its deliberate and inadvertent marks everywhere. It also contains and frames the world in the semblance of what philosopher Martin Heidegger called a "world picture" (115). The world's places and beings are comprehensively categorized by naming, classifications, surveillances, rules and framings. Nothing remains that cannot be figuratively or literally rendered as a postcard, tracked via satellite map, GPS, or other technology, and tagged for whatever uses it might yield now or in future. Ultimately, with the advent of today's techno-industrial era, the expanded centre has thickened its technological networks so that the world is well on its way to being fully gridded by ever-expanding lines of transportation, electrification, communication and trade.

True knowledge comes not from mere observation but from thinking and feeling. We can, thus, try to re-define our view of and relationship with, the non-human. By including the emotional, the sensuous, the mystical and the instinctual, we can construct a much richer reality about the non-human world than can be had through the merely observational and utilitarian. Through the representation of the non-human in literature, as it happens also in films and other media, there is a possibility of accessing a different understanding of them which may bring us to more compassionate attitudes emanating from the processes of identification involved in reading. That is why, according to Copeland, "literary animal studies need to explore why it is that literature stimulates us to identify with, and care about, and want to help, characters not ourselves, not even human and how the functioning of the imagination currently figures into animal-centric literary theory and into animal studies as a whole" (94).

Randy Malamud in his theory of "empathizing imagination" in *Poetic Animals and Animal Souls* (2003), defends that the empathizing imagination is epitomized by art because "art has the potential to present a valuable (if not complete and flawless) account of what it is like to be a different animal from ourselves" (Malamud 7). The empathizing imagination can be said "to enhance the awareness of sentient, cognitive, ethical, and emotional affinities between people and animals", taking us closer to what it is like being another animal (9). It takes us where observation cannot reach, making us become the 'other' who lives on the page. This is what Copeland calls "metamorphic imagination" suggesting the possibilities of transformation (10). Hence, if literature can affect our imagination, turning it into a space

for generating alternative visions of animals, it can also be described as a space for liberation where the voice of the animal is heard and the need to evolve from an anthropocentric to a biocentric, non-binary paradigm is realised. This can further allow readers to re-situate humans within the biosphere and develop a dialogical and communicative relationship with earth-others that would provide an adequate ethical response to the non-human world.

Gowdy, in *The White Bone*, prefaces her narrative with a map of the terrain traversed by the elephants in their search for food, safety and missing family members. It is a vast area populated by an enormous variety of African wildlife: giraffes, crocodiles, monkeys, snakes, vultures, hawks, lions, warthogs, cheetah, zebra, hippopotamuses, hyenas, mongooses, rhinoceros as well as elephants. In the territory covered by Gowdy's map, Africans have no place, for it is a domain which humans enter only as predators. In contrast to the elephants, which, as several reviewers have noted, are both individually drawn and complex characters, Gowdy's humans, known as hindleggers, are evil and vicious murderers of elephants.

With one exception, a reference to Masai involvement in the killing of elephants (305), Gowdy does not specify the ethnicity, race or nationality of the ivory poachers. *The White Bone*, a symbol of "forgiveness and hope" (43), which is "the whitest thing you've ever seen" (70), comes from a species of white elephants which is now extinct. Black, on the other hand, is used throughout the narrative to signify death, depravity, corruption, violence and evil. Thus the further descent of humans into evil is described as "the darkness [which] had entered the humans and was corrupting their already corrupt spirits" (43), while the elephants' hope that some humans might someday find redemption is expressed in the metaphor – "even the blackest crevices have known a moment of sunlight" (45). Gowdy's inversion of the conventional human/non-human dichotomy is the highlight of the novel and quite evidently serves the over-all ecological project of the author. Gowdy's elephants have history, religion, philosophy, art, literature, and science, while civilization and culture are non-existent. In view of Gowdy's narrative, it seems that Africa is meant to serve the interests of wealthy western safari tourists, the "entranced humans" who will stare at the elephants in *The Safe Place* (205). While tourism is a major foreign-exchange-earning industry in Kenya, ivory poaching is mainly the work of Africans impoverished by the declining economies of their nations which have been forced by IMF and World Bank conditions to devalue their currency, to "slash social services and public subsidies on staple foods, energy, and transport," to cut jobs in government offices and agencies, and to use most of their foreign-exchange earnings to pay the interest on debts to western financial institutions (Lappé and Collins 112). But in the final analysis, it does not seem to be poachers who, in Gowdy's view, are the ultimate threat to the elephants' future. Rather, it is the people in general: there are just too many of them. Human population growth is a concern which runs throughout Gowdy's narrative. For example, "In the last half century ... the profusion of humans and the need to make constant detours around their habitations" has drastically restricted the movement of the elephants (Gowdy 6-7).

During an interview with Jana Siciliano, Gowdy asserted that she did not want to write a novel . . . designed to shed light on human folly through animal behaviour. In ecocritical terms, Gowdy's avowed and thematized refutation of allegory communicates her frustration with unthinking anthropomorphism, the human practice of viewing

everything in terms of itself. In fact, she questions human reluctance to place the animal at the centre of the story. *The White Bone's* attempt at animal-centred narration is its crucial and overriding aim. While such an ecocritical novel is possible, the form seems quite limiting, Gowdy's own declarations notwithstanding. As an instance of postmodern allegory, which inevitably and ultimately gestures towards the human, *The White Bone* enlarges its aims. It is carefully researched and tackles questions of animal cognition and theory of mind. But the novel is also unapologetically sentimental: it is, as Gowdy is fond of saying, "an act of love" (qtd. in Bemrose 57), a pursuit of moral and emotional truths. Like sentimental novelists before her such as Harriet Beecher Stowe, Anna Sewell, or Marshall Saunders, Gowdy appeals to the empathy and morality of her readers through her affective depiction of the plight of her (animal) protagonists. The ethical value of the novel outweighs, and in fact depends upon, the anxieties about anthropomorphism and sentimentality that it elicits.

*The White Bone's* moral precepts, the exposition of which is a central motif of sentimental literature, are nowhere clearly delineated and, wherever suggested, underwhelm the reader with their irrelevance. Gowdy thus exposes the inefficacy of the sentimental form in the context of our present ecological crisis. Her eschewal of the rhetoric of sentimental exhortation exposes the stark fact of humankind's inability to protect the African elephant. In *The White Bone*, a novel about African elephants narrated from their point of view, elephants communicate not only by taste, smell, and infrasound – systems by which zoologists have proven that they relate – but also via a highly developed verbal language. The focus of the novel is not simply on the human perception of elephant consciousness; in fact, it is more radically biocentric than that. Elephants comment not only on their own language and belief systems, but also on those of other animals, including the mongoose, hippopotamus and martial eagle. Signs function as omens and landmarks in the novel and work within a complex hermeneutic system to construct cognitive maps upon which the survival of the elephants depends. Hope for the African elephant, and for other large mammals in Africa, exists in *The White Bone* in the form of a game reserve – The Safe Place. By the end of the novel, the reader is certain that only the gaunt survivors of the clan of The Lost Ones and those of the protagonist's adoptive family, the She-Ss, have survived the dual perils of slaughter and drought. These elephants represent a sustainably diverse gene pool; they might, under favourable circumstances, breed and potentially restore their populations. Hope for the survival of the African elephant, then, is revealed at the end of the novel as the only recourse – an act of faith on the part of the elephants and readers alike.

Like philosophers of mind such as Thomas Nagel, Gowdy is fascinated with the question of 'other minds'. In his influential article on animal consciousness, Nagel asks, "What is it like to be a bat?" Can we, he muses, appreciate "the subjective character of [other minds]" (392) without framing those experiences in human terms? Colin Allen, in the *Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy*, identifies two key epistemological queries posed by philosophers of mind: the Distribution Question and the Phenomenological Question. The Distribution Question asks whether we can know which non-human animals are conscious; the Phenomenological one asks whether we can know what the experiences of animals are like. The latter question is, to many scientists and philosophers, scientifically intractable. Where scientists and philosophers falter, however, Gowdy forges ahead. True to her reputation as a literary daredevil, Gowdy frames a bold response to the Phenomenological Question of animal consciousness with her imaginative leap into elephant subjectivity.

Gowdy realizes the phenomenological quality of the elephant mind most poignantly by depicting their keen awareness of death. Elephants in the novel are not only aware of death in the abstract; they are aware of the specific perils posed to them by the “murderous drought” (Gowdy 57) that ravaged Africa in 1970s and 1980s, and by ivory poachers. The novel is set in an era – as even the elephants are aware – of “unprecedented slaughter” (57), in which Kenya lost two-thirds of its elephant population to poachers between 1981 and 1989 alone. Tall Time, the novel's 'link bull', knows that humans are responsible for the death of the elephants. He also knows what the “slaughterers” (Gowdy 56) are after – tusks and feet. (Poachers periodically harvest tails, hides, and flesh as well). Coming upon hides draped across wooden frames, Tall Time vents his rage and sadness:

[he] stomps these fraudulent skeletons to splinters. He gathers the bones and passes one hind foot a few inches above them in order to release the spirit to the oblivion of The Eternal Shoreless Water, and then he carries them from the clearing, covers them with leaves and dirt and sings a hymn (56).

The poignancy of Tall Time's ritual derives from the reader's knowledge that, in She ones' cosmology, tuskless elephants are denied paradise:

To have your tusks hacked off while you are on earth is an incomparable physical anguish regardless of whether you are still alive. It also denies cows entrance into the family of the She, since for a cow to become a sky cow, at least one tusk, or the stump of a tusk, must remain attached to her skull for a full day and night following her last intake of breath (32).

Throughout the novel, elephants are portrayed with emotional nuances and dramatic realism, qualities indicative of Gowdy's conviction of their intelligence and agency. Principles of comparative psychology inform not only Gowdy's representation of the phenomenological quality of her protagonists' lives, but also her treatment of “intentionality” (Allen and Bekoff 64). In an interview with Jana Siciliano, Gowdy maintains that “everything my elephant characters do lies within the realm of the possible. As a novelist I have simply taken observed behaviour and credited it with a high level of intention”. Whereas the language of behaviourism reduces animals to 'objects', the “ordinary language of action reflects a regard for animals as acting subjects” and represents the “immanent, experiential perspective of animals ... as real, recoverable, and invaluable in the understanding of their actions and lives” (Crist 2). Gowdy is aware of the significance of intentionality in the discourse of animal cognition and the corresponding debate about animal welfare. She alludes to such discourse when she uses the term “intention” to describe her characters' ability to conceptualize their own experiences, an indication of higher-order representation, complex mental processes accounting for the perspectives of self and other. Gowdy focusses on intentionality and deception in order to support her belief that elephants are conscious in both the phenomenological and self-reflexive senses.

*The White Bone* has been lauded as a brilliant precursor of the novel of the future because of its realization of noble and tragic lives that are not our own. However, fiction about animal subjectivity is by no means a new phenomenon. As cognitive ethologist Donald R. Griffin argues, scientists throughout much of the early to mid-20th century “believed that to be concerned with consciousness of any kind, especially non-human consciousness, was sentimental and needed to be avoided” (x). Griffin explains that

“curiosity about what life is like for members of other species” was “strongly discouraged, even repressed, among scientists.” But this is no longer the case, he assures us: “consciousness is back in style, and there is no longer any reason for scientists to pussyfoot around the subject” (xi). Sara Bershtel, one of Gowdy's editors, attributes popular acclaim for *The White Bone* to just such a shift in thinking about animal cognition, suggesting that the novel caught the wave of intense interest in things like the environment and the discovery of consciousness in animals. As Coetzee's international recognition attests further, (he was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 2003) questions of animal consciousness and animal welfare are of particular interest at the present moment, a moment in which critical focus has increasingly turned to the re-centring of the ethical.

The representation of African elephant sensibility in *The White Bone* is calculated to elicit respect for elephants on the basis of their cognitive and emotional likeness to us. In this anthropomorphic respect, Gowdy recuperates the sentimental tradition of animal literature that flourished toward the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century with the publication of Anna Sewell's *Black Beauty* (1877), Marshall Saunders' *Beautiful Joe* (1895), Ernest Thompson Setons' *Wild Animals I Have Known* (1898), and Charles G. D. Roberts' *The Kindred of the Wild* (1902). Gowdy shares with these writers a desire to solicit readers' empathy and compassion, to raise awareness about the phenomenological quality of the lives of animals, and to encourage their humane treatment.

A dynamic portrayal of the economic and conservationist realities that continue to fuel debate about the sustainability of the ivory trade is clearly beyond the scope of *The White Bone*, which is confined to the perspective of its elephant protagonists. A more probing and apt critique, given the novel's investment in the sentimental form, questions the viability of Gowdy's moral precepts. Scientists readily concede that there are practical ramifications to the debate about animal cognition. Griffin argues, “Our ethical judgments about how we should treat members of other species are strongly influenced by what we believe about their consciousness” (ix). There are also the ethical implications of our gift of consent as readers accompanying Gowdy into the world of elephant sensibility. The experience is meant to be transformative; we are meant to recognize, through the complicated semiotics of Gowdy's gaze, something of ourselves – something of the faculties which humans could do well with, which humans are seen to have lost.

Thus, *The White Bone*, by locating and embodying the African elephant tries to reconstruct imaginatively what survival might mean to the vast category of those 'non-human others' whom anthropocentric bias has managed to delineate over centuries. With its concerns over the use and abuse of authority, *The White Bone* certainly qualifies as a text which raises significant issues relevant to the overlapping fields of postcolonialism and ecocriticism. Yet the path is dangerous too, since it can give rise to a certain misreading that depends upon evoking and mobilising unwanted human sympathy. In other words, narratives that purport to give voices to animals do not appeal to human sympathy on the plea that elephants deserve to survive because they are like humans; but that they deserve to survive because they are themselves.

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## Looking at Student-Teacher Bonding through the Lens of Attachment Theories: A Study of Movies *Black* and *Taare Zameen Par*

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This paper seeks to study the student-teacher bonding with reference to attachment theories as this relationship is represented in two hindi films namely *Black* and *Taare Zameen Par*. *Black* movie had been produced by Sanjay Leela Bhansali and the lead roles Debraj and Michelle were enacted by Amitabh Bacchan and Rani Mukharjee respectively. The other movie *Taare Zameen Par* was directed and produced by Aamir Khan. The lead roles Nikumbh and Ishan were played by Aamir Khan and Darsheel Safary respectively.

Attachment theory, which is under study in this research paper is a relatively new branch of psychoanalytical theories. It explores the forces that drive relationships among individuals and the affects these forces have on them. The relationships that develop and are experienced in infancy are critical to the development of relationships throughout the child's life. Attachment theories define and analyse affectionate connections between two individuals which depend upon developments since childhood. Children develop expectations in accordance with the extent to which they receive support when required and these experiences shape the relationships they form later in life. Individuals who seldom receive warmth, approval and support when required during their childhood feel uneasy with intimacy. They thus learn to rely on their own resources and abilities to redress threats and tend to overcome their limitations and strive hard to perceive themselves as competent and resilient.

Attachment theory was initially applied almost exclusively to the study of children and their caregivers. In the 1980s, the theory was extended to understand adult romantic relationships and then eventually to all friendships. This theory, when applied to the relationship between a child and a caregiver, works on concepts such as the child's need for safety, security and protection, which are fundamental in infancy and childhood. Attachment theories deal with a range of relationships like that of children with parents, siblings, friends, even student-teacher relationships and so on and so forth.

The two major researchers in the field of attachment theories are John Bowlby and Mary Ainsworth. Bowlby started formulating attachment theory because he was not satisfied with the psychoanalytic explanation of the infant's bonding to his mother as it held that the mother-infant bond resulted simply from the fact that the mother gave the infant food, and satisfied his/her hunger drive (Bowlby, 1988). Bowlby studied the works of Harlow, who had researched this bond in monkeys and had found that young monkeys chose to stay close to caring surrogate mothers rather than hard and disciplined surrogate mothers who provided food. Bowlby also studied the work of Lorenz, who researched this

bond in ducklings and goslings, deducing that this primal bond existed naturally without the intermediary of food. These ideas inspired Bowlby to work on the hypothesis that a natural tie exists between infants and caregivers independent of drive-reduction. *The Nature of the Child's Tie to His Mother* and *Attachment and Loss* (1991) were the two texts in which Bowlby has presented his experiments and analysis.

Bowlby defines attachment behaviours as: "...any form of behaviour that results in a person attaining or maintaining proximity to some other clearly identified individual who is conceived as better able to cope with the world" (1988 13). Thus, a positive attachment relationship could be described as one which is highly positive and affective. And, it is important to mention that attachment is most often considered from the child's perspective.

The term "attachment", on the other hand, first appeared in 1969 in Mary Ainsworth's study conducted in Baltimore about positive and negative implications for children's development associated with various upbringing methods and attachment levels. Ainsworth has also done extensive and comprehensive reviews of various literary works in the light of attachment theories.

Drawing on concepts from ethology, cybernetics, information processing, developmental psychology, and psychoanalytical theories, John Bowlby and Mary Ainsworth gave shape to the adult attachment theory. It is in fact Bowlby, who in a systematic way formulated the basic tenets of the adult attachment theory. He revolutionised the usual perception about a child's bonding to the mother and the disruption of this bonding through separation, deprivation and bereavement. Mary Ainsworth's inventive methodology made it possible to test some of Bowlby's ideas empirically and helped in expanding the theory itself, thus resulting in some of the directions it is now taking. Ainsworth developed the attachment theory further by advocating the concept of the attachment figure as a secure base from which an infant can explore the world. In addition, she formulated the concept of maternal sensitivity to infant signals and its significance in the development of infant-mother attachment patterns.

Application of adult attachment principles to the teacher-student relationship re-frames the way the relationships are viewed and offers a significant platform to study the substantial role teachers have in the development of their students. Kesner (2000), in his study of Bowlby's theories, points out that while all attachment relationships are close relationships, the reverse is not always true. Citing Bowlby's assertion about children's tendency to get attached to significant adults other than parents, he postulated that "Perhaps there is no other non-familial adult that is more significant in a child's life than his or her teacher" (Kesner 134). A healthy and dependable relationship with a teacher can protect the child from academic failure and give new directions to an otherwise directionless child (Pianta, Steinberg and Rollins 15).

There are three basic constructs of the attachment behavioural system that are significant in relation to teacher-student scenario. The first one is separation anxiety, a specific form of anxiety experienced in relation to one's attachment figure; the greater the distance, the greater the anxiety. As the anxiety increases, the attempts to reduce the distance with the attachment figure increase. These attempts form a part of the second important construct, known as separation protest behaviours which often include aggression. In infants, separation anxiety is evoked by physical distance from the primary care-giver, usually the mother, while in older children and adults it is experienced due to

emotional distance from the care-giver who is known as the attachment figure or secure base. The third of these constructs is the degree to which avoidance of close relationships results from this separation anxiety. (Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters and Wall 1978).

These constructs help us understand the plight of Ishan in the film *Taare Zameen Par*. The child Ishan Awasthi is ridiculed at school and at home for not being able to write and read properly. He suffers from developmental dyslexia but instead of dealing with his problem, he is ridiculed both at school and home for not being as capable as his elder brother. Ishan cannot read and his writings contain several spelling mistakes as he uses inappropriate letters and words. He is frustrated as he is unable to cope with his unanalysable troubles which is evident from his behaviour at times His apparent hyperactivity, shown in a scene in which he takes a shower, showcases his mental dilemma at not being able to comprehend his problems at learning. He lacks motor skills and he cannot knot his neck tie or tie shoelaces properly. Ishan does not have dyscalculia, he has a prominent language deficit. The film has a happy ending, however, with Ishan's artistic talent being discovered by his art teacher Ramshankar Nikumbh. In fact, his art teacher makes the diagnosis of dyslexia after examining Ishan's class notebooks as he used to teach in a special school for students with psychological and physical disorders.

The common attachment model applied to education perceives teacher as care-giver and student as care-seeker. However, it is usually neglected that even the teacher has attachment needs which only the students can fulfil, hinting that a dyadic rather than unidirectional attachment between teacher and students can and will develop. Application of adult attachment principles to the teacher-student relationship reframes the way the relationships are conventionally viewed and also offers teachers new ways to inform and improve their classroom practice to create a motivating child-teacher equation.

Because Ishan is not as intelligent as his elder brother, he is always ridiculed by his father who thinks that Ishan's failures are a result of his carelessness. The father is never able to realise that Ishan is suffering from dyslexia. Thus, in order to make Ishan self-dependant and responsible, he is sent to the hostel despite the fact that he is highly dependent on his mother. His separation from his mother and the resultant alienation corresponds to the separation anxiety discussed in attachment theories. It is his teacher Nikumbh who acknowledges what Ishan is going through and helps him overcome it using various teaching aids and by making him focus on his artistic talent.

There are scenes in the movie in which we are shown that words are dancing in front of Ishan's eyes, thus foregrounding his helplessness and inability to learn, read and write. It is only Nikumbh who realises that Ishan needs innovative and special teaching aids to learn and grow. Unlike Ishan's parents, Nikumbh does not see him as a failure. Here, the absence of primary caretaker is fulfilled by the teacher who helps Ishan come to terms with his troubles and also makes his parents understand him and his disorder.

In late twenties, two of the researchers, Wright and Sherman, who were researching teacher-student relationship, also added to the postulates of attachment theory. Wright and Sherman (1963), in their research presented rich descriptions of the secure as well as insecure teachers and explains the differences between the two. For a secure teacher, who has had a healthy upbringing, her/his affectionate behaviour towards the pupils is the result of love s/he received during her/his childhood. S/he identifies with the loving, supportive mother by trying to repeat or copy her in an effort to preserve this valued image.

This dependency is satisfying to her/him as it is an opportunity to give back the love that s/he received by embodying it in her/his own behaviour.

The second type of teacher depicted in Wright and Sherman's study is loving but insecure, one who was deprived of the rewards of love in childhood. S/he was made to succumb to the mother's wishes out of the fear of punishment rather than the prospect of reward. In contrast to the first kind of loving teacher, the insecure teacher loves his/her pupils not only in order to be loved by them, but also to make up for that loss by providing children with the love which was deprived to her/him (Wright & Sherman 71).

In the conventional psychoanalytical practice, the analyst is supposed to maintain an objective distance from the analyst and Freud theories this relationship is in terms of transference and counter transference. As stated in counter transference, after the patient transfers the negative emotions from the original person in the past to the therapist, the therapist starts showing those emotions in his own personality and behaviour. However, in attachment theories, the teacher does get emotionally involved with the students but does not absorb or echo back the bottled up emotions of the sufferer.

It is significant to mention here that Nikumbh himself suffered from dyslexia in his childhood and thus, tries to help Ishan avoid the troubles he had to undergo until his teacher had helped him overcome them. Thus, Nikumbh's special attachment with Ishan can be seen as an attempt to pay back the gratitude he has for his teacher by serving as an emotional and psychological support for Ishan. He is able to sense the extraordinarily keen abilities for observation in Ishan which is evident in the floating plain he creates out of nothing and his striking paintings and drawings. The art competition that Nikumbh organises towards the end of the movie serves as the medium to portray the fact that every child is unique special and has unique abilities and capabilities that must be appreciated.

Another movie that can be studied from the standpoint of attachment theories is *Black* by Sanjay Leela Bhansali, which is supposed to be a cinematic adaptation of Helen Keller's life. The movie revolves around the life of Michelle who lost her eyesight and hearing after recovering from acute illness at the age of two and exists in a black world where she leads a life of utter isolation. She grows more and more frustrated by the black and dark world around her, making her a violent, uncontrollable eight-year old child. Her parents, Paul and Catherine, are unable to put her at ease until Debraj Sahai enters their lives. He is an old alcoholic teacher for the deaf and blind, who himself is suffering from Alzheimer's disease. Debraj is an eccentric man who sees himself as a magician and, thus takes it upon himself to bring young Michelle into the light. He uses harsh yet innovative methods and manages to teach Michelle some words and better manners, but he has difficulty teaching her the meaning of words until he throws her into water, making her feel it and thus understand it through sensations.

With Debraj's insistent support, Michelle enters a graduation college and is able to get her graduation degree in ten years despite all the troubles that had made it seem impossible for her to study among normal students. But, by the time she gets her degree, Debraj's Alzheimer's disease has grown to a great extent, making him a distorted man, who cannot remember people, objects and even words and their meanings. The movie ends with Michelle among a crowd of people, all dressed in black, carrying candles and walking towards a church. There is a voiceover of a letter Michelle has written to Debraj's friend Mrs. Nair explaining that today is her teacher's first day of school, and that like hers, his learning

process began with the word "BLACK". It is now Debraj who is beginning to learn to speak and understand and Michelle acts as a firm support, highlighting what has earlier been stated in the paper that adult attachment model works on plausibility of reciprocal caregiving and care-seeking among teacher and student. It is a reciprocal relationship which works on mutual give and take.

However, certain scenes in the movie have been added to the movie to make it a box-office hit, which are not present in the text *The Story of My Life*, on which the movie is based. The love angle shown between Debraj and Michelle and the kiss scene between the two add 'sentimentalism' to the movie and no such instances are found in the text. Also, the teacher in the text is a female whereas in the movie it is a male. Had the teacher been a female in the movie too, the love angle would not have been present.

In conclusion, it can be stated that in both these movies, the teachers' own dilemmas, past baggage and troubles get untangled during their journey as teachers. As Rodger and Scott assert in their article "The development of the personal self and professional identity in learning to teach", the professional identity of a teacher cannot exist without the internal representation by that teacher of the student and the relationship that exists between them (21). Thus, here, the identities and roles of teacher and student are interdependent and reciprocable working on the assertion that knowledge is an intersubjective exchange. Thus, attachment theories question the assertion of conventional psychoanalytical theories that it is the mother who has to be the primary care-giver. Here, it is the teachers who serve as primary care-givers, guides, path finders, friends as well as critics for Ishan and Michelle.

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## Postcolonial Conflict of Assimilation and Identity Formation in Andrea Levy's *Small Island*

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Andrea Levy's writings are emblematic of who she is and her background. Born in 1956 in London, she was thrust into a world of racism growing up black in white England. Her father was among the first wave of Jamaican migrants to arrive in England on the SS *Windrush* in 1948 and her mother soon joined. "It was while studying in college that Levy began to realize the racial hierarchies at play in London" (Younge). As she grew up, she was drawn to literature. As she read Toni Morrison, Alice Walker, and Maya Angelou, she searched for a similar black female voice in British literature. As more black people began to immigrate to London, Levy developed a curiosity of her parents' homeland, traveled to Jamaica in 1989 and upon returning to London, she wrote her first novel. *Every Light in the House Burnin'* which was published in 1994 and *Never Far from Nowhere* was published in 1996. Both these novels "deal with identity and the struggle between being black and English" (Lima). Her third novel, *Fruit of the Lemon*, published in 1999, tells the story of a female character who travels to Jamaica to uncover her family's history. Her fourth book, *Small Island*, was published in 2004. For the first time, Levy wrote from both the black and white perspectives from the great immigration period of black people into England. *Small Island* has been extremely successful as it "earned the 2004 Orange Prize for Fiction, the 2004 Whitbread Novel-of-the-Year Award, the 2005 Commonwealth Best Book/Eurasia Region, the 2005 Commonwealth Writers' Prize for Best Book, and the 2005 'Orange of Oranges' Prize." Her latest novel, *The Long Song*, explores the close relationship between Britain and the Caribbean in the early 19th century. In fact, Levy's life history is infused within her writing.

Since the Postcolonial conflict of assimilation and identity formation in Andrea Levy's *Small Island* is the primary concern of the article, it will be pertinent to take recourse to the post-1945 when migration to Britain became particularly vibrant which has largely contributed to Britain becoming one of the most cosmopolitan nations in the world. The fact that this migration was mostly from Britain's erstwhile colonies implies that it is in a sense, a continuation of the colonial narrative. Graham Huggan in *Post-coloniality* holds that "the mass relocation, either voluntary or forced of people from their own homelands to new regions – probably still the most common understanding of the increasingly multivalent term 'diaspora' – has been a central feature in the historical processes of colonization" (2010: 66). Postcolonialism remains one of the more popular terms in contemporary academia. It refers not to an epoch but to a stance or a reaction to colonialism and its myriad excesses.

Since the colonial enterprise was an exercise in oppression, the term postcolonial has become an umbrella term for the treatment of diverse forms of oppression. Rumina Sethi in *The Politics of Postcolonialism* avers that "in an age replete with innumerable variants of 'post-ist' politics, postcolonialism means so many things to so many people that its full implications necessarily lie outside our grasp . . . its original focus on colonial politics has now extended from issues of minority-ism under European rule to the hegemony of the U.S. in turning the world global, and from the marginality of women and blacks to the exile of those of us settled outside our nations" (Sethi 2011: 1).

Set in London in 1948, Andrea Levy's *Small Island* focuses on the diaspora of Jamaican immigrants, who, escaping economic hardship on their own "small island," move to England, the Mother Country, for which the men have fought during World War II. Their reception is not the warm embrace that they have hoped for, nor are the opportunities for success as plentiful as they have dreamed. Alternating among four points of view, Levy involves the reader in their interconnected stories, which she tells with an honesty and vibrancy that make the tragicomedy of their lives both realistic and emotionally involving. Queenie Bligh, a white woman with a mentally ill father-in-law, takes in boarders to make ends meet when her husband Bernard does not return from India. Most of her boarders are black immigrants from the Caribbean, desperate men and women who are willing to pay high prices for small rooms, and Queenie gradually befriends them on a personal level. Gilbert Joseph, a Jamaican who participated in the Battle of Britain, is one of Queenie's tenants, giving up his dream of studying law and working instead as a truck driver, the only job available to him. Six months later, his "golden-skinned" bride Hortense arrives at Gilbert's small room with her heavy trunk, ready to show London her superior "British" manners and hoping to work as a teacher. When, Queenie's husband Bernard unexpectedly moves back home, life at Nevern Street changes forever.

These four major characters, through their often touching first-person stories, convey their hopes and dreams for the future, revealing, as their stories intersect, their personalities, family backgrounds, experiences in love, commitments to the Mother Country, their economic predicaments, and, not incidentally, their prejudices. Queenie, as a woman trying to support herself and her dependent father-in-law, reveals the predicament of many other British women in the post-war years. Gilbert, equally sympathetic as a character, is imbued with the pride of a soldier who has answered the call of his country, but he is disillusioned when he discovers that he is an unwanted outsider in London and that most of the population thinks Jamaica is a country in Africa.

Hortense is a snob about her golden skin (the result of her mother's relationship with a white man). Her Jamaican teaching certificate, she discovers, is useless in London, and she is helpless--and bitterly contentious--during the couple's transition to London life. Bernard's story of his war-time experiences in India betrays both his resentment against his superior officers and against the Indians he has met, and he returns home with an even greater conviction of his own superiority and a resentment he applies to Queenie's tenants.

Andrea Levy's parents sailed to mother country in 1948 with expectations of finding employment, better future and a strong view of getting assimilated in the culture, identity and race of mother country for which they fought in second World War. Levy uncovers the Britain at the threshold of change in mid-20<sup>th</sup> century that is not completely free of race and colour as Proctor asserts: "I feel Great Britain is still not fully free of racism. There



seems to be a sense of 'them, and 'us' 'outsiders' and 'insiders' (Proctor 2). Levy posits conflict of race and false notion of imperial identity.

This novel addresses the everyday experience of black families and young black women in Britain. Thus, *Small Island* is more ambitious political narrative explores the foundation of Britain's present day multicultural society through the experience of myriad characters. Levy implies the real Britishness is a conundrum as Sebnem Toplu contends:

Britain is struggling to come to terms with its imperial past . . . with the challenges presented by a post imperial multi-racial society". He reasons how, "within this highly complex social structure, the novel has proved to be a fruitful site for investigating hybridized cultural forms of Britishness (Toplu 2)

Four voices permeate the narrative in *Small Island*– Queenie and her husband Bernard who are British white; Hortense and her husband Gilbert who are Jamaican black. The characters seem to be real as the novel touches the historical fact. *Small Island* introduces themes like bitter racism, contested identity, predicament of diasporas of black Jamaican immigrants and mirage of assimilation into host land. It records unpleasant racist aspect of the period considering historical facts that permit Levy to be dispassionate.

The novel is semi-autobiographic as Levy's father served in RAF and her mother was a teacher in Jamaica as Gilbert and Hortense are portrayed in the novel. The novel is divided into two main sections – to describe time before 1948 and happenings of 1948. Before 1948, Bernard doesn't depict his story at all whereas his wife, Queenie tells about her children and what takes place after she got married to Bernard. Hortense and Gilbert depict their lives before and after and also the ideas they had about Britain prior to departure to beloved mother country. Levy constructs her identity through her writing. The idea that there is something essential about one's identity, esp. in relation to blackness as a marker of racial identity, is an easy justification for nationalism and segregation. The recognition of the diversity of subject, social experiences and cultural identities lead to the composition of the category of the 'Black.'

Hortense as a character changes and becomes more humane as the novel progresses. She thinks she is perfect and whatever uncouth she comes across she criticizes bitterly. Hortense is prejudiced about the black colour and considers herself fair because of her lighter complexion. She considers herself for better prospects in future because of her fairness and she justifies her grooming at Mr. Philip Roberts' family and denigrates her parental upbringing:

If I was given to my father's cousins for upbringing, I could learn all my timetables. And more could become a lady worthy of my father wherever he might be (*Small Island* 38).

This reflects the image of Britain Hortense envisages in her mind. She strongly feels herself to be a part of the nation because of her lighter skin and fails to grasp that she is black immigrant. Hortense has high opinion about herself and dreamlike image of Britain and considers herself true British. This view of Hortense changes when she comes to live in Britain, and forgetfully becomes racial towards others and indirectly acts as a racist. She values British authority and imitates them verbatim and feels that others should value her due to her fair complexion. But she equally fails to felicitate equal respect amongst children and to grasp her blackness. Her view of sophisticated, cultured, well-mannered Britain

changes when she invites her friend Celia to the Anderson's--the white family house where she lodges in. Hortense felt that Mrs. Anderson being a wife of headmaster must be well mannered and highly sophisticated. Sadly, Hortense gets engulfed by the uncouth antics of this boorish family and comes across embarrassing details of the family. This reflects how she is prejudiced. She asks Celia whether she dislikes the family. Her (Celia's) answer remains positive concluding that Hortense has an inherent flaw to see only negatives and she opts to be racist by criticizing the family. Hortense faces gender discrimination and racism while searching a job as a teacher. Her training in Jamaica becomes invalid and she gets a reply: "You can't teach in this country. You're not qualified to teach here in England" (*Small Island* 454).

Queenie also shows racist traits and gender discrimination while persuading Hortense to step off the pavement if white person wishes to pass. Hortense reflects her astonishment through her deliberation:

Not believing what my ear was hearing I asked I, a woman, should step into the busy road? She nodded. So, I enquired of her, 'And if there is a puddle should I lie down in it?' (*Small Island* 335).

This incident shows how unwanted she is in Britain. In the character of Hortense, traits of gender shaping are explored further in her bad cooking and her behaviour that gives no value to her husband Gilbert. She considers him inferior to her; even their marriage was a result of adjustment. Her constant complaints and attempts to always dominate him and force him to behave as per her wish. On the contrary Gilbert is more social and amiable but confronts racism when in the cinema hall the usherette said "You are coloured . . . you have to sit back . . . all niggers" (184) and his glorified vision of mother country starts hovering. "This mother doesn't offer any comfort after the journey" and "yet looks down at you through lordly eyes and says 'who the bloody hell are you?'"(139). Before leaving for England Gilbert's cousin Elwood attempts to persuade Gilbert not to go. He argues how the war is a white man's war:

Man, this is white man's war. Why you wanna lose your life for a white man? For Jamaica, yes, to have your own country, yes. That is worth fight. To see black- skin in the governor's house doing more than just serving at the table and sweeping the floor . . . That is worth a fight. Join you them, man. But you think, winning this war going to change anything for me and you (*Small Island* 129).

Elwood approves of war where the black man would be free from his inferior position. His reasoning clearly discloses the racist juxtaposition. Thus, one discovers Levy's characters progressively involved in deconstructing the Englishness.

The dual reality, looking back and looking forward, the old country and the new, the two notions of the home, the fact of being the child and orphan of the Empire is the position of the immigrants in Great Britain in 1950's. The relationship of both 'outsider' and 'insider,' of being black and born in Great Britain as well as the feeling of being stranger in the land of birth, is perpetuated by the treatment received from the white society. Levy remains defiantly outside the limits of Englishness; observing:

I am English doesn't mean I want to be assimilated; to take on white culture to the exclusion of all others... I cannot live without rice and peas. I know dance when Jamaica wins everything... and being English will not stop me

from fighting to live in a country free from racism and social divisiveness  
(*The Guardian Weekend* 19 Feb., 2000)

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## Changing Contours of Diaspora and Diasporic Identities: A Study of Monica Ali's *Brick Lane*

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A large scale movement of migrants, whether forced or voluntary has been taking place throughout the world for reasons ranging from economic opportunities, ethnic violence, social and political compulsions. These movements have repeatedly drawn the attention of theorists and writers throughout the globe. However, this age of globalization and its continuously changing social, economic and political conditions have rendered the views and concerns about interpreting migration in terms of uprootedness, homelessness and fractured consciousness as obsolete to a large extent. Moreover, in contemporary scenario, the impact of globalisation on diasporic identities has resulted in astonishing ethnic and cultural exchanges and development of transnational ties and bonds. This fact necessitates going beyond the focus on gloomy aspect of 'diaspora' and examining the changing contours of diasporic identities who are continuously trying "to recreate, reinvent and reproduce themselves anew" (Hall 235).

The present paper aims to analyse various implications of the concept of diaspora that has developed over the past few years, and talks about the need to rethink and redefine the ways it has been studied so far. The paper also explores how the diasporic identities undergo various transformations as projected by Monica Ali in her novel *Brick Lane* (2003) wherein she depicts the people of Bangladeshi diaspora community living in the U.K. trying to relocate themselves in alien environments. While discussing about diasporas, it is generally perceived that once uprooted, the diasporas have to live with a sense of uprootedness forever as their homelands stand only for a place 'always longed for.' Besides, an attempt is being made to highlight that sometimes these homelands can also become a foreign place for which no desire to visit or return is felt as the hostlands which seem to be so hostile and alien in the beginning, gradually become a place of permanent existence for the immigrant.

The term 'diaspora' which initially was used in connection with the exile of the Jews from their homeland Palestine, is now being used to include all types of immigrants and their migration, whether forced or voluntary from their homelands to other transnational lands as well as within the nation. In order to understand its changing implications with the passage of time, it is necessary to discuss the views presented by different scholars and theorists in this field. Throwing light on the concept of diaspora, William Safran in his essay "Diaspora in Modern Societies: Myths of Homeland and Return" pertinently observes that only that group can be called a 'diaspora' in which there is a dispersal of people "from an original center" to "two or more foreign regions" and who keep on maintaining a "collective memory, vision or myth about their original homeland" (qtd. in Vertovac 7). He further asserts that the diasporas remain alienated in host society by having a desire to return to "their ancestral home" (qtd. in Vertovac 7). These features known as forerunners of the concept of diaspora have been modified by Robin Cohen, who with the intention to move away from the definitions based on the paradigm of Jewish experiences, stresses that "the

possibility of a distinctive creative, enriching life in host countries with a tolerance for pluralism" can also be one of the common features of the concept of diaspora (*Global Diasporas*, 26). Believing the term etymologically to be more positive, he further expresses that "it is because of a degree of anxiety in diasporas that they are motivated for achievements" (24) which is obvious from the various accomplishments of diasporas in different parts of the world than of those living in their homelands. Arguing further on this phenomenon, Khachig Tololyan in his essay "Rethinking Diaspora: Stateless Power in the Transnational Moment" states that one's continuous practice and one's development of "diasporic consciousness" makes a person "diasporan" (30). Adding to the idea of "diasporic consciousness," Robin Cohen avers that "[a] strong tie to the past or a block to assimilation in the present and future must exist in order to permit a diasporic consciousness to emerge or to be retained" (*Global Diasporas*, 24). This diasporic consciousness can instigate a strong desire in the minds of diasporas either for assimilation into new environments or for resistance to do so.

Having been brought up in Britain since her childhood, Monica Ali has also observed very closely the changes in diasporic identities due to major historico-political situations prevailing in the UK, particularly with reference to Bangladeshi Muslims, which she has tried to delineate through the portrayal of different characters in *Brick Lane*. Assimilation and acculturation are some of the processes which diasporic individuals directly or indirectly are supposed to go through during their stay in the hostlands. Throwing light on the process of assimilation, Christine Inglis in her essay "Some Recent Australian Writings on Immigration and Assimilation" states that assimilation can be understood as a "psychological process involving satisfaction, identification" which further includes "primary and secondary group contacts with members of the host society" (336-337). Whereas assimilation stands for "complete acceptance of the target culture and rejection of the source culture," the process of acculturation entails accepting the "target culture without rejecting the source culture" (Svensson 24). Acculturation allows the immigrants an access to the two cultural environments resulting in cultural hybridity which is not only the combination of two cultures but it also results in creation of a new transformed identity. Whereas a few characters in the novel *Brick Lane* wish to belong to both the source culture and the target culture, there are some others who show resistance towards the host culture. There are also second generation diasporic characters in the novel who only want to belong to the host culture as they have assimilated themselves into the environment of London. Thus, Monica Ali seems to project in the novel that for some diasporic individuals, the diasporic consciousness becomes an impetus for assimilation in hostlands whereas for other individuals, it is a cause of resistance to acculturate in the same place.

The older image of migrants is generally perceived as deterritorialized, free-floating people belonging to "neither here nor there" but the professionally trained and skilled migrants going voluntarily to the developed countries in search of better economic opportunities during the late twentieth and early twenty first century are different from them. Under the impact of globalization, these people have now been able to produce strong "transnational connections that differ in fundamental ways from those maintained by immigrants a century ago" (Foner 360). Thus, in the present scenario, the notion of diaspora cannot be separated from the process of maintaining, negotiating, transforming and reinventing cultural identities which are always on the path of continuous change.

Monica Ali too in *Brick Lane* seems to propose that by being far from the boundaries

of original home, one can also have the vision for the transformation and creation of modern, contextual identities. The narrative moves around an area in East London, known as Brick Lane, a temporary interzone for immigrants who have not yet fully settled in England. Nazneen, a poorly educated girl living in Bangladesh was married off by her family at the age of seventeen to Chanu, an overweight windbag and twenty years older than her who brings Nazneen to his small home in Brick Lane where he had been living for more than twenty years before marriage. After being estranged from her original homeland, Nazneen keeps on craving for it in the initial years during her stay in Brick Lane. Always sustaining a hope of going back to Bangladesh, she, somehow, manages to live in the suburbs of London, but the “omnipresence of foreignness and the necessity of grappling with its influence render this act a creative reconstruction liberating it from circumscribed limits” (Banerjee 12).

However, a change in Nazneen's thought and life style begins when Chanu buys her a sewing machine to fulfill her desire to work and the machine becomes a symbol of her emancipation. Ultimately, when Chanu decides to go back to Bangladesh with his family, Nazneen chooses to live in Britain itself rather than going back with him, as in London she gets the feeling of having a space where she can create “an independent and creative identity” (Banerjee 71). Cohen, while discussing about the migrants in foreign lands, opines that after a long duration of their stay, these migrants start feeling a bond of “language, religion, culture and . . . history” with other migrants and “perhaps a common fate impregnates such a transnational relationship and gives it an affective, intimate quality that formal citizenship or even long settlement frequently lack” (*Global Diasporas*, 20). While living in London with other Muslim women of her country, Nazneen also starts feeling the same.

Rainer Baubock and Thomas Faist opine that for diasporas, a return to homeland should be replaced “with dense and continuous linkages across borders” including countries of not only origin and destination but also the “countries of onward migration, and thus emphasizing lateral ties” (Faist 12). Monica Ali too, through Nazneen, has shown that in this new world, diasporas have not only changed but are 'perpetually remade' in changing circumstances and instead of feeling homeless, uprooted, alienated, continuously craving for a desire to return to 'homeland', they believe in accepting the new British culture without rejecting the source culture. Nazneen comes out as a migrant who successfully reaches the third step of migration i.e. “integration of migrants into the countries of settlement” after passing through the phase of separation and transition (Faist 13). Here integration may be defined as a course of action when, besides accepting the host culture and its norms and values, a migrant is also able to retain many aspects of his/her own culture and gradually feels himself/herself accepted into the alien surroundings. Realizing London as her ultimate 'home', Nazneen says at one point, “I didn't know that I was searching for a place which I've already found” (Ali 394). Victor W. Turner, viewing migration as a three-step process, remarks that after crossing the liminal space or the transitional phase consisting of various 'changes', a migrant reaches “in a relatively stable state once more” (45). Nazneen has also been shown such a character by Monica Ali in the novel under study.

The individuals like Chanu and Karim also have been portrayed as those identities in the novel who in order to integrate into the White society adopt its practices and ways into their lives. Chanu starts consuming alcohol in the 'forced' company of other educated migrants like Dr. Azad to claim himself to be westernized. Having a desire to become

'respectable' not only in the Bangladeshi community but also in the British, he wishes "to be a British Civil servant . . . a High Flyer, Top Earner, Head of Department, Permanent secretary . . ." (406). But the trajectory of change in diasporic identities is never the same for all individuals, as Jana Evans also states that "we are in a unique historical moment wherein different diasporic trajectories intersect and overlap" (12). Chanu's hope of coming to terms with new environment assuming that the host culture would also embrace him open-heartedly in return, changes into despair gradually as he ends up just by being a driver only and goes back to Bangladesh eventually. Faced with the racial discrimination and an indifferent attitude of host society, these individuals start feeling a sense of longing and reunion with the original home and are compelled to "maintain important allegiances and practical connections to a homeland or a dispersed community located elsewhere" (Clifford 307).

While talking about the varied experiences of diasporic people, Robin Cohen pertinently remarks that these experiences can be distinguished as "the 'solid' diaspora, marked by powerful myths of a common origin territorialized in an 'old country' and the 'liquid' diaspora, which is constructed through new cultural links and a substitution of sacred icons" respectively ("Solid, Ductile . ." 119). In *Brick Lane*, Ali also dwells upon these experiences through portraying Chanu's experiences on the one side and those of Nazneen and her daughters on the other side. After his numerous professional failures, Chanu concentrates on his sole and the last aim, i.e., to return to his homeland Dhaka and settle there permanently. However, relocating herself along with her daughters Shahana and Bibi in London itself, Nazneen is a representative of those transformed diasporic identities who have undergone diaspora experience defined "by a conception of 'identity' which lives with and through not despite difference, by hybridity" (Hall 235). For the second generation diasporic characters, Shahana and Bibi who are born and brought up in London, the boundaries between the homeland and the hostland have been erased. Having born in Britain, their acceptance of its culture is more enthusiastic than that of the country of their origin as there are no direct ties with old cultures for them. These diasporic identities seem to have transformed themselves a lot by following the process of acculturation and assimilation.

On the other hand, by portraying the characters of Hasina, Chanu, and Karim (who also go back to Bangladesh due to increasing racial discrimination after 9/11) in contrast to those of Nazneen and her daughters, Ali seems to be raising a very pertinent question i.e. 'which place can be defined as 'home'?' Besides, if "home is a place of return" and also a "lived experience of a locality," as says Avtar Brah (192) then how far this is true for the people like Hasina, Chanu and Karim who never feel located properly at any place whether it is home or abroad, and for the people like Nazneen and her daughters who never want to return to their so called original homelands. Here both older and recent usages have been presented by depicting that the process of "migrant integration," "cultural innovations" on the one hand, and cultural distinctions, on the other hand, may co-exist in the changing world of globalization (Baubock 13). The changing contours of diaspora in the contemporary context are shown transcending the old paradigm of assimilation. Rather than assuming the journey of migrants as unidirectional trajectory, i.e., a sharp break from homelands and a singular path of assimilation, there is an emphasis on the fact that the journey followed by the diasporic identities in the present world is "neither unidirectional, nor final" but it "follows multifarious trajectories and sustains diverse networks" (Lie 304).

By portraying the characters of Nazneen and her daughters, Ali indicates that not

the ghettoization but the hybridization and acculturation are the necessary requirements for migrants in the globalised world to 'incorporate' within the host culture. Therefore, hybridization is clearly evident from the journey of Nazneen who after being displaced from her homeland in Gouripur (Bangladesh) finally gets transformed into an independent, 'model' migrant moving from margin to the centre and ultimately becomes a successful hybrid identity. Ali has also depicted Razia, a first generation migrant, who after her husband's death realizes the potential of her new home country and decides to live independently by learning English and adopting western lifestyle. Arjun Appadurai, giving his views on these changes, aptly remarks that in this world "both points of departure and points of arrival are in cultural flux, and thus the search for steady points of reference . . . can be very difficult" (42).

Moreover, the notion that for diasporas the 'home' in original homeland no longer exists and they are left only with "broken mirrors, some of whose fragments have been irretrievably lost" (Rushdie 11), also needs to be reconceptualized in the present context. Linked to hybrid identities, it is not only "back home" that has been caught up in the process of modernization, rather diasporic identities themselves have undergone the changes or transformation in various respects. Ali projects in the novel how after returning to his homeland Bangladesh, Chanu has to compromise with a meager job in a soap factory. He is not properly relocated even in his homeland as he himself is a changed hybrid identity now after having spent so many years in London.

The development of new technologies in the field of information and communication has also attached new meanings to the already existing notions of diaspora resulting in greater mobility of diasporas to homelands. In a way, the trajectory of change in the concept of diaspora resembles that of the trajectory of change in 'diasporic identities,' as they are transformed a lot with the passage of time. In the contemporary context, "interpretations of migration . . . have given way to ideas of diaspora as communities of simultaneously local and pluralistic identities, ethnic and transnational affiliations and celebrations of cosmopolitanism" (Banerjee 7). In other words, along with loneliness and rootlessness, 'diaspora' also stands for 'movement and dynamism,' 'origin and belonging,' 'community and culture' in the present scenario.

Thus, instead of recognizing diaspora as a traditional concept relating to the scattering of people from their homeland to which they must return, an attempt has been made to study this concept as a "sense of belonging to more than one history, to more than one time and place, to more than one past and future" (Docker vii). In fact, the change in diasporic identities varies from individual to individual and is never 'transparent'. Moreover, "instead of thinking of identity as an . . . accomplished fact . . . we should think of, instead, identity as a 'production' which is never complete, always in process and always constituted within, not outside representation" (Hall 222).

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## Neoliberal Subjectivity in Bharati Mukherjee's *Miss New India*

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Neo-liberalisation has an active role in shaping the identity of the neo-liberalised individual based on the tenets of individuality, material acquisition and practices of identity formation through consumption. Anjali, the protagonist of Bharati Mukherjee's novel *Miss New India* (2011) fits into the icon and identity of the neo-liberalised category of the new Indian woman perfectly. This new woman needs to harmoniously fuse Indianness and global-ness, values of middle class respectability and a professional career; maintaining the balance between the private and public realms by being both domestic and outgoing. But most importantly, as being the representative of India's burgeoning middle class, after the economic reforms of 1991 and consequent economic liberalization, she needs to validate her identity by wholeheartedly possessing a unidimensional, conspicuously consumerist attitude towards life (Varma 176-77). Anjali Bose identifies herself with the globalized Indian citizen, calling herself Angie, wearing Western wear and looking at everyone, even her own self as a marketable resource to be used for self-enhancement.

India is traditionally a non-consumerist culture, that boils down to the austerity and frugality of a typical family household like that of the Bose family, one, which is characterised by "the mother's modesty, the father's authority, the spontaneous hospitality, the obsequiousness of the staff, the absence of ostentation" (Mukherjee 22). Anjali, aspirant to belong to the new Indian upwardly mobile middle class is critical and ironic of her parents' non-consumerist, unostentatious mode of life. The austerity of Bose household is indicated in the staple habit of the earlier middle class as reflected in Anjali's mother's hoarding staple food in her "just in case bins" (Mukherjee 19). Anjali's father, unlike Parbati and Auro would abstain from any leisure obsessions like gardening or origami for fear of looking foolish and that of unnecessary indulgence. Her parents would showcase Anjali as the epitome of Bengali virtue to augment her value in the marriage market. To them, "...at least she wasn't a modern, citified, selfish, materialist girl" (Mukherjee 21) – which precisely she is.

Now, the new Indian identity, as we find celebrated in the new Indian English fiction is necessarily consumerist. Varma points out the earlier socialist goals of the state and the then general acceptance of the notion of non-consumerism and that of restraint on materialistic exhibitionism, as received from the Gandhian and Nehruvian ideals. People would find respect linked with what one did and achieved, rather than what one owned. He emphasises,

The important point is that in the years immediately after Independence, the middle class believed that the professed bias of the State towards the poor was valid and necessary, and it was prepared, at least in theory, to accommodate interests outside its own narrow ken (Varma 42-3).

However, the economic reforms of 1991 and the economic liberalization that have been sweeping across the country for the last few years have altered the lives of a large section of India's burgeoning middle class. The liberalization process gave both legitimacy to and opportunity for greater material gratification. Consumerism was dissociated from any feeling of guilt and an important development that parallels globalization and adds feature to the new India is the spontaneous self-assertive materialism and an unapologetic new consumerism in the new Indian citizen. In a country that was overtly poor, according to Varma, the emphasis had long been on restraint of material acquisition and austerity but with neoliberalism and the inflow of global capital, consumerism came to be sanctified and was suddenly severed from guilt as the middle class' ability to consume was now the index to mark progress. In fact, globalization is a process focussed on practices of identity formation through consumption that creates consumer subjects and consumer citizens. Anjali here is one such prospective client, marked by her "enthusiasm for and awareness of the lifestyle of the developed countries, with greater attention to convenience and individuality and greater optimism about the future" (Singh 7).

This consumerist stance, inherent in Anjali is severely disappointed when she enters the room of her American teacher for the first time and finds it lacking any furniture or modern amenity. "...the rooms were so barren, so like a servant's quarters...his exposure agitated her" (Mukherjee 10). Even when she is planning on escape, materialist Anjali finds the intercity bus not up to her mark as to her, buses are for the underclass. However, she is an opportunist to think, "people who ride by bus are humble...space could always be cleared for a young college girl in a t-shirt and jeans" (Mukherjee 69). She is also an impulsive and compulsive buyer of consumer items ranging from clothes, accessories and shoes. The moment she arrives in Bangalore, all she can think of is money, and what to buy with it.

At times, Anjali seems obsessed and fetishized with her own physical beauty, which she looks at as if that is something tangible, reified, marketable and consumable. She also totes up her assets and liabilities, in the marriage market. With globalization, the general, pervasive atmosphere of consumerism percolates even to the private zone of marriage and complicates the realm of family values with marketplace practices, ideas about cultural capital, the rise of extortionate dowry demands, objectification, commercial print culture and online worldwide market. The role of the would-be brides in pressurising their parents to spend luxuriously so they can have the kind of tasteful wedding they deserve to have becomes evident in Anjali's silent, reflective comparison of her would-be marriage with Sonalidi's gaudy event. Notwithstanding her father's compromising economic condition and despite her lack of any financial contribution to her plans, Anjali decides that "Her wedding...would have glamour and dignity" (Mukherjee 25). It is this tendency that Yogesh Atal brings to focus: "now even daughters prod their parents to spend more on their weddings and to give them a large dowry" (Atal 237).

Anjali becomes so abjectly materialistic and consumerist that to her, even the evil and denigrating practice of taking dowry seems justified. Thinking of Sunita, who decidedly rejects the idea of being married to anyone, who expects a dowry in return, Anjali reflects: "What kind of desirable boy thinks so little of himself that he doesn't demand a dowry? . . . Even my father thought I was worth a matched set of golf clubs" (Mukherjee 131). However, the very idea of equating herself to a matched set of golf clubs brings her to reckoning with shame, "And then she thought, almost ashamed to admit it, Yes, Sunita, you

are of little value" (Mukherjee 131).

Probing into the nature and facts pertaining to this rise of consumerism, it is important to note that the credit card industry mushroomed into a 1600-crore business. More than a million Indians gave up generations of financial conservatism, which stressed on the dangers of going into debt, to become credit card holders (Varma 185). Anjali is nineteen years old which explains that she has grown up at a time when the consumer culture was gaining pace in India and satellite television had an important role to play in this mechanism. The mass media and programmes aired through various national and international channels propagated the idea of this ideal, materialistic good life to be cherished and aspired and fuelled unabashed consumerism. Her body is a resource to her, as is her culpability as a woman from a remote Gauripur, being washed up in Bangalore and she uses her resources in transaction to achieve what she wants. As Hursh points out, "neoliberalism perceives of and promotes the individual as an autonomous entrepreneur responsible for his or her self, progress and position" (Hursh 115). Anjali takes on the role of the individual subject who must assume responsibility for herself and her own well-being and thus she acts as an active consumer-entrepreneur in the economy. After gifting her the magical silvery call phone, almost immediately Mr GG takes her to his posh apartment at the Cubbon Park and desires to have a sexual rendezvous with her. Anjali is surprised but not affronted. Rather as a true neoliberal consumer subject, she tries to take control of the situation by transacting her body to the best consumer available at hand. She exhilarates in the fact that this well-connected, powerful man desires her. She decides that she is not a victim but a seller, who decides to sell her merchandise to the highest bidder in this market. The marriage market is not where she chooses to put herself up in, but nevertheless, in this globalized, consumerist realm, she can hardly keep herself aloof from the encroaching reaches of the market forces. Also, according to Sandhya Gupta, the spread of global capitalism has brought in not only increased sexual freedom and segregation of sex and marriage as categories, but also the commodification of every part of our lives, including sex (Gupta 40). Anjali's unprejudiced attitude towards sex as a mere insignificant activity, without any associated moral compunctions, also owes itself in the role of the burgeoning media, especially that of MTV, which has been an important ideological influence and alternative to her parents' tutelage, during her growing years.

Anjali is calculative to such an extent that she invests her time on the wealthy "her serene highness, the never-ruffled" (Mukherjee 139). Husseina Shiraj and the perky Tookie DeMello who can provide her with information she needs but she doesn't have time for the lower middle class Sunita Sampath who has little transactional value to her. Anjali remarks on the aspect of fat on the young people in Bangalore, an overt indicator of over-consumption, more than their mantle can take. She weighs her self-worth as also anyone else's by the external manifestation of their attire, social holding and possessions—self earned or not. It is her habit to judge people by the fashion they hold, the things they wear, the cars they ride in, the connections they have and the accent they speak their English in. These are the loci of understanding how much money they can afford to spend, how deep pocketed they are, and these are the factors that decide their desirability to her. Anjali quickly takes note of brands wherever she finds one, as she describes the "mustached man in Ray-Bans" (Mukherjee 87) in the barista or the Tanishq gold choker that Parvati wears for the high tea or the woman employee in Tookie's office in a Versace T-shirt. The paintings

signed by artists like Anjolie Ela Menon, Arpita Singh, Rini Dhumal in the Banerjee drawing room at Dollar Colony have brand value as well.

This tendency to enumerate the brands on a person is evocative of a new trend in contemporary globalized India. Now, instead of inherent human qualities, attributes and values, brands have become the icons that function as the new identity markers that conspire to instil a sense of an exclusive community and superior status among people who can buy into them and who, by dint of their purchasing status, are assumed to share similar ideals and values. It is indicative of a particular lifestyle that is promoted as one worth aspiring. The new image-conscious consumers value the sign-value that brands offer. The aspiring new generation that seeks to accommodate themselves into the category of new India like Anjali, is tempted by this offer, promoted by expensive, multinational brands, of inclusion into the preferred, privileged social cycle at par with global consumers. This allure comes along with the power to purchase and own products of multinational brands.

However, Anjali's consumerist attitude, brand consciousness, ease with mass-media-generated imagery and ideas and exposure to consumer goods protect her from being bewildered at her arrival at the city. She is familiar with the names of cars that she sees on Bangalore streets. She is confident in the flawless American English that she has trained to speak in. And in the barista, where she first goes on arriving at Bangalore, she feels immediately at home with nearly all the boys and girls, her age, dressed like her, in jeans and T-shirts, chattering in American English. Anjali can feel connected with these call centre employees at once, though she does not understand the Bangalore babble they speak in. She at once decides that she has suddenly become a global citizen, not anymore inhibited by old world conditions. She cannot hesitate now or worry about her future or reputation. She can put on any role, fabricate any identity. She feels liberated. She bursts into the endless possibilities of the globalized locale as she feels that here she could be anything she wanted to be. She decides she cannot be skimpy on comfort, especially now that it can be easily purchased. She has to be adventurous and binge on the opportunities that the city opens up to her.

According to GG, these young women, "the new species of tyger-lamb" (Mukherjee 273), in their materialistic conviction and mature sense of independence bear the right to the entitlement of Miss India, rather than the infantile pageant winners. Therefore, consumption can vitalise transformative acts as well and aid in the production of a new individual out of the confines of an old non-consumerist world order and constitute part of a strategic resistance. Thus, Anjali-Angie-Anjolie Bose must be the perfect person to embody the new glitzy India that is emerging post neoliberalism. Anjali is a character constantly in the process of fabrication, whose making involves an unmaking of the past. She is not humble, not hesitant in grabbing 'help' etched out to her by people willing and eager to reach out to her. She is calculative and a job to her is the key to happiness. She believes in the transformative power of money that can change her from a small-town girl into the new mysterious woman from Bangalore. She has assumed neoliberal subjectivity to the core in that she is the one with a fierce sense of self-care, who remains independent and assumes responsibility for herself as well as manages her own risk, one who develops a suspicious disposition and a calculative rationality to survive. She believes she can be equal to anybody. There is no need absolutely for the old world reverence and respect for superiority. Every position is acquirable; every marker of success, power and status,

consumable. She derives her die-hard optimism from her faith in Peter Champion's ultimatum: "Break your feudal habit of revering masters and elders" (Mukherjee 122). She is the postcolonial new woman, ought to be self-sufficient and ready to take on any role and any means to achieve what she wants for herself.

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## From Silence to Speech: Women in Anees Jung's *Beyond the Courtyard*

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India is a vast country where cultural backgrounds, religions and traditions vary widely, the extent of discrimination against women also varies from one societal stratum to another and from state to state as some areas in India are more inclined to gender bias than others. No doubt, India is moving away from the male dominated culture, discrimination is still highly visible in rural as well as in urban areas, throughout all strata of society. Anees Jung embarked on a journey into the remotest corners of India, she discovered apathy, cruelty and untold misery which characterized the faceless lives of the women. The shocking awareness culminated in the book, *Unveiling India* (1987). In the sequel, *Beyond the Courtyard* (2003) she returns to investigate what if anything has altered for their daughters. Have the dramatic changes in the social scene in the wake of liberalization cable TV and a general opening up of society made any fundamental difference to their lives? Do they possess the resilience of their mothers or is this a generation hovering uncertainly between two worlds unwilling to be fettered by tradition and yet lacking the courage to break free? As before Anees Jung finds stories of suffering and fortitude, despair and hope: a young Rajput woman in Kutch defies the veil and her husband's command to take up a job; Ameena in Hyderabad rescued from an ageing Arab Sheikh in 1992 when barely twelve is finally married off to another man more than twice her age; young mothers in Punjab are forced to kill their unborn daughters; a young prostitute in Mumbai fights drug addiction and hate determined to live with dignity. Journeying across forgotten landscapes both human and geographic, Anees Jung paints yet another poignant, unforgettable and at times harrowing portrait of women in India who have been psychologically and physically impacted by the dominant cultural forces and consigned to the margins as "invisible beings." Her narrative mirrors on their "lived experiences" to offer a penetrating leap to the reader into their abysmal predicament, horrid and agonizing predicament so that the missing gaps in the dominant patriarchal narratives are filled.

*Beyond the Courtyard* records the trials and tribulations of the women at the grass-root level all across India; the stories and testimonies provide a glimpse to the passionate, deeply touching, often soul stirring real life situations. Behind all these painful stories is a woman who has fought many battles and traversed a journey from a *pardah* clad conservative family to sloughing off her traditional upbringing so as to rise up to become a highly successful, independent career woman. Anees Jung was a pioneer in the sense that she trudged across the inner heartland just to reach out to the unreachable sections, to make these women narrate the untold stories of their lived experiences however bitter they may be. Her firm conviction that these women are the best preservers of the essence of India, is reflected in her interactions with these women.

Applying Feminist Standpoint theory, the present paper attempts to explore 'the Lived Experiences' of these marginalized women, portrayal of their predicament, where they were made to speak for themselves in the realistic portrayal of their predicament. Both Patricia Hill Collins and Dorothy Smith have been instrumental in providing a sociological definition of standpoint theory. A Standpoint is an individual's unique world perspective. The theoretical basis of this approach involves viewing societal knowledge as being located within an individual's specific geographic location. In turn, knowledge becomes distinctly unique and subjective- and varies depending upon the social conditions under which it is produced (Mann and Kelley 1997, 392).

Feminist Standpoint theorists generally make three principal claims:

(i) Knowledge is socially situated, (ii) Marginalized groups are socially situated in ways that make it more possible for them to be aware of things and ask questions than they are for non- marginalized, and (iii) Research particularly that focused on power relations should begin with the lives of the marginalized.

The feminist standpoint as developed by Nancy Hartsock, Dorothy Smith expresses female experience in a particular set of social situations. It allows us to "go beneath the surface of experiences to reveal the real but concealed social relations" (Sandra Harding 70). Therefore women's lives make available a particular and privileged vantage point on male supremacy. Feminist scholars like Bell Hooks and Patricia Hill Collins have advocated taking women's 'lived experiences' as the beginning of development of consciousness which can build power to counter male hegemony.

When Anees Jung travelled through small alleys of Indian villages, she found,

"They emerged as if from ancient shadows, reticent, oppressively silent. They looked into my eyes and half told their stories. Stories of pain and bearing narrated with patience and a sense of 'knowing'. There was about them nobility and a generosity that deeply moved me. I had journeyed deep into the inner worlds of the old land to meet them. These were the women of India" (Foreword).

This pathetic, poetic and moving introduction sets the tone of unearthing the reality behind the doleful eyes brimming with tears, yet ready to take on the world. These women down yet not out, show remarkable strength despite their extenuating and claustrophobic circumstances. History of India is all about men and their exploits, as patriarchy is one of the oldest and most resilient forms of exploitation and oppression deeply embedded into the fabric of our society.

Indian society is an evidence of the centuries old social and textual subjugation of the oppressed women who have been pushed to the periphery and have never been considered fit enough to be cast as protagonists of the mainstream literature. Rather they are rendered invisible, groveling in obscurity, on the margins of existence. In this particular narrative by Anees Jung, these indispensable yet invisible; silent and self-effacing women have been given a voice, a medium to narrate their own 'lived experiences' which had been negated, totally denied to them. At every step, they are pushed further into the life of ignominy to resurface again as the mythical bird 'phoenix' because they are resilient and have developed strategies of survival. The characters who have been voicing their stories



range from adolescents to elderly women, even prostitutes who have been declared social outcasts by the mainstream society. They fall in the lower rung of the binary–man/woman; powerful/weak so are always at the receiving end. Yet they are fighters, they develop the spirit to fight, to struggle against all odds: class, hegemony, patriarchy against the various forces which are appropriated by the system deeply entrenched in their psyche to keep the women in their position.

Anees Jung visits a family whose daughter laments, “I have no one to talk to” (xi). Anees found that mother too was totally shattered, alienated. They were living in abyss. There was no communication, just an inner claustrophobia. Both were creatures of silence best epitomized in the Urdu word–*Ghutan*. “The inner claustrophobia spawned visibly by the enclosed courtyard .and invisibly, surrounding them from all directions” (xii). Lack of communication sums up the relationship between Vimal, a young girl and her widowed mother, whose hurry to marry her off at a tender age just to fulfill her responsibility, breaks into smithereens the dreams of Vimal who aspires to study.

The story of Vimal is narrated by Lallan Bai, an unsung heroine acclaimed by the writer in her previous book *Unveiling India*. Lallan Bai herself had passed through a very traumatic phase of her life and gained wisdom and maturity. At present when she met Anees after so many years, she as health worker had brought about a perceptible change in her area, so was keen to help and guide Vimal also. Vimal's husband was alcoholic; she simply found courage one day and ran back to her home only to face the hostility instead of warmth from her mother. As wisely suggested by Lallan Bai, both need to understand each other's' problems and find a solution.

Another girl named Laila, from the similar background had committed suicide. She was an extremely talented girl and her parents tried to provide her with everything she required, yet there was a huge communication gap. Her soaring spirit found solace in the paintings she created and the poetry she wrote. When Ms. Najma, a counselor from the Maithri institution (that runs a Helpline for the adolescents) inquired about Laila from her classmates, none of them knew about her death or the circumstances leading to her death. 'Laila was not part of the geography of their lives' (xiii), thus leading to the disconnect. After her death, Najma visited her home, in order to collect her paintings and her diary where she had vented out her feelings of extreme desolation--a silhouette of a girl; by the riverside; or in the forest or on an abandoned rock. Parents were benumbed with grief, they couldn't gauge the depths of despair; her loneliness of an extremely sensitive soul and had simply junked the paintings and her diaries consigned to flames as they were unable to understand the 'muted expressions' of their daughter. But a few survived . . . became her voice . . . a thin wail emerging from the depths of her soul to light up the worlds of many young girls like her. She writes,

“With wings outstretched  
Fly my birds of desire  
Your inner soul  
You come for a moment  
And read my inner soul  
Peace is with me when you are near  
My mind attained salvation” (xii).

These are the fragmented remnants of little girl's dreams- paintings and her

poignant poetry which might have been the sole reason of her survival. "The spaces beyond the cramped courtyard of these young girls hold undeciphered visions" (xiv). In order to decipher them they need conducive atmosphere which sometimes they don't get, so feel suffocated. Anees Jung gave her the voice she lacked, made her the subject of her own story to live, to breathe for a while on the pages of her book, where she went on to record as many stories as she could. Adrienne Rich, an American feminist, strongly believes that women's subjectivity can only be constructed through an articulation of personal life experiences. She states, "Only the willingness to share private and sometimes painful experiences can enable women to create a collective description of the world that is truly ours" (Adrienne 16).

Anees describes a woman's journey through life by using an analogy of a street performer who walks on the tight rope, arms outstretched and eye focused, her gait almost that of trapeze dancer as she is being watched by the audience that surround her. The woman walks with poise and is able to reach the end of her journey amidst thunderous applause. The author then shifts her focus to the plight of young girls, barely in their teens in the slums of Hyderabad, where in older times, traditional values were nurtured but now they were traded for a few bucks. These teenagers barely out of puberty were commodified and sold for a price in the name of marriage. Anees recalls the story which had created quite a furore in 1992, when Ameena, the object of the lusty Arab's desire, was sold just for 10,000 rupees at the tender age of eleven. While flying to the Gulf; an airhostess grew suspicious and reported the matter to the police. She was fortunately rescued and her story helped awaken the consciousness of the people to the core issues to the extent that while a few years back young girls were not allowed to move beyond the four walls, they were now attending a training center established by the Govt. But to expect complete transformation will take some time as stories of persecution continue. These girls who are too young to resist the victimization by the Sheikhs and their parents alike, exposed the predatory economics of their brokering deals.

A pretty diminutive girl, Afzal narrates her pathetic story, "He was to wed my elder sister . . . but he didn't like her, he said she was too short" (6) reveals the extent to which they are treated as mere objects to be auctioned. If the buyer does not like one he can always have another. Her voice was not heard and was buried beneath the need to raise a family of twelve people by a poor *qawwali* singer, her father. Such were the depressing stories of Ameena and Afzal, which send warning signals. "The story was the same; the agony identical" (7). The height of their audacity was that these girls were abandoned just a few days after marriage which was just a ploy to sanctify their sexual exploitation. If these girls had not spoken out, there would be many more falling prey to this gruesome trade, thus Anees Jung emerges as an 'organic voice' of the oppressed group.

Patricia Hill Collins, a renowned American Sociologist, in *The Black Feminist Thought*, notes that valuing the experiences of the oppressed groups helps to produce oppositional and shared consciousness in the oppressed groups. She aims to create oppressed groups as 'subjects' of their own stories rather than as objects. Therefore, 'the lived experiences' of the marginalized women give us a clear vision of the circumstances which are oppressive and render them "muted within dominant societal structures" (Orbe 03). Those living in the slums also construe the 'marginal location' as a privileged position because of their social situatedness. These slums are transformed into 'safe spaces' where they can weave and nurture their dreams of a bright future. Patricia Hill Collins further

points out that

“The social situatedness of oppressed persons offers them with a critical insight as each oppressed group can learn to identify its distinctive opportunities to turn an oppressive feature into a source of critical insight about how the dominant society is structured” (Collins 07).

The story of the sex workers of Sona Gachi awakens the reader to new realm of awareness about the women who were pushed into the flesh trade by their sordid circumstances. Ruma laments that her husband was an alcoholic, “I had hunger in my belly and beatings on my back” (105), Things deteriorated when her husband started bringing his friends home, who sexually exploited her. She was commodified when he started getting money in exchange. She was left with no option, she fled from the place of her persecution strangely her 'homespace', but before she left she informed Panchayat of her decision. Unfortunately, the place she started working in, the owner also started exploiting her. She utters a cry of agony, “where could I go then? prostitution is everywhere” (106). So she descended into this business, at Sona Gachi but resolved that she would protect other young girls entering into this line. Her own persecution at the hands of those whom she trusted implicitly, gave her an 'insight' into the lives of others and she evolved from a victim to a person, completely in control of her sexuality, and from there emerged as a savior to the young girls.

The focus in the narrative shifts to the trials and tribulations of a midwife Sita- a *dai*, for the last 22 years in the hilly village of Rajgarh in Himachal Pradesh. Sita hadn't got any professional training but just learnt the technicalities and nuances of midwifery from a senior whom she would often accompany. In fact, in the absence of a well-qualified doctor and staff, Sita was the only hope for the villagers but she was not accepted by them as their own. Though she played such an intimate role in their lives yet was an 'outsider within.' Her situation changed her perception, she developed an urge to seek apprenticeship with a doctor in order to secure a place for herself in the society which had alienated her.

Patricia Hill Collins opines, “The concept of the “outsider within” refers to a special standpoint encompassing the self, family and society” (Collins 1986, 1). This relates to the specific experiences to which people are subjected as they move from a common cultural world. Therefore, a woman may acquire special expertise or may gain mastery of a particular field yet she is made to feel as though “she never quite belongs” (Collins 14). Essentially, their cultural and social situation overshadow their true value as an individual; thus become outsider in their own society. Speaking from a critical standpoint, Collins affirms what Britain and Maynard claim, (1984:199), “domination always involves the objectification of the dominated; all forms of domination imply the devaluation of the subjectivity of the oppressed” (Quoted in *The Black Feminist Thought*). The self-valuation and self-definition are the two ways of resisting oppression as happens with many of the characters in the various stories narrated by Anees Jung. Some like Lallan Bai manage to rise above their circumstances and some like Vimal simply give up. A faint glimmer of hope rekindles our faith in the progressive outlook discerned by the writer where an Indian mother begins to say to herself and her daughter, “I chose to have you because I wanted to be a mother. I chose to work because that gives me a different sense of self-worth that is neither greater nor lesser than motherhood, only different” (121).

Such lived experiences create a unique standpoint and pave way for alternative

space where voiceless gain agency by voicing their stories steeped in pain. Anees Jung observes that, "though they may have succeeded in creating an alternative space, an alternative vision is yet to emerge." Anees Jung strikes a very optimistic note amidst all this despondency, "I believe in the land and I know it will find its way" (xiv).

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## Negotiating Muslim Identity in Mohsin Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*

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*'And then?'*

*'And then the Towers fell.'*

*'And you stopped being an individual and started being an entire religion.'*

(Kamila Shamsie. *Broken Verses*, 2005:45)

The friction between the East and the West existed since the time of the Crusade-the religious wars. The Crusades aiming at recovering the Holy Land, Jerusalem from Muslim rule, continued several centuries and ended finally in favour of Islam. Since then, bitterness conditioned the thinking of the West for the Muslim. The persistent “extremely negative images (of Arabs and Islam): the stereotypes of lustful, vengeful, violent, irrational, fanatical people” (Said 114) got further intensified after the attack of 9/11. The identity of the Muslim was questioned once again as the incident widened the existing gulf of mistrust. The resultant distortion of the perception and approach towards the Muslim community seemed to consolidate the position of Islam as a hostile and inferior culture and the Muslims became, as Noam Chomsky holds, “the symbol of ultimate evil” (Chomsky 34).

The rippling effects of the terrorist attack on 11 September 2001 when two hijacked passenger planes crashed into the twin towers of the World Trade Centre, Manhattan, New York, were felt globally. It was found “something quite new in world affairs” (Chomsky 41) for its scale and target. The attack had severe economical, psychological and social implications on America. This attack claimed about 3000 human lives, a million dollars' worth infrastructure and peace in the society. Depression, anxiety, post-traumatic disorder and insomnia ensued in the following weeks and months of the attacks. Socially, the American culture of openness took a back seat and uninhibitedly leashed an attack of hatred and accusation. The attack jolted the Americans but it also shook the Muslim world to the core. It recreated the image of Muslims as fundamentalists and terrorists. This change in outlook deepened the identity crisis of the Muslims. The immigrant Muslims immediately came under a scanner of skepticism pushing them to the margins from the mainstay. The circumstances after the 9/11 attack, invited extreme hostility against Muslim community and raised question on their loyalty. The Muslims “who are formally citizens of the United States are now being thrust outside of the protective ambit of citizenship as identity” (Volpp 159).

## **Narrative Cutting**

In the wake of this most tragic event of the century, writers like, Mohammad Hanif, Nadeem Aslam, Kamila Shamsie, Daniyal Mueenuddin and Mohsin Hamid documented the diasporic experiences of Muslim immigrants. A large body of literature depicted various shades of this dark chapter of human history. This act of writing back a defying narrative is a part of what Edward Said calls “a constant struggle to re-represent Islam” and “a reactive counter response” (Said 300). In this context, Mohsin Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (2007) stands out as an important milestone. It seems to provide authentic and in-depth account of the plight of a Muslim immigrant after 9/11 attack.

*The Reluctant Fundamentalist* as a pioneer work of fiction writing which not only raises the voice of Muslim community against prejudices and social exclusion but also contradicts the culturally structured notions and stereotypes by white Americans. The novel deals with the confrontation between intricate emotional and the complex political world. *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* became a million-copy international best seller, reaching number 4 position on the New York Times Best Seller list and was translated into over 25 languages. The novel was shortlisted for the Man Booker Prize and won several awards including the Anisfield-Wolf Book Award and the Asian American Literary Award.

The author Mohsin Hamid succeeds in his attempt in exploring the identity crisis of the immigrants of the third world in the Western world, particularly of the Muslims. The book highlights the plight of a young Pakistani Muslim Changez Khan who comes from Pakistan, studies at Princeton University, becomes a successful professional with a financial firm Underwood Samson, enjoys reputation in the firm and takes pride in being the part of this newly adopted American culture till the critical day of 9/11. After this event, his life in the host country starts changing. He feels out of place and marginalized. He feels humiliated when treated as an outsider and viewed with suspicion for being a Muslim. He fights and stands for his identity but finally retreats to his country.

### **Exposure to the New World**

The young protagonist of the story, Changez Khan with a dream to make it big in the country of opportunities, leaves his country Pakistan and comes to America. His arrival at the Princeton fills him with a sense of fulfilment. He is proud to be associated, identified and hooked to an identity that a country like America might fetch him. Changez feels elated; for him “this is a dream come true. Princeton inspired me the feelings that my life was film in which I was a star and everything was possible” (TRF 3). A Princeton degree and prestigious job in a leading evaluation firm Underwood Samson increases Changez's fondness for America. He starts identifying himself as a “lover of America” (TRF 1) and “A young New Yorker” (TRF 45). Overwhelmed with the sense of gratification he feels “bathed in a warm sense of accomplishment” (TRF 45). His desperation to fit into the American culture gets intensified “I attempted to act and speak as much as my dignity would permit more like an American” (TRF 65). He admits that his mannerism “appealed his senior colleagues” (TRF 41) as his angalized accent in America is associated with wealth and power. There are times when he is completely oblivious of his real identity as on his very first day at Underwood Samson office he “did not think of himself as a Pakistani” (TRF 34) as his firm's impressive offices made him “proud” (TRF 34). In a candid confession he admits “I learned to tell executive of my father's age – I need it now” (TRF 65). Even when asked of his origin he is unhesitant to declare “I am from New York” (TRF 65).

## Identity Crisis

Changez understands his responsibility as a citizen. The desire to get accepted into the society of the adopted country poses new challenges. His identity is always questioned; he is left with no choice but to face an identity crisis. "Identity has many factors contributing to its development and these factors differ from individual to individual. Identity crisis on the other hand, originates for an immigrant when his original identity obtained from his homeland, clashes with demands of a new identity in the new land" (Erikson 170).

Though Changez wins appreciation of his senior and companions but doesn't win their trust so easily. Sharing his dream with his companions he says, "I hoped one day to be the dictator of an Islamic republic with nuclear capability" (TRF 29). They appear shocked and seem to take his statement rather seriously though his intention is purely non-serious and lighter. Their shock is quite predictable as Changez belongs to Pakistan; a country which like other Muslim countries has an image of a nation governed by extremists. Changez's only credibility lies in his intelligence and professional abilities. His nationality fails him to win trust and faith. For them, he always remains an outsider. The beginning of the novel itself is suggestive of this very lack of trust between Americans and Muslims. In a meeting with an unnamed American in the old Anarkali market Changez has to make him believe that he is harmless. The conversation between the two begins as "Excuse me, sir, but may I be assistance? Ah, I see I have alarmed you. Do not be frightened by my beard" (TRF 1). His beard, in fact, marks him as a fundamentalist or a terrorist. He becomes the representative of a race that is largely mistaken as extremists. He has to defend himself by saying "I am both a native of this city and a speaker of your language" (TRF 1). In this way, he tries to establish his own identity which seems dual and divided. He makes efforts to impress others that he is different from those who have really broken the trust of Americans. Changez has an identity which no doubt is subjected to a lot of prejudices and it appears that he is almost striving to win faith of others. In this context, the words of German Psychologist Eric Erikson "cultural and historical change can prove traumatic to identity development" (Erikson 159) seem relevant as the attack of 9/11 ruined the fabric of a society where Muslims like other immigrants hitherto had become inseparable thread irrespective of their religion, were now viewed as potential terrorists, fanatical and violent.

Immediately after the 9/11 disaster, the world for Changez, changes for ever. At the Manila airport, he is separated from his team. He is escorted by the armed guards into a room where he is made to strip down to his boxer shorts and humiliated. As a result, he is the last person to board the aircraft and invites looks of concern from many of his fellow passengers. He says "I flew to New York uncomfortable in my own face. I was aware for being under suspicion; I felt guilty" (TRF 74). But his misery continues as at the New York airport he is separated from his team again. They join the queue for American citizens and he joins the one for foreigners. His passport is inspected by a woman officer. He is asked "What is the purpose of your trip to the United States?" (TRF 75) he replies, "I live here" (TRF 75) what she says in return upsets him "that is not what I asked you, sir" (TRF 75). The interrogation ruthlessly attacks his nativity, identity and culture. He is dispatched for a secondary inspection in a room where he sits on a metal bench next to a tattooed man in handcuffs. His team doesn't wait for him and he has to ride all alone to Manhattan. The experience leaves an indelible mark on him. He feels out of the place. His mimicry of a New Yorker sounds futile as soon he is subjected to indignities and racial discrimination, on the

basis of his racial and cultural origin, at the airports. After that incident, Changez can sense the change happening around him. He is made to palpably realize that America is gripped with fervour of patriotism and revenge. American flags all round appear to proclaim as “we are America--the mightiest civilization the world has ever known; you have slighted us; beware our wrath” (TRF79).

Changez doesn't want to believe in the happenings around him and overlooks the crumbling of his American dream. He feels, “shocked at power of his blinkers” (TRF 93). American retaliation on Afghanistan deeply hurts him and as he has always thought of America as a nation that looks forward; for the first time he is struck by its determination to look back and is shocked and angry at the same time.

### **Identity Rebound**

The protagonist is upset to see strangers turning vicious towards him and calling him “Fucking Arab” (TRF 117). Even after all this, he is not ready to shed his Americanness as he admits “I recall the Americanness of my own gaze when I returned to Lahore . . . at first I was struck at how shabby our house appeared, with cracks running through its ceilings and dry bubbles paint flaking off where dampness had entered its walls (TRF 124).” But later he realizes “that the house had not changed; I had changed. I was looking about me with the eyes of a foreigner, and not just a foreigner, but that particular type of entitled and unsympathetic American” (TRF 124). His realization makes him angry and he resolves to exorcize the unwelcoming sensibility by which he had become possessed. This is the turning point in his search for his real identity. His desperation to claim his real identity gets very obvious when back in America he starts growing beard which explains “I had not shaved my two week old beard. It was perhaps a form of protest on my part, a symbol of my identity” (TRF 130). He doesn't wish to blend with his co-workers and at Underwood Samson suddenly he becomes “a subject of whispers and stares” (TRF 130) and at the subway where earlier he would seamlessly blend into the crowd, his appearance with beard confirms his Muslim identity and invites racial hatred quite bluntly. But this doesn't seem to deter him. When his colleague Wainwright objects to his bearded looks he asserts “they are common where I come from” (TRF 130). It makes it evident that Changez wants to shed his pretense, confirming his real identity, flaunting his sheer foreignness and declaring to live on his own terms. His wavering focus on work invites wrath of the senior colleague during an evaluation visit to Chile at a publishing firm. His aloofness at work attracts attention of Juan-Buatista, the chief of the publishing firm. He tells Changez, “you seem very unlike your colleagues. You appear somewhat lost” (TRF146).

Changez's struggle within is, in fact a progression of a metamorphosis which is nearing its completion. In his own words he mentions, “I was clearly on the threshold of great change; only the final catalyst was now required” (TRF 150), the catalyst here he mentions is a lunch meeting with Juan-Buatista. It is Juan-Buastita who explains to him about Janissaries the Christian boys captured by Ottomans and trained to be soldiers in a Muslim army to defend their Sultan. His meeting with Juan-Buatista deeply moves him as he describes “Juan-Buatista's words plunged me into a deep bout of introspection. I spent that night considering what had I become. There really could be no doubt, “I was a modern day janissary a servant of the American empire at a time when it was invading a country with a kinship to mine and was perhaps even colluding to ensure that my own country faced the threat of war” (TRF 152). He feels tormented and anguished and wants to free himself



from the guilt of playing a janissary who is actually being set against his own people. Next morning, he refuses to work anymore, which leads to his expulsion from Underwood Samson. He knows it well that without a job his visa in America would expire and he would be compelled to leave America. The feeling of leaving America relieves him. Finally, he is able to remove the mask of his Americanness. He feels gratitude towards Juan-Buatista as he thinks, "Thank you, Juan Buatista for helping me to push back the veil" (TRF 157) and to show him "one of the ugly faces of global capitalism" (Nkrumah 112).

Changez's last meeting with his patron Jim remains very precise. Before leaving the office, he realizes that he has been resented and suspected by his colleagues for his bearded looks for long as except Waineright no one else comes to say farewell. Finally, he leaves America and comes back to his homeland Pakistan. Looking back at his past fills him with regret and resentment at the same time. Changez does not withdraw from his Western life because he has found religion as a zone of ultimate comfort but because he is not happy serving a civilization which does not respect his culture of origin. So his return to Pakistan is a decision concerned with the sense of identity instead of religious fundamentalism. He lacks any sense of belonging to American society. The feeling of alienation is strong enough to bring him back to Pakistan. Americans looked at him as an outcast and a lackey of attackers. In fact, he resents the American attitude of looking at the immigrants from the Muslim countries which conclusively remains a big reason behind his departure from the U.S.A.

### **Identity Redefining**

The quest to redefine his identity commences, he begins to identify with Afghanistan, a country which has become a victim in the War of Terror in the wake of 9/11 events. Ironically, Pakistan a neighbour and friend and a fellow Muslim nation, is made to support American troops in launching attacks on Afghanistan. The War on Terror causes him to change his perception of the self:

"I was no longer capable of so thorough a self-deception. I did, however, tell myself that I had overreacted, that there was nothing I could do, and that all these world events were playing out on a stage of no relevance to my personal life. But I remained aware of the embers glowing within me, and that day I found it difficult to concentrate on the pursuit—at which I was normally so capable—of fundamentals" (TRF 100).

Changez candidly admits to his American listener that he had always resented how America conducted itself in the world, constantly interfering with other countries' "affairs and finance was the main means to exercise its power" (TRF 156). He feels guilty of playing a part in this project of domination as an employee of Underwood Samson. He feels surprised for delaying his decision to quit his employers. In the process of metamorphosis, he understands himself and starts defining his identity.

In brief, Changez's character and his identity crisis is, in fact, a creation of a society which became inhospitable after 9/11. His social ordeals are accountable for the feeling of bitterness which he has developed for America—a country which he once loved and identified with. Changez becomes a victim of suspicion and hatred while bearing the burden of a sudden social hostility of the Americans towards his religion and race. After the events of 9/11 he goes through the torments for being a Muslim and his identity is reinforced as an outsider, thus his desire of him acculturating into an American society

remains a far-flung reality and his quest for negotiating identity seems unattained and unfulfilled. At one point of time, Changez even compromises his identity but the shift starts smothering him. He returns home, not enlightened but enriched with experience, ready to take another stride and move on to turn a new leaf.

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## Antagonistic Portrayal of Father in Mamta Kalia's 'Tribute to Papa' and Jayanta Mahapatra's 'Life Signs'

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'Generation gap' with all its attendant implications has created a wide chasm between the present day youth and their parents, resulting in social tensions which are gnawing at the social fabric that has been assiduously built over years. The young generation believes in the celebration of their self, to the exclusion of all that has been so far valued highly. Their vehemence to be free from the dependence syndrome is driving them crazy, and in the process upsetting the equations of respect and admiration that always characterized their predecessors. The present article analyses antagonistic feelings of the children towards their parents, by focusing on two contemporary Indian English poets--Mamta Kalia and Jayanta Mahapatra—and their poems, *Tribute to Papa* and *Life Signs* respectively.

Mamta Kalia's poem *Tribute to Papa* is an autobiographical poem, published in her collection *Tribute to Papa and other Poems* in 1970 in which she expresses strong antagonistic feelings towards her father. The title of the poem suggests tribute to her father but ironically she has made the bold and bitter attack on her father's personality. Through this poem Kalia tries to present her father's weaknesses, drawbacks and his timid nature vis-a-vis the materialistic modern World, thereby parodying or ridiculing her relationship with the father. The poem begins with the pungent ironical questions raised by the poetess to her father, but indirectly the questions themselves implicate the answers.

Who cares for you Papa?  
Who cares for your clean thoughts?  
Clean words, clean teeth?  
Who wants to be an angel like you? (1-4)

These lines suggest that there is no one who cares about his goodness, nobility and rectitude. Obliquely the poetess expects her father to give up these things and follow the path trodden by the others. In the second stanza Kalia describes her father as an unsuccessful man, his failure attributable to his "so called ideologies/principles". Every daughter in the world loves, admires and respects her father and the son admires his mother, but the poetess very sarcastically represents her father in a degrading manner. Kalia's father represents 'middle class man' with the limited dreams and unwilling to traverse the safe and secure middle path in life for the sake of upward social mobility. She feels that he lacks guts, which every successful man possesses. He is unsuccessful business man in import and export business. She would feel proud of him if he were successful businessman:

But you've always wanted to be a model man,  
A sort of an ideal

When you can't think of doing anything  
You start praying  
Spending useless hours at the temple (14-18).

Mamta's father aspires to be a model for others but lacks ambition and goals in his life. It is he who, most of the times spends useless hours in the temples. This behaviour of Mamata's father represents his timidity, lack of confidence and his staunch dependence on only Providence for some miracle to happen in his life. However the father expects that his daughter should have greatness and qualities like that of Rani Lakshmbai of Jhansi. Quite paradoxical that a man lacking in ambition, cherishes dreams of excellence for his own daughter. In the present poem the tone of Mamta Kalia also appears like that of Sylvia Plath's poem *Daddy*. So much disgusted Mamta reaches the extreme stage of disowning her father:

These days I am seriously thinking of  
disowning you, Papa,  
You and your sacredness (25-26).

Likewise, Sylvia Plath in her poem, *Daddy* too expresses her revulsion for her Nazi father:

Daddy, I have had to kill you  
You died before I had time-  
Marble-heavy, a bag full of God,  
Ghastly statue with one gray toe (6-9)

Bruce King in *Modern Indian Poetry in English*, also compares Kalia with Sylvia Plath and the influence on her. He remarks:

“Mamta Kalia can be a powerful poet with her strongly cadenced  
phrases and changing rhythms. There was the Sylvia Plath influence,  
but Kalia also has her own voice a striking one (King 279).

To an extent Mamta Kalia's poetry has echoes of Sylvia Plath. Both the poet-daughters express their extreme antagonistic feelings towards their father. Mamta Kalia seems to dislike her father because of his simple, honest and a staunch religious nature and looks upon him as a man totally misfit for today's competitive world as he lacks guts or self-confidence which is essential for a successful entrepreneur. It is her perception that her father never acted as a motivator to his daughter. The struggle and conflict in her mind reaches its zenith when her father suspects her of having a love affair and fears she might give birth to a child before her marriage:

You suspect I am having a love affair these days,  
But you're too shy to have it confirmed  
What if my tummy starts growing gradually  
And I refuse to have it curetted? (32-35).

Mamta disdainfully mentions her father's decision to commit suicide which reveals him as weak minded person. Thus, Mamta's pen- portrait of her father is sardonic and ironic too as the poem is titled as tribute to him. The present poem compels the reader to ruminate over stormy father-daughter relationship. Is it Mamta's revolt against the male chauvinism of the contemporary Indian society or is it her inner cry against male hegemony? These questions certainly haunt the mind of the reader. M.K.Naik aptly observes:

Mamta Kalia's verse in *Tribute to Papa and poems*, on the other hand,

has a refreshingly astringent quality. She can talk about love, marriage, family life and society with irony and wit (Naik, 220).

The feminist stance of Mamta against male hegemony in Indian society is cogently put across in her candid admission of her love affair, much to the chagrin of tradition bound father. By rupturing the tradition she emerges as an independent, empowered woman who must respond to her natural urges, thereby conveying a message that the orthodox traditional ways of life must be abandoned. The spirit of modernity must be embraced, and male chauvinistic tendencies operating in Indian society must be shunned, and the females must be given the freedom to be living, breathing and convincing women of substance, courage and conviction.

Another poem *Life Signs* also projects father-son relationship quite extensively and intensively. The present poem is published in 1983 in the title collection of *Life Signs* by Jayanta Mahapatra. Mahapatra also writes this poem in which antagonistic treatment is given to the image of father. Before Mahapatra father-son relationship has been explored extensively by A.K. Ramanujan, R. Parthasarathy, Shiv K. Kumar and others and since long time 'Father Poems' are well rooted in Indian English poetry as a sub-genre of Indian poetry in English. In his book *Modern Indian Poetry in English* while discussing about experimentalists Indian English poets, eminent critic Bruce King writes that: "In *Life Signs* (1983) there is a continuing air of sadness and consciousness of death" (King 206). The speaker in the poem *Life Signs* very bluntly declares antagonistic feelings towards his father:

What's in my father's house  
is not mine. In his eyes,  
dirty and heavy as rainwater (1-3)

This blunt expression points to the sense of loss and dispossession and non-belongingness to one's father and his house, and signals the 'communication gap' between the speaker and his father. This generation gap represents sense of loss through the image of the flowing river. The rain water is described as dirty and heavy, which suggests the speaker's strong hatred, and hostile feelings towards his father. The poem presents a negative image of the father-son relationship. It represents apathy, dryness, meaninglessness and aridity of emotions. There is unbridgeable gap between father-son relationship and it seems enigmatic type of relationship. The speaker in this poem appears in a state of rootlessness, there is feeling of dispossession and alienation broadly reflected by the utterances of the speaker. The speaker seems to relinquish his legal right or claim on the ancestral property. The speaker hints about his father's outrageous manner of carping, ridiculing, and snubbing manner to him. The indignant speaker thus provides an ample evidence of his antagonistic feelings. The negative image of the father as a result of love-hate relationship, is highlighted throughout the poem. The poem broadly projects the psychological warfare between the father and the son. Contrary to the son's feelings of compromise, the harsh and obnoxious behavior of the father persists:

My indifference quietly left behind;  
the sun has imperceptibly withdrawn  
And nothing stirs there  
except for two discoloured Kites (4-8)

The speaker describes his father's eyes as discoloured which implies listlessness or barrenness of feelings towards life. There is no affectionate bond between the two. The

expression “nothing stirs there” means father's feelings towards his son are totally lifeless, cynic and dry. These lines of the poem compel the reader to ponder over the real cause of grudge of father towards his son. The poem also to some extent reveals the theme of the clash between tradition and modernity. The speaker tries his best to divest himself of the old belief of looking upon father as god. But after the demise of his father old beliefs forced him to perform the last rituals as per Hindu traditions on the *ghat* of the Ganges. Thus, the father's image is submerged in the river Ganga and his spirit is freed from world of life and death. Yet he cannot exorcise the image of his father from the residues of his memories. The son cannot tear himself asunder from his past. The portrait of his father hanging on the wall reminds him that he is not separated from him and realizes repeatedly that his father's voice echoing wearily from bone to bone. The phrase “my likeness” used in the concluding lines of the poem is very suggestive, that despite his constant efforts he fails to separate himself from his father's diabolic voice or his frequent roaring on him. The concluding lines of the poem are suggestive of his unwilling and invisible bondage to the tradition symbolized by the father:

And I have taken my likeness down  
from his walls and hidden it  
in the river's roots a colourless monsoon  
eaten away by what has drifted between us? (23-24)

Probably the poet would like to suggest that it is not the relationship of father-son that has been drifted away in the flowing waters of the Ganga but anger, frustration, alienation and extreme differences have also been submerged into the river. By presenting the psychological conflict between two set of forces, represented by the father and the son, the poet broadly draws our attention to the inevitable gap between two generations and their respective attitudes in a somewhat cryptic manner. M.K. Naik aptly writes:

His style has an admirable colloquial ease, punctuated by thrusts of striking images . . . His muted brooding occasionally results in extremes of either excessively cryptic statement or verbal redundancy and in weaker moments he is seen echoing other poets (Naik 217).

Viewed from a broad perspective, the speaker wrestles with the eternal dilemma of his identity. . He tries to redefine his search for identity, but due to the adverse, hostile and unpleasant conditions he fails in his attempts to overcome them. The poet also tries to focus darker sides of human life. In the present poem he represents dominant concerns in human life in the form of vision of grief, loss, dejection, rejection and dispossession. While writing about Mahapatra's poetry, Bruce King comments:

He introduced to Indian English poetry the new kind of verse that had been written in America during the previous decade where various unexplained, often contradictory feeling were held together- although spaces were left between- by being parts of an introspective mood brought about from heightened alternatives ( King 38 ).

Numerous poems of Mahapatra highlight human relationship in different perspectives. While throwing light on these human relationships, he has woven the thread of the relationship in pessimistic and negative form on a note of tragic consciousness of the seamy side of life. King further elaborates:

Mahapatra's work has no clear demarcations of contrasting opinions, new

kinds of material or radical departures in organization. The poems appear a continuous relation of aspects of the isolation, loneliness, solitude and alienation of the self from the external world without apparent purpose (King 206).

In one of his interviews published in *Rock Pebbles: A Peer Reviewed Journal* (January–June 2011), Mahapatra shares his views about the symbolic vision in his poetry. While talking about himself, he expresses that: “And here, at forty, I was into poems, I was looking around the World, and into myself may be when I started out writing poetry, I thought I was the center of the universe, which was absolutely wrong. My early poems were exercise in a way, written mainly to please myself. These poems were more fused in themselves, and they tended to be abstract. My mind was more to me than my heart, which is not right when it comes to poetry. I am sure you will agree (Dr. K.C.Pradhan and Dr. K.C.Mishra). Further substantiating his views about his poetry, Mahapatra avers: “Frankly I started out from being a sort of physicist and went into poetry, people always insist, they are two opposite poles of the earth. I don't know. And I don't agree. My beginning poems spoke about myself and the people around me, they were seemingly personal, because I was not aware of a large world that existed around me; it was my pain, my love, my relationship which mattered. It took time to see things, feel them, it took time to bring out in my poetry the myths that have shaped me from the chaos of history and tradition that has always energized my land, Orissa” (Dr. K.C.Pradhan and Dr. K.C.Mishra).

In both the poems under scrutiny--*Tribute to Papa* and *Life Signs*-- feelings of strong hatred and abject contempt between the human beings are quite pronounced. It is not between the two outsiders but between two human beings tied to each other by blood. In one poem, the speaker is the daughter and in the other it is the son who harbor hatred against their own father. In the India ethos father is looked upon as revered personality and respected by the whole family and his word is always final. However, Mamta Kalia's poem offers negative portrayal of her father and inventories his human failings and drawbacks. She proposes a different version of reality for her father which must be rooted in pragmatism, a path trodden by successful people in life. Likewise, Mahapatra's depiction of father in “*Life Signs*” reveals extreme antagonistic feelings bordering on alienation, frustration and hopelessness. A common thread between Mahapatra's poem and that of Mamta Kalia's is the expression of disgust and contempt for their father, and the portrayal of a conflict between the traditional beliefs and the rationalist skepticism. People hate others because they have a constant fear within themselves. According to a psychological study, thinking about the target group or a person mostly we project unwanted parts of the self. According to Sigmund Freud, “projection is a tendency to reject, what we don't like about ourselves.” Acts of hatred are attempts to distract oneself from feelings of helplessness, powerlessness, injustice, inadequacy and shame. Thus, both these poems obliquely focus on the psychological base of hatred and extreme antagonism people harbor against human beings touching their lives.

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## Taking Linguistics to Classroom: A Stylistic Analysis of Tennyson's Short Poem "The Eagle"

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Linguistics is one of the least appreciated, and perhaps the most misunderstood areas, as far as the teaching of language and literature in India is concerned. Whether it is the school or the college, a typical English-teaching classroom in India, more particularly perhaps in Punjab, is dominated by content-based, lecture-oriented and teacher-centred method of teaching. The medium of instruction / teaching in most of the schools and the colleges in Punjab is the mother tongue. The teacher enters the classroom and delivers a well-planned lecture explaining, or perhaps only summarising, the contents of the poem, the short story, the play or the novel under consideration. And at the end of the lecture, the students are assumed to have understood everything that they need to understand about the topic. Or better perhaps, they are guided to purchase and read some cheap notes and help-books. But the most significant question before each one of us is: can they read and understand the texts, literary or non-literary, on their own? Do they really master the techniques and methods of reading and analysing texts after they have completed their graduate or even postgraduate courses in English? This paper is a modest attempt at addressing some of such issues by taking a small piece of literary work—Lord Tennyson's short poem "The Eagle"—and analysing it by means of linguistic theories of style and stylistics. The poem is / was in syllabi of some of the schools and the colleges in Punjab.

### I

Stylistics, according to Simpson, is "a method of textual interpretation in which primacy of place is assigned to *language*". While linguistic features do not of themselves constitute a text's "meaning", an account of linguistic features nonetheless, maintains Simpson, "serves to ground a stylistic interpretation and to help explain why, for the analyst, certain types of meaning are possible" (Simpson 2004, 2). Stylistics derives its terminology from linguistics which has at least two advantages. First, linguistic theory aims to be "comprehensible" in offering a complete account of language structure at all levels: semantics, syntax; phonology and phonetics; text - grammar; and pragmatics. Secondly, linguistic terminology is "systematic" (Fowler 1986, 4-5). Thus, one of the crucial things attempted by stylistics is "to put the discussion of textual effects on a public, shared, footing" (Toolan 1996, IX). According to Leech and Short (1981),

in general, literary stylistics has, implicitly or explicitly, the goal of explaining the relation between language and artistic function ... Style being a relational concept, the aim of literary stylistics is to be relational ... to relate the critic's concern of aesthetic appreciation with linguist's concern of linguistic description (13).

Stylistics is 'literary' from the point of view of linguistics, or 'linguistic' from the perspective of literary studies. In either case, what is meant, in a nutshell, "is the application of theoretical ideas and analytic techniques drawn from linguistics to the study of literary texts" (Fowler 1981, 11).

However, Stylistics, as the study of the relation between linguistic form and literary function cannot be reduced to "mechanical objectivity". Linguistic analysis does not replace the reader's intuition (Leech and Short 1981, 5). As Halliday says –

"Linguistics is not and will never be the whole of literary analysis, and the literary analyst – not the linguist – can determine the place of linguistics in literary studies. But if a text is to be described at all then, it should be described properly; and this means by the theories and methods developed in linguistics, the subject whose task is precisely to show how language works" (Halliday 1964, 19).

But linguistic analysis is not "just" a neutral method of analysis compatible with any theoretical framework. "A model of analysis is a model of language", that is to say, it essentially implies "a theory of the nature of language in the process of describing it" (Fowler 1986, 7). Chomsky's Transformational Generative Grammar (TG) sees language as a capability of the human mind, and therefore, highlights the formal and the cognitive aspects of language (Leech and Short 1981, 4-5). M.A.K. Halliday's Systemic-Functional Grammar, on the other hand, sees language as a "social semiotic", and so diverts attention particularly to the "communicative and socially expressive functions of language" (Leech and Short, 5). In Halliday's own words,

Systemic grammar is an analysis-synthesis grammar based on the paradigmatic notion of choice. It is built on the work of Saussure, Malinowski and Firth, Hjelmslev, Prague school, and the American anthropological linguists Boas Sapir, and Whorf; the main inspiration being J.R. Firth. It is a tristratal construct of semantics (meaning), lexicogrammar (wording), and phonology (sound) (Halliday 1985, Vol.I, 262).

The semantic system itself can be regarded as the realization of some higher level semiotic (1979, Vol I, 197).

Halliday (1994) gives a number of possible applications of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) underlying all of which is a common focus on the analysis of authentic products of social interaction (**texts**), considered in relation to the cultural and social context in which they are negotiated. Consequently, the most generalizable application of SFL is "to understand the quality of texts: why a text means what it does, and why it is valued as it is" (Halliday 1994, xxix). The method of analysis used for stylistic interpretation of Tennyson's "The Eagle" in this paper is based mainly on SFL model of Halliday. But, as Halliday says, there are many different purposes for analysing a text, and the scope and direction of the analysis will vary accordingly. "The guiding principle is to select and develop whatever is needed for the practical purpose in hand" (Halliday 1985, 285). The present paper is simply an illustrative exercise and is not aimed at offering an all-comprehensive analysis of "The Eagle". The analysis of the poem in the following section focuses especially on two pairs of intersecting patterns: "one textual, the intersection of cohesive chains with thematic structures; the other ideational-interpersonal, the intersection of mood and transitivity".

Cohesive chains, theme and information structures combine to display “the motifs” and “the thematic progression” of a text. And the patterns of mood and transitivity represent a character's/narrator's “point of view on the ongoing situation” (Halliday 1994, 384-391). The constraints of space and scope of this paper do not permit a detailed discussion of this model. The reader may however consult the works cited at the end of this paper. In the following section Tennyson's “The eagle” will be analysed by applying the method of analysis discussed in this section.

## II

Alfred Lord Tennyson (1809–1892) was an English poet often regarded as the chief representative of the Victorian age in Poetry. “The Eagle” is one of the shortest poems by Tennyson. The poem consists of only two sentences, organised into two stanzas of three lines each. But in a few lines, Tennyson captures a small but majestic event – an eagle diving from a cliff – with total precision. The poem describes “the unusual surroundings in which the eagle lives and the power or force with which it pounces on its prey”. “The sea, otherwise so vast and mighty, appears weak in front of the powerful eagle.” “Through a clever interplay of words and imagery the poet succeeds in painting a vivid pen picture of the eagle and the eagle's surroundings.” (*English Reader* 1988, 49- 51). The image of the eagle is often used to symbolize strength, supreme power, speed and cruelty. But Tennyson was also regarded as the preeminent spokesman for the educated middle-class Englishman of his age, in moral and religious outlook and in political and social consciousness no less than in matters of taste and sentiment. Hence, Tennyson's Eagle is also read as symbolic of the monarchy of the Great Britain.

The title of the poem immediately draws our attention to a participant in the discourse – “The Eagle”. And most of the poem is concerned with this bird of prey. This is clearly indicated by the Textual organisation of the poem, as the analysis of **Cohesion, Theme-Rheme and information structure, and clause-complex** below will reveal.

### 1. Referential and Lexical Cohesion:

**Reference:** The cohesive resource of reference refers to how the writer / speaker introduces participants and then keeps track of them once they are in the text (Eggins, 32). The reference chains show us who the major human participants in a text are, and their relative importance. The reference chains also contribute to the thematic and metaphorical meanings the text is making (Eggins, 40). A convenient way to capture the reference patterns in a text is simply to trace through mentions of the text's participants as is shown below in the case of “The Eagle”. Numbers 1, 2, 3, etc indicate sentences while (i), (ii), etc indicate clause numbers within the sentences.

The Eagle: Title, 1 (i) he- crooked hands; 1 (ii) he – 2 (i) him- 2 (ii) he – his mountain walls 2 (iii) he. (articles, pronouns, and possessives used as resources of reference)

The Sea: 2 (i) The wrinkled sea, (lexical reference)

The Other Participants: 1 (i) The crag, 1 (ii) The sun, lonely lands, the azure world, 2 (ii) his mountain walls, 2 (iii) a thunderbolt. (lexical reference)

As this analysis shows, only a couple of participant chains are developed in the poem, thus showing a clear focus. The longest chain is concerned with *the eagle*. Another major participant, introduced in the second stanza, is “*the wrinkled sea*”. In addition, there are some other participants most of which are related with the eagle: *the crag, hands, the sun, azure world, mountain walls, thunderbolt*, etc. All these chains are interwoven throughout the

text around the eagle, his habits and habitats, clearly indicating that the poem is mainly concerned with describing the eagle and his activities in relation with the other participants.

If we consider **the type of cohesion** by which entities in "The Eagle" are chained, we find that all the participants are referred to lexically, but the eagle, once lexically introduced in the title, is referred to pronominally. Once its status as the centre of stage is established in the title, it is taken for granted as the given or understood participant. Thus it is further referred to throughout the poem by pronouns: *he, him, his*. Not only that, the eagle is represented in human terms as "he" and not as "it", indicating its masculinity and strength. The sea on the other hand is referred to lexically when functioning as theme and is also qualified by an epithet "wrinkled".

A third-person pronominal reference or reference by means of definite article "the" also indicates the poet-speaker's relationship with the events and the characters. The speaker is a distant observer and not a participant in the discourse. However, the use of the article "the" in the title does not make a definite/ specific; it rather refers to, a type or a species, the whole class of eagle (Ref. *Oxford Advanced Learners' Dictionary, The Concise Oxford Dictionary*). The article thus has "a generalizing and universalizing function" (Fowler 1981, 90). The poem is not about specific participants and a definite event but about general actions of a representative of a type or species.

How these processes and participants are realised and evaluated will be further revealed by an analysis of lexical cohesion which will supplement and support these findings.

#### **Lexical cohesion:**

Lexical cohesion refers to how the writer/ speaker uses lexical items (nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs) and event sequences (chains of clauses and sentences) to relate the text consistently to its area of focus or its field (Eggins, 42). An analysis of lexical cohesion thus reveals how a writer weaves thematic, ideational and interpersonal meanings throughout the text.

If we look at the noun phrases used in the poem, we find that the eagle throughout is referred to as "he" in human terms. It is not evaluated by any epithet or adjective. But his *hands* are evaluated as "crooked". Similarly, his *walls* are evaluated as "mountain" which may suggest height, strength or even fortification. On the whole, the eagle's manner of action is evaluated as "like a thunderbolt" which may indicate his violent speed and force. The sea by comparison is introduced lexically and is evaluated as "wrinkled" and "crawls" thus making it weaker in strength like old men and children. Otherwise immeasurably huge, mighty and crashing on the rocky cliffs, the sea hardly seems to be violent and dangerous.

All other participants are also referred to lexically and are evaluated by epithets. The place of action is described in hyperbolic terms indicating the exaggerated height: *Close to the sun in lonely lands, Ring'd with the azure world*. The verbs (processes) which represent the actions of the characters show a clear sequence of events:

Verbs: The eagle: *clasps, stands, watches, falls*.

The sea: *crawls*.

Lexical realisation of process types reveals the superior strength and power of the eagle in comparison with the sea. The eagle is represented as looking down upon the world from a privileged position like a powerful monarch sitting in his high fortress: *watches from his mountain walls / And like a thunderbolt he falls*. The subtle choice of lexis (words) thus

focuses on representing strength versus weakness.

An analysis of cohesive chains thus is an effective way of understanding and capturing the major focus in a text. But the effectiveness of this inter-chaining depends on the textual structure and, in particular, on the organization of the clauses into Theme and Rheme (Halliday 1994, 387).

## 2. Theme analysis:

Two key systems that enter into the expression of textual meaning in the clause are the system of Theme, and the system of Information Structure. The system of theme is realized through a structure in which the clause falls into two main constituents: a Theme and a Rheme (Eggs, 298). Within that configuration, the Theme is the element which serves as the starting-point, the point of departure of the message; it is that with which the clause is concerned (Halliday 1994, 38). The Theme typically contains familiar, or 'given, information, i.e. information which has already been mentioned somewhere in the text or is familiar from the context. As a general guide, the theme can be identified as that element which comes in first position in the clause. The remainder of the message, the part in which the Theme is developed, is called in Prague school terminology the Rheme. The Rheme typically contains unfamiliar, or 'new', information (Eggs, 299-300).

The choice of clause Themes plays a fundamental part in the way discourse is organized. (Halliday 1994, 61). By analyzing the thematic structure of a text clause by clause, we can understand how the writer made clear to us his underlying concerns (Halliday 1994, 67). Table 1 below shows the analysis of clause Themes in "The Eagle."

**Table 1: Theme-Rheme Analysis**

Clause No.	Theme	Marked	Rheme	
				End focus
Stanza I	Unmarked			
1.(I)	He		clasps the crag with	crooked hands
1.(ii)		Close to the sun in lonely lands, Ring'd with the azure world,	he	stands
Stanza II 2.	The wrinkled sea		beneath him	crawls
(i)				
2 (ii)	He		watches from his	Mountain walls
2 (iii)	And [Conjunctive]	like a thunderbolt	he	falls
Total	The eagle (2) The sea (1)	Circumstantial Adjunct (Ac): Eagle's habitat and manners (4)		

From this display we can clearly see the major thematic focus and the 'method of development' of the text. First, the title "*The Eagle*" introduces and establishes the status of the eagle as the Theme of the whole poem. Clause 1 (i) then picks up *He* (The eagle) as the unmarked theme (taken as given) and the end focus on "*hands*" draws our attention to his body part. The whole clause is thus the new information or the point of departure. The speaker intends to tell the reader about the eagle and what he does: *clasps the crag with crooked hands*. In clause 1(ii), the circumstantial adjuncts occur as the most marked Theme, which serves to locate the eagle in space: exaggerated vertical height and the unusual surroundings. And *he* (the eagle) is placed in the most unmarked position in Rheme, while the end focus comes on *stands*. The whole clause tells us what *he* does and where.

The second sentence/ stanza begins with another Theme: *the wrinkled sea*. The whole of clause 2 (i) is new information / the point of departure. The Theme in clause 2 (i)

however is unmarked, while the Rheme serves to locate the sea lower (*beneath him*) in terms of status and vertical height, and the end focus on “*crawls*” foregrounds his weaker strength in comparison with the eagle. Clause 2 (ii) again begins with *He* (the eagle) in Thematic position with the end focus coming on “*his mountain walls*”, thus locating the eagle in position of power in terms of vertical height and in terms of high fortified *walls*. Clause 2 (iii) begins with a most marked theme, the circumstantial adjunct of manner *like a thunderbolt*, while the end focus comes on “*falls*”, both drawing attention to the eagle's manner – the lighting speed with which he falls of his target. The eagle (*he*) again occurs in unmarked thematic position as part of Rheme. The last clause introduced by thematic conjunctive “*and*”, sums up the whole action of the eagle: *And like a thunderbolt he falls*. So this is what the whole poem was about, the speaker seems to tell.

Overall, the Theme analysis indicates that the eagle is mostly thematic and the focal point of the poem. But as clause theme, it is largely unmarked indicating how its status is taken as given or understood throughout. The circumstantial elements [4] which occur as marked Themes serve to locate the eagle in position of imperial, regal authority in terms of vertical height and describe his manners. The theme choices thus indicate how the eagle, with his habitat and his manners, is represented as the centre of the world viewed/constructed by the poet. The complete absence of interpersonal themes, however, realizes distance and authoritative tenor.

The analyses of referential chains and the Theme-Rheme and Information structures that Tennyson has used in the poem clearly reveal how the meaning of the poem is built upon a contrast: the eagle versus the sea and the other participants. All these analyses tell us how the discourse/ text is organised to make meaning. The major space given to the eagle marks it as occupying the centre of the stage. The analysis of clause complexes /sentences will further supplement these findings.

### **3. Clause complex/ Sentence Analysis:**

Structurally, Tennyson's poem consists of only six lines organised into two stanzas of three lines each. Each stanza further consists of only one sentence/ clause complex. Stanza / sentence 1 consists of two ranking clauses both joined only by a semi colon. No explicit conjunction is used but an implicit conjunction *and* can be interpreted indicating a paratactic addition of events. Stanza / sentence 2 consists of three ranking clauses. Clause 2 (i) and the rest of the clauses, clause 2 (ii) and 2 (iii), are again joined by a semi colon. But as the lines, and the event sequence, represent a contrast between the manners / actions of the eagle and the sea, an implicit conjunction, “*while/ meanwhile*”, can be interpreted after semi colon as joining clause 2 (i) and clauses 2 (ii) and 2 (iii). There is only one explicit conjunction “*and*” which joins clauses 2 (ii) and 2 (iii) by paratactic addition, bringing the actions of the eagle and the poem to a quick conclusion with the end focus coming on “*falls*”.

The poet has thus placed the events in a clear time sequence, highlighting the speed and quickness of the events. The last clause brings the poem to a crashing end. Like the suddenness of the eagle's movement, the poem rapidly comes to a close. This is significant and explains the impact of the poem. It is this that the poet / speaker has been trying to impress on the reader as the point of most significance.

Syntactically also, both the stanzas end with a subject and verb (S+V) sentence pattern that comes after the descriptive part of the sentence. Syntactically parallel structures foreground some of the lexical items by putting them in parallel positions:

he stands.[SV]

he falls. [SV]

The structural organisation of the poem thus seems to imitate the lightening speed with which the eagle *falls* upon his prey.

Some of the other items under focus are the modalities, by which the poet/speaker represents his point of view on the ongoing situation, switching the focus of attention from the ideational content to the interpersonal force (Halliday 1994, 388-389). This in turn relates to the complementary patterns that emerge in the development of transitivity and mood.

#### 4. Transitivity Analysis:

In the analysis of transitivity structure in a clause we are concerned with describing three aspects of the clause: the process itself, typically realized by the verbal group/ verb phrase; the participant(s) associated with the process, typically realized by the nominal groups/ noun phrases; and the circumstances (circumstantial elements) associated with the process, typically expressed through adverbial groups or prepositional phrases. Halliday identifies six basic types of processes: Material, Mental, Relational, Behavioral, Verbal and Existential (Halliday 1994, 109).

**Table 2: Transitivity Analysis**

Clause No.	Process	Process type	Actor/ agent	Medium: Actor/ Goal/ Target	Circumstantial (C)/ other Participants
<b>Stanza I</b> 1 (i)	clasps	Material (effective)	He (The eagle)	The crag (Goal/target)	C-means/ instrument: with crooked hands
1 (ii)	Stands	Material (middle)	---	He (The eagle)	C-Location (Place): Close to the sun C-Location (Place): in lonely lands, C-manner: Ring'd with the azure world,
<b>Stanza II</b> 2 (i)	crawls	Material (middle)		The wrinkled sea (Actor)	C- Location (Place): beneath him (vertical height)
2 (ii)	Watches	Material (effective)	He (The eagle)	? Omitted	C-Location (Place): From his mountain walls (vertical height)
2 (iii)	Falls	Material (effective)	He (The eagle)	? Omitted	C-Conjunctive: And C- Manner: like a thunderbolt

As Table 2 shows, all the process types in the poem are material (doing) type, suggesting that the poem is centrally concerned with constructing a field of actions, events and happenings. *The eagle* and *the sea* are the major participants. *The sea* is represented as an actor in clause 2 (i) only, but even in this clause the material-middle process indicates that the sea is the Medium of action affecting only itself: "*crawls*". It does not act upon anyone or anything other than itself. In all other clauses (04) it is *the eagle* that is represented as the active agent. Out of these clauses, three (03) have material-effective process types in which the eagle is represented as the Agent of action acting on others. In clauses 2 (ii) and 2 (iii), the transitive processes are represented as intransitive, leaving the Medium-Target or the goal

unstated which only serves to widen the scope the eagle's action: What does the eagle watch? What does he fall upon? The questions are left to the imagination of the reader.

All other participants, in the poem are reduced to the status of Circumstantial elements (07): means-instrument (01), place (04), manner (02). Most of the circumstances are about the eagle, which serve to locate the eagle alone high up in the wild world, with the sun and *the azure world* forming the perfect background. There is only one circumstantial about the sea that serves to locate it "*beneath*" the eagle in terms of vertical height, thus making it vulnerable to the eagle's high position and superior power.

The transitivity patterns thus indicate that the eagle is mostly represented as Actor / Agent and he acts on others, while the sea and all other participants are represented as affected Medium - Target (*the crag*) or as Medium- actor (*the sea*) affecting only themselves (*crawls*). Thus, in Toolan's terminology, the eagle is represented as powerful, active, controlling participant, superior in strength to the otherwise mighty sea. The sea (or the world) in contrast is represented as powerless or less powerful, "most acted upon", "controlled" participant (Toolan 2004, 89). The Transitivity analysis thus supplements the findings from the analyses of lexical and referential cohesion, Theme-Rheme and information structures and clause-complexes.

### 5. Mood Analysis:

The clause as exchange consists of two functional components: a MOOD element, which functions to carry the argument, and a RESIDUE, which can be left out or ellipsed. The MOOD component consists of two essential parts: (1) the Subject, which is a nominal group, and (2) the Finite operator, which is part of a verbal group. The MOOD is the element that realizes the selection of Mood in the clause, that is, the overall structure of the clause, e.g. declarative, interrogative, imperative, etc. The remaining component, the RESIDUE, consists of functional elements of three kinds: **Predicator**, **Complement** and **adjunct/s** (Halliday 1994, 74-78). Selection of Mood expresses the interpersonal force in a text.

**Table 3: Mood Analysis**

Clause No.	MOOD		Residue		
	Subject	Finite	Predicator	Complement	Adjunct
		Fused finite and predicator (F/ P)			
Stanza I 1 (i)	He	Clasps (F/ P)	Clasps	the crag	A-Instrument: With crooked hands
1 (ii)	he	Stands F/P	Stands		A-Place: Close to the sun A-Place: in lonely lands, A-Manner: Ring'd with the azure world,
Stanza II 2 (i)	The wrinkled sea	Crawls F/P	Crawls		A-Place: beneath him (vertical height)
2 (ii)	He	Watches F/P	Watches Falls	Watches what? Complement left unstated	A-Place: From his mountain walls (vertical height)
2 (iii)	he	Falls F/ P		Upon what? Complement left unstated.	A -Cunj- add: And A - Manner: like a thunderbolt



As Table 3 shows, there are total 5 clauses in the poem, all of which are in full declarative Mood, functioning unambiguously as statements: 'this is how things are' (Halliday 1994, 389). *The eagle* (he) is in the subject position in four (04) clauses. The remaining one (01) clause has *the wrinkled sea* as the subject. This makes the eagle as the centre of the world created by the speaker.

All the clauses are unmodalized / unmodulated and are in positive polarity which leaves no scope for any doubt or tentativeness on the speaker's part. The speaker is providing authoritative information leaving out no suggestion that any of it is a matter of opinion. In all the clauses, the Finite element is fused with the predicator (F/P) and the primary tense used is simple present. This further indicates that the actions and events are mainly presented as habitual facts, as things naturally are, and not as a matter opinion. The poem builds a contrast between what the eagle and the sea habitually do:

The eagle: *clasps, stands, watches, falls.*

The wrinkled sea: *crawls.*

A high proportion of Adjuncts [7] used in the poem also indicates that a considerable proportion of the meanings made in the poem are made as “non-core, non-arguable information”. The packaging of meaning into Adjuncts suggests that the poet / speaker is making it more difficult for the readers to dispute his claims (Egins 334).

Taken together, the dominance of declaratives in the poem, the absence of any type of modality in the Finite or in the mood Adjuncts, the use of positive polarity and a large number of adjuncts with circumstantial Adjuncts dominating create the cumulative effect of an authoritative stance. The analysis of Mood and Modality thus reveals that what the speaker states is not a matter of personal opinion but of fact and universal truth.

#### **6. Some other Features:**

We may also note here **the role of rhyme and some other phonetic features** such as **alliteration**. In line 1, for instance, there is a repetition of a plosive sound /k/ in *clasps, crag, crooked*. “Plosives are those consonants articulated by a sudden damming up and sudden release of the stream of air from the lungs. Thus to the general bunching of consonants they add a particular texture of sound: a pervasive abruptness; a flinty, unyielding hardness” (Leech 1969, 94). The repetition of plosives thus appears to imitate the roughness and strength (*crooked*) of the eagle. In clause 1(ii), there is again a repetition of a lateral sound /l/ in *lonely lands*. The repetition of the same sound at the beginning of an accented syllable also makes us pause on each of those words, thus foregrounding them. Alliteration in this way “adds a new layer of meaning” to the poem (Simpson 2004, 15).

In terms of **metre**, the poem is a triplet composed in iambic tetrameter which is next to iambic pentameter as the most common meter in English poetry. It is usually used in English and Scottish traditional ballads. The **rhyme scheme** used is –aaa bbb, which is another feature that serves to highlight the contrast between the eagle and the sea by foregrounding some of the lexical items (words), for example *crawls* versus *falls*.

And finally, we may also interpret the poem at the **Discourse Level**. Discourse is context-sensitive and its domain of reference includes pragmatic, ideological, social and cognitive elements in text processing. That means that “an analysis of discourse explores meanings which are not retrievable solely through the linguistic analysis of the levels surveyed thus far” (Paul Simpson 2004, 7). For stylistic analysis, this paper has mainly depended upon Michael Halliday's Systemic Functional model of grammar. This model

(SFL) defines Text as “language that is functional”, “language that is doing some job in some context” (Halliday & Hasan 1985/89, 10). A basic premise of systemic linguistics is that “language use is purposeful behaviour”. People do not ‘just talk’ or ‘just write’ in order to kill time or to display their linguistic abilities. They speak or write because they wanted to use language to achieve a purpose: they had goals that they were using language to achieve. Any use of language is thus motivated by a purpose (Eggins, 4 - 5).

In this poem also, the poet / speaker is not only giving a “neutral” picture of the world of nature seen by him but is also expressing and communicating his view of that world to the reader. Tennyson has represented the eagle as the ruler of the sky (*the azure world*) with unbeatable power and speed. The significant questions that we need to raise are: why should Tennyson choose to write the way he wrote about the eagle and the sea, or even about the rest of the world? Why should he come to admire the bird and represent him in such terms? And literary works have always been more or less tainted by the social- political conditions of the times during which they are produced. Tennyson was then a poet laureate and representative of the Victorian age. Considering the relationship between Tennyson and the Royal British family, it is reasonable to believe that the image of this poem may also be tainted by the times. Thus if the eagle in this poem is represented as the ruler of his “azure world”, Great Britain was regarded as the ruler of the entire world in the Victoria Era. No wonder then that the eagle and the sea are taken as representative symbols by the critics: the eagle symbolic of the power and strength of the Great and mighty British Empire under Queen Victoria and the sea as symbolic of the weak, vast world which could be attacked and tamed at will. It does not mean that this indeed was Tennyson's intention. But the linguistics analysis of “The Eagle” made in this paper lends some justification to the critics' interpretations.

### III

The analysis of “The Eagle” in this paper is very limited and selective, and should not at all be taken as all comprehensive. It was only an illustrative exercise attempting to answer some issues raised at the beginning. Stylistics, as Simpson says, can be used as an interpretative approach as well as a tool to support our literary impressions (Simpson, 166). Generally, in looking at style in a text, one is not interested in isolation, but rather at a pattern of choices: “something that belongs to the text as a whole”. It does not mean that stylistics is not interested in local features of a text, but rather that “local or specific features have to be seen in relation to other features, against the background of the pervasive tendency of preferences in the text”. Local devices may suggest specific reinterpretations of experience at particular points in the text. Cumulative ideational structuring depends on regular and consistent linguistic choices which build up a continuous, pervasive representation of the world – “a cumulative building of a world view” (Fowler 1986, 149-150).

And this is what explains the powerful impact of Tennyson's “The Eagle” on the reader. Tennyson has given us only a quick six-line poem about how an eagle falls upon a prey to eat. But it is not only this that explains the over-all impact of the poem. How the poem works as a whole depends on the cumulative effect of all the linguistic and literary devices that Tennyson has used, some of which have been discussed in this paper. The way the poem is structured and thematically organized, the changes in the perspective, metre and the rhyme scheme, the rhythm and speed of the piece, the sentence structure, transitivity and Mood choices, and of course, the precision of words, all work together to

make the piece much more than the sum of its parts.

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## Teaching Poetry: A (De)constructivist Reading of Wordsworth's *Daffodils*

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(Maharashtra, India)

Teaching English literature to Indian students has always been a daunting task since literary and linguistic competencies of majority of students pursuing English literature courses at undergraduate and postgraduate levels are below expectations. Majority of teachers teach 'about' literature rather than teaching literature. Traditionally, a teacher of English begins discussion, say, on a poem, with the biographical sketch of the poet, the social milieu and the immediate circumstances that are said to have occasioned the writing of the poem. It is followed by explanation which consists, by and large, the teacher's own interpretation of the poem. In some cases, the teacher is the only person in the class who reads the text. Students are not exposed to the literary text at all and still they manage to get good marks in literature courses. This is an eloquent example of teaching about literature. Of course, it is not being implied here that teaching about literature is totally a worthless activity. Sometimes it gives valuable background information in a short span of time without which it may be difficult to understand a literary text. Sometimes allusions need to be explained in a lecture. However, the activity of teaching about literature needs to be used sparingly and judiciously by the teacher. If there is any teaching 'about' literature, it should ultimately lead to the teaching of literature.

In teaching literature, the aim is to improve each student's 'literary competence' and enable him/her to read literary texts independently and come out with responsible critical responses. Close repeated reading of the text on the part of each student is essential in this approach. Initially, the teachers and students explore the text together and there is a lot of discussion and/or disagreement in the classroom. Then, the students are encouraged to explore the meaning/s of the poem by themselves. This method makes 'enjoyment' of literature possible.

There are various methods of teaching English literature which involve students' active participation. In 1930s, I.A.Richards evolved a critical approach while teaching poetry at the University of Cambridge which is known as Practical Criticism. It is also sometimes referred to as 'Critical Appreciation' or 'Commentary and Analysis.' Richards was reacting against two dominant schools of criticism in those times--Biographical Criticism and Sociological Criticism. The former assumes that a literary work is a product of the author's life, and therefore, cannot be fully understood without the study of the author's biography. The latter assumes that a literary work is a product of the society in which the author lived and therefore, cannot be fully understood without understanding various factors relating to the author's contemporary society. Richards tried to demonstrate that it is possible to understand and appreciate a literary text without knowing anything about the author's life

or his society. Therefore, he presented his students with texts of poems without giving either the title of the poem or the poet's name. Students were expected to read and re-read the texts perceptively and struggle with them. Close attention to the language of the text enabled students to 'discover' meanings and aesthetic aspects of poems. In this case, the teacher did not dictate how students should react to the text. Of course, the teacher guided the discussions among students and tried to make them independent readers of literature. Richards succeeded in enhancing student's 'literary competence' in the process.

In America, another school of criticism called New Criticism was opposed to viewing literary texts as parts of literary history. The school gave importance to interrelationships of elements within literary texts. The major New Critics are Monroe Beardsley, R. P. Blackmur, Cleanth Brooks and Rene Wellek. Wales (1989: 318) comments, 'It is with their work that ideas of anti-intentionalism are associated: the "meaning" of a text being primarily to be derived from internal evidence and not the "intentions" of its author'. An important feature of New Criticism is its monist approach to form and content. In this approach, form and content are inseparable and the content or the meaning of a text can be understood only through a study of its form or structure.

Another approach which could be used for teaching literature through language is stylistics. Stylistics claims to be a science and values its objectivity in the study of literature. It begins with an objective and verifiable description of the formal and structural features of the texts. Stylistics inherently is not connected with the teaching of literature. It is a discipline intended to theorise about and analyse all the uses of language in a variety of texts. However, stylistics has a number of implications for the teaching of English literature, particularly in countries like India.

Literature is written through the medium of language. Language is the substance out of which literature comes into being. Therefore, in teaching of literature close attention should be given to the use of language in literary texts. This can be done even without entering into technicalities of linguistics and stylistics. In the classroom, however, the teacher need not use any technical terminology related to linguistics or stylistics, but use the insights offered to him by stylistic analysis. The teacher can draw students' attention to the effective use of language in a text and ask them searching questions that make students think and respond appropriately to a literary text. For example, in the first stanza of William Wordsworth's '*The Solitary Reaper*' there are four expressions meaning 'lonely.' The teacher can ask students to identify these expressions and ask them why they think so many expressions having the same meaning are used in the text. Students may come up with a number of explanations which may lead to fresh interpretation/s of the poem.

Since the emergence of 'deconstruction' as a mode of interpretation, teachers are able to constructively use the method in the classroom. The method has its origins in Poststructuralism as advocated by Jacques Derrida who questioned Ferdinand de Saussure's concept of the unity of linguistic sign, among other things. Hence, the stylistic approach which presupposes a 'system' of language and pre-determined procedures of analysis is undermined by the practitioners of the method. Deconstruction is a method of reading a text so closely that it discovers paradoxes and inconsistencies within the text. Close reading here becomes symptomatic reading. As a consequence, the reader unearths unexpected meaning relations among verbal and textual elements which go against the conventional interpretations or authorial view of literary works. Derrida (1976:58) observes,

'A deconstructive reading must always aim at a certain relationship, unperceived by the writer, between what he commands and what he does not command of the patterns of language that he uses . . . (It) attempts to make the non-seen accessible to sight.'

In using the method of deconstruction in the classroom for the study of poetry, the teacher may urge students not to follow prescriptive or normative reading, be open-minded. And also, it is not necessary for the teacher to introduce ideologically loaded terms and concepts related to deconstruction or poststructuralism. Suffice it to say that the procedure is sceptical in nature since the meanings of words are not anchored by a *center*, and therefore, not stable. This gives rise to plurality of interpretations, sometimes complimentary, sometimes contradictory. And this is a virtue and is acceptable.

The deconstructive approach to the study of poetry is illustrated here with reference to the well known poem 'Daffodils' by William Wordsworth. It is a poem about how the poet felt happy in the company of golden coloured daffodils. Initially, the teacher may acquaint the students with popular interpretations of the poem- a 'nature poem,' 'a romantic poem' or the poem which illustrates Wordsworth's theory of poetry as 'spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings recollected in tranquillity.' He may explain to students that these interpretations, though they are correct interpretations, give the poem a fixed centre and how they severely limit their own reading process. Deconstructive reading dismantles the centre of received meanings, letting free the signifying process. For instance, the teacher may, with textual evidence, justify a contrary interpretation to that of its conventional interpretation as a 'nature poem.' No doubt, on the surface, it deals with Nature and the poem extols Nature's beauty. However, underneath the surface meaning, Nature is humanized and the humanized Nature in the form of daffodils, 'fluttering and dancing in the breeze,' transfer their 'joy' to the poet who is 'lonely' and in 'vacant and pensive mood' and makes him 'dance': 'And my heart with pleasure fills and dances with daffodils.' Both the daffodils and the poet share a sense of fellow feeling. The poet's life, as he himself confesses, is full of suffering, stress and worthlessness. And, in the 'jocund company' of daffodils, the poet finds 'inward bliss.' The sociable nature of Nature, which is unintentional, becomes obvious when Nature shares her bounty with human world enriching an otherwise dull and drab human world, the poet being a representative of this world. This kind of *decentering* reading reveals a strong social content which goes against its interpretation as a 'nature poem.'

It must be made clear to the students that there are no definite procedures in deconstructive reading. Sometimes, a single word or a configuration of words by virtue of their ability for manifold combinations and permutations, leads to unexpected interpretations. For example, the word 'host' in the line 'A *host* of golden daffodils' reveals the inherent contradictions in the meanings of the poem. The standard meaning of 'host' given in most standard dictionaries is 'a large number of.' In addition to this, the teacher can make students aware of other meanings of the word, including etymological meaning, and how these meanings make sense in the context of the poem. He can point out that the whole poem can be viewed in terms of the *host-guest* relationship. The poet/speaker in the poem is like a guest and the daffodils are the host. The host offers something to the guest, and in this case, the daffodils offer the guest an unusual gift--an everlasting source of bliss.

The teacher must make students aware of the fact that words constantly float free of the meanings they are supposed to designate. Words are subject to constant

'slippage/spillage' (Barry, 2004:64). For instance, etymologically, the word 'host' is derived from the Latin word 'hostis,' which meant 'a stranger/an enemy.' The *trace* of this meaning could be said to be lurking beneath the use of the word 'host' in the poem. As a result, the 'host-guest' equation between the poet and daffodils stands radically challenged. The 'pensive' guest is no longer welcome in the 'jocund company' of daffodils. The poet finds himself out of place, out of harmony, in the company of daffodils. He is left to recall the beauty and joy of daffodils 'long after' his encounter with them and experience the bliss in *solitude*. The poet's position is like that of a parasite as in a 'host-plant,' a botanical term, living off the bounty of Nature for his inner/spiritual sustenance. Just as a parasite is dependent on host-plant, the poet is dependent on daffodils in order to nurture his soul. It is experienced that students would certainly enjoy the process of *deconstruction* and love to recreate new meanings through a responsible engagement with the language of the text. They will gradually realize the fact that there are no fixed and 'correct' meanings and fixed and 'correct' interpretations.

Again, a careful reading of the poem reveals another significant configuration of words which gives rise to yet another novel interpretation. Expressions such as 'inward eye,' 'bliss of solitude' and the whole lot of synonyms of 'joy' used in the poem (*shine, twinkle, sprightly, sparkling, glee, gay, jocund, bliss, pleasure* etc.) relate to Biblical vocabulary and evoke virtual Paradise on earth, that is, the Garden of Eden--sans suffering, sans mortality- the Creation of God. In this context, the poet may be seen as Adam, the original inhabitant of the Paradise who has now fallen from Grace, and therefore, a mortal man and suffering Man. He is in need of divine blessing. All he has to do is to look around--'gazed and gazed' by the 'inward eye'- and 'love'. This act of gazing is akin to prayer emanating from the poet's soul. In doing so, he finds God's Grace in the beauty and joy of Nature, and thus, inner harmony and harmony with the Almighty. Thus, the poem 'Daffodils' could be interpreted as a religious poem with Christian motifs. This interpretation, in conjunction with host-guest relationship, implies that God is the host and that He is immortal and eternal, and the guest, the poet, is just a mortal and a temporary visitor on this earth.

Thus, the method of deconstruction can be used as a tool in the classroom to enable students to think afresh and 'see' new patterns of meaning. When one sees what is behind the surface structure, he/she 'sees' other structures emerging. In poststructuralist parlance, this is called *play* of presences and absences. Meanings are really anarchic and this is acceptable in deconstruction since it leads to reconstruction or re-ordering of meaning/s. It is necessary to make students aware of the fact that meanings neither originate in the author nor in the text as believed by biographical/sociological critics or New Critics or stylisticians respectively. There need not be standardized, monolithic structures of meaning. No kind of reading gives full knowledge, but only *traces* of meanings. In deconstruction, nothing is closed, nothing is pre-arranged. Reading, then, becomes free play. There is no fixed signified, but only play of signifiers. In this kind of reading, the reader is not enslaved, but emancipated from bondage to the 'givens' of literary texts. It has been experienced that students even in rural areas of India are able to ask searching questions and understand the text better.

A teacher should encourage students to come out with their own interpretations of the text and justify them on the basis of textual evidence. It must be recognised that students are capable of arriving at their own interpretations which the teacher may not have thought

of. A true teacher is always happy at such interpretations. This also encourages students to read the text closely, carefully and innovatively. The (de)constructivist approach makes students aware of the serious relationship between language (the medium of literature) and a literary work (the product) and the relationship is problematic. The use of deconstructivist approach in the literature classroom strengthens both teachers and students. Students become active participants in the 'discovery' of procedures and significance. This leads to a more effective teaching and learning of literature rather than teaching/learning 'about' literature. It is interesting to note that deconstruction, which had its origins in philosophy, has profound implications for the teaching of literature.

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## Enhancing Employability Prospects of College Students from Rural Background: A Case Study

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Globalization in all the fields has necessitated the learning of English language which is used all over the world. The business practitioners also have realized the cardinality of strong communication in English to run and flourish a business successfully. Employability Skills: The transferable skills which include communication skills are essentially needed by an individual to make them 'employable'. Many employers therefore, necessarily look for candidates who can communicate well in English. However, the huge population of educated youth is deficient in English communication skills especially speaking skills. The report on *Manpower and Employment in Rajasthan, 2010* also certifies the fact as it states, "Since the existing syllabus and teaching at the college level do not really help the students become well equipped for jobs, some intermediation is, therefore, needed for preparing these people for the job opportunities."

### Review of Literature

Mr. Lakshmi Narayanan, Vice Chairman of Cognizant Technology Solutions and the then Chairman of NASSCOM, in an interview with Shobha Warrior (2007) regarding the talent demand and supply gap and the role of the NASSCOM to help the industry bridge the gap, comments: "The current situation is that, in terms of availability of talent, the numbers are good. The problem lies in the suitability of people. The industry has moved forward rapidly and technology also has changed but the educational institutions and the curriculum have not changed that rapidly. So, we have to bridge the gap by providing additional training to the people who are coming out of colleges so that they are industry-ready". Ashu Tomar in her research paper on *Exploration of Employability Skills in NCR Areas* has also highlighted the problem of lack of skill development in engineering education and stated, "The basic problem with the skill development system is that the education system is nonresponsive to the labor market. She also holds the inflexibilities in the curriculum as major hindrance in this direction. There is no denying that in today's industry, there is an increasing demand for professionals who have not only competence in their field of specialization but also good interpersonal communication skills. In order to make students industry ready syllabus needs to be changed (Ashu Tomar 2014) and teachers should scale new horizons in teaching communication skills by using technology as a major teaching learning resource. With the rapid expansion of Web 2.0 technologies such as twitter, facebook, youtube, blogs, wikispace, online forums etc., it has become essential for the teachers to understand the

metamorphosis in nature of professional communication and organizational operations and help the students sharpen their skills according to the changing market needs. G. Gowsalya et al., have stated in their study that Confederation of India Industry (CII) 23 Only 10 % of MBA graduate employable and 17% of the engineering graduate employable. 25% of the candidate use in the job market and 60 % of the population available in working and contributing towards GDP. IT industry faced shortage of 3.5% employability skill for the requirement of the job. Anjani Srikanth Koka et al. (2015) have investigated whether the engineering students were able to inculcate the attributes which the employers sought for. Their findings reflected that most of the engineering graduates found it difficult to secure employment after graduation as they lack employability skills. The study was concluded that the engineering institutions to get a broad view of the needs of IT, MNCs in terms of employability skills and in turn prepare their students so as to acquire better employability skills.

The present paper which is the outcome of the major UGC research project, aims to study the employability skills of college students from rural Rajasthan in Shekhawati district and to identify their level of employability skills. The study also aims to help in widening the employment profile of these college students from rural background of Rajasthan by increasing their command over English communication skills. Though Ashu Tomar has studied the employability skills in NCR by exploring the academia and corporate perspective whereas the present study has included students' perception in view for this purpose.

**Methodology**

The present study involved 470 students of 8 Government and private Arts, Science and Commerce colleges located in Shekhawati region of the state which includes Jhunjhunu, Sikar and Churu districts. The survey was conducted during the academic year 2014-2015. The tools used for data collection comprised of questionnaire survey among students. After validating the validity and reliability of the research instruments, the questionnaire survey was conducted among students. To achieve the objective, the methodology for research was divided into pilot survey and main survey. For the collection of data random sampling technique was used. A questionnaire using likert scale (see annexure) was formulated for the survey. The Pilot survey was done at one of the colleges in Pilani on seventy five students of BA First year and Second Year. The reliability coefficient was .769 which authenticated the survey.

**Table I: Reliability Statistics**

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.769	.772	20

**Problems for Conducting the Survey**

Before stating the results and finding, it is essential to mention that in all the eight colleges the students could not understand the questionnaire which was prepared in simple English. The researchers had to translate it into Hindi and at times in Marwari so as to get the authentic responses from students. Leave alone speaking at interviews and group discussion, students fail to understand the simple written English. This is mainly because

most of the learners are first generation learners. A close observation of the responses reflect that they are well aware of importance of English but neither the syllabus provide them adequate training in the necessary communication skills nor the teachers use interactive method for teaching for enabling them to do so. *They study English as subject not as a language.* Moreover, they study just to pass the exam. During general discussion the researchers observed that the students were quite intelligent and receptive in their own subjects. However, due to lack to English communication skills they felt intimidated.

### Results and Findings

The data collected from the questionnaires were analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively.

The questionnaire included twenty items which focused on four major dimensions of the project research. These dimensions included importance of English, methods of teaching, materials for teaching and use of technology at college level which were formulated based on the objectives of the survey.

88.7% students have marked agree and strongly agree which means that the students consider teaching of English to be very important for them at the college level. Against second statement around 87.3% students have marked agree and strongly agree respectively which reflects that the majority of students' strongly perceived that English plays a vital role in getting better placement whereas only 12 % of the respondents feel that English is not very important. This could be because they perhaps do not intend to take up any job after completion of their studies.

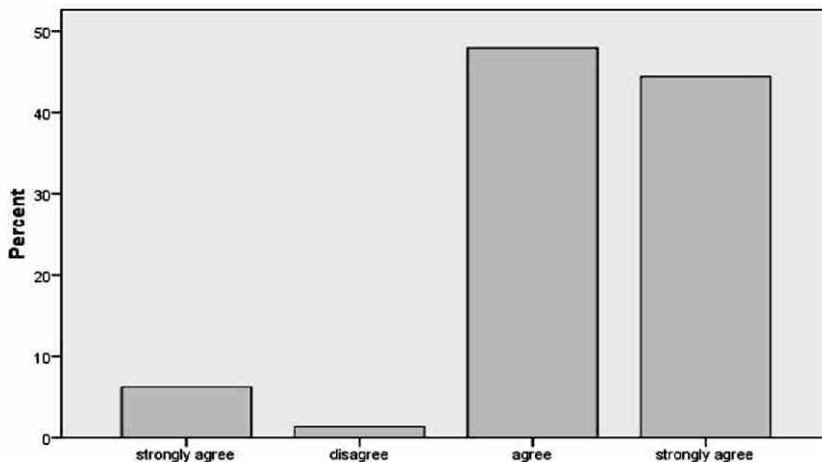


Fig: 1: Students' Perception about Importance of Communication Skills in getting Better Placement

Items no.5 and 6 focuses on the methods of teaching English. 85.8 % students agree that the kind of teaching being practiced at the college level is lecture oriented. From the responses of the respondents it can be ascertained that classroom teaching need to be more interactive rather than lecture oriented. If classes are interactive, students will get opportunities to use English for communication and they will be more participative in the classroom discussion.

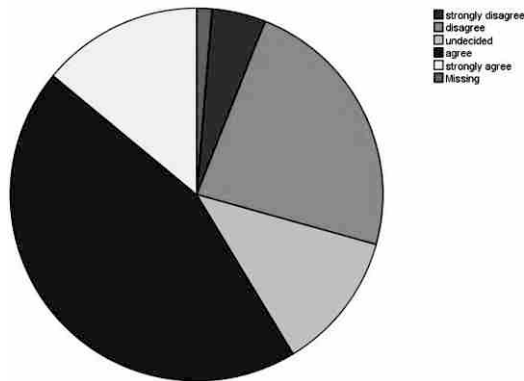


Fig: 2 Students' Perception about Methods of Teaching being practiced in the classroom

In ranking the importance of the skills, students ranked writing as their least competent skill and regarded speaking as the most important skills needed for mastering communication skills for placement purposes. Items no 15, 18, 19 and 20 focused on the need and use of technology enabled materials for better communication skills development. In item no 15, 51.3% and 38% of the students have marked agree and strongly agree respectively that hold the view that technology enabled materials will help them in developing better communication skills.

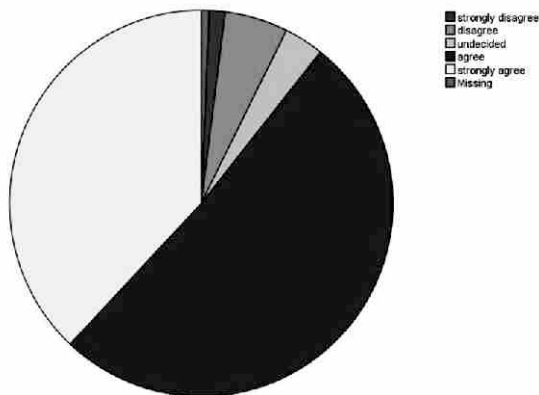


Fig:3 Students' Perceived that use of Technology will help in gaining/acquiring better Communication skills

From the responses of the students it can be analyzed that all these colleges still follow the traditional method of teaching English Language which does not benefit students in acquiring desired English communication skills.

Based on the study, the following findings can be entailed:

1. The present syllabus does not provide opportunities for communication skills development.
2. There is inadequate acquisition of English communication skills among students which they would require at the workplace and also in real- life situations, and hence necessary measures need to be taken.

3. Based on the findings of the study it is observed that teachers are not getting adequate training in the latest language teaching methods so that they make their classroom teaching more interactive, updated and fruitful.
4. In order to strengthen the students' communicative competence and for making the learning more interesting technology assisted language lab should be set up and used appropriately. This would help to pace up learning with changing communication needs of the labour market.
5. Since Shekhawati region students have specific problems regarding pronunciation and usage, specific instructional materials should be designed.

### Conclusion

The primary objective of the study has been to investigate and examine the identification of employability skills of rural college students and to draw an outline of action research for further developing employability skills of these rural college students. Keeping in view the unemployment students should be provided with six months' employability skills program based on their Skills Need Analysis which will enhance their foundation competencies, Communication Skills competency and occupational competencies. After the completion of six months period, these students with their enhanced skill sets will be able to obtain employment in the public or private organization. This will be a forward looking action step that can be taken up for the betterment of the society at large.

### Annexure

#### Questionnaire

Dear Students,

You are requested to provide your opinion about the role of communication skills in getting a better placement. There is no right or wrong answer for these questions. But your honest responses will help in determining the efficacy of the research. Please respond to all questions of the questionnaire. All the information will be kept confidential. Mark your preferences on the five point as given below:

Name:

Age:

Gender:

College:

Year of Study:

Native Place:

S. No.	Items	1 (Strongly Disagree) nor Agree)	2 (Disagree)	3 (Neither Disagree)	4 (Agree)	5 (Strongly Agree')
1.	I think teaching of English is important at the college level.					
2.	I think English communication skills play a better role in getting a better placement.					
3.	I think that teaching of English should aim only at passing of exams.					
4.	I think that the present syllabus aims at training students for future professional skills.					

5.	I think that the classroom teaching is more lecture-oriented.					
6.	I think that the classroom teaching is rather interactive.					
7.	I think that the teaching of grammar can help me in improving my English.					
8.	I think effective listening skills is very important for getting a good job.					
9.	I think that reading skills is important for getting a good job.					
10.	I think writing skills is important for getting a good job.					
11.	I think translation method helps in learning English language.					
12.	I think I get adequate training in my classroom for effective listening.					
13.	I think I am given enough training for correct pronunciation in the classroom.					
14.	Due to lack of training I am not confident regarding the use of my body language during face to face communication.					
15.	I think it is necessary to use technology for developing communication skills					
16.	I felt hesitant while speaking due to lack of training in the classroom.					
17.	I think a change in the method of teaching is needed to enhance students' ability in oral and written communication.					
18.	I think the use of computers and videos for teaching communication skills will really help me in gaining communication proficiency.					
19.	Practicing in language lab is an integral part in my course curriculum.					
20.	I feel language lab is used optimally in my college.					

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## Gurukula and Hogwarts: A Comparative Study of the Ancient Varna System and J.K. Rowling's Harry Potter Series

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It is well known that education, administration, trade & commerce, and physical/skilled work form the four pillars on which any society rests. Virtually every other activity falls under one of these categories. The determinants for these are aptitude and ability. Everyone has a penchant for one of these, displayed by their own natural inclinations and choice. These inclinations are later manifested in their occupational preferences. For example, there are those who prefer to offer service to society through physical/ skilled work, including doctors, engineers or through various entertainment and art forms like dance, music etc; there are those who serve through agriculture, trade, commerce, business, and banking; those who have leadership qualities, administrative abilities, like to work in police or military departments with an aim to protect society; and those who are by nature intellectuals, contemplative, and inspired by acquiring spiritual and philosophical knowledge, motivated to share them and guide the other members of this society. Accordingly they choose their occupation. The choice here is not dependant on the family to which they belong but their innate traits or nature. It is this that determines the occupation was most appropriate for him or her. A doctor's child may probably have an inclination to become one but has to work hard to acquire the skills. Merely being born to a doctor cannot assure the child of becoming one. This is applicable to all occupations.

To visualize a society with a penchant for this appears wishful thinking and an impossible reality. But it is not an exaggeration to state that this was what India was like in the *Vedic* age. The *Vedic* system, observed four basic classifications, namely, the Brahmanas, the Kshatriyas, the Vaishyas and the Shudras which were meant for the progressive organization of society. The classification addresses the following needs of the society:

- sages and preceptors – to impart learning
- warriors, military, government administrators – to govern, protect society
- the merchants, bankers, farmers, - to trade
- skilled labourers, musicians, dancers – to perform physical tasks

The society was divided into four natural groups depending on individual characteristics and dispositions. These activities were divided into four basic divisions called *varnas*.

*Varna* literally means colour, but *varna* also means to envelop or cover, taking its origin from the root '*vru*' as in *vrthra*. In fact, according to Radhakrishna Sastri, it also means 'the act of selecting' (Shastri, 413). Therefore, it must have been misinterpreted at some point in history, which has decimated the social set up. Sociologists understood the word *varna* as colour, and drawing parallels with racial discrimination, interpreted it as social divisions on the basis of the colour of the skin. However, there are clear references in the *Bhagavad Gita* as to how "*varna*" was determined by ("*guna*") qualities and ("*karma*") efforts. Lord Krishna says: "*Chaturvarnya mayaa sristam gunkarma vibhagasah*" (*Gita*, 4:15) i.e. the four orders of



society created by Me (Lord Krishna) according to their *Guna* (qualities/behaviour) and *Karma* (profession/work/efforts). This is reiterated in “*swabhava niyatam karma*,” (*Gita* (18:47). The primary purpose of this division was to cover or meet the society's requirement. There has to be someone to teach, govern, trade and provide service.

Another misinterpretation, with regard to *varna* is to consider them on hierarchical lines. It is erroneous to deem one superior *varna* to the other. That action is supreme where “there is no more efficacious medicine for inner purity than doing one's own work, whatever it be, without any desire for reward and doing it to perfection” (Maheswari). Such a *varna* would be determined not by one's birth, but by one's proclivities as observed by the teachers in the school that the student was attending, in the Vedic Age, i.e. the *Gurukulam*.

### **Gurukulam and Varna**

The learners are initiated to learning at a very tender age, under the tutelage of the Guru. The Gurus recognize the aptitude and the ability of the learner, and accordingly determine the *varna* they should belong to. Every learner is introduced to all forms of learning, before the deciding their choice. Once the Guru identifies the characteristics of the learner, he/she would be given training in the field best suited. This is akin to the way counselors work with students in schools today. Thus, he or she would have a suitable occupation, in keeping with their aptitudes, and make a respectable contribution to society

A classic example of the Guru recognizing his disciples' strength is the oft quoted *Mahabharata* episode, where Dronacharya calls the Pandavas and Kauravas to aim at the wooden bird. Only Arjuna exhibited a propensity for archery skills, which require a perfect aim. He said he could see only the bird's eye and nothing else. While Yudhishtira exhibited skills appropriate for governing as he could see the entire planet, Bhima and Duryodhana exhibited skills for using power. Therefore they were taught appropriate skills that best suited their mental disposition.

Along with learning/honing these skills comes ethical use of them as well. This calls for a strict adherence to certain code of conduct for each *varna*. The codes were designed to suit the occupation of the individual. Hence they were not uniform. Punitive measures were severe but on par with the nature of the occupation. For instance, a small misdeed as telling lies, would invoke severest punishment for the preceptors. As the Guiding Gurus of the society they would set a wrong precedence if they commit this crime. While for the others the punishment for the same offence would be comparatively milder. Here again, the individual's social stature or ancestry would not come into the picture at all. In the eyes of Dharma concession is extended to none. Dronacharya's punishing Ekalavya, for using his martial skills on an innocent defenceless creature without the sanction of the Guru, and Lord Krishna's advice to Arjuna to fight as it is the duty/dharma of a Kshatriya to wage war, are classic examples for this concept. A *Brahmin* or a *Vaishya* cannot kill another human being while a *Kshatriya* can, for a specified socially accepted purpose.

Thus, the system of *varna* existed to organize the social set up considering the natural tendencies of people. The goal was to direct them to work harmoniously and attend to the needs of society.

### **Historical/Literary evidence**

The fact that each *varna* accommodates the corresponding type of person and not through birth, can be exemplified with several examples from Sanskrit history and literature. Valmiki and Vyasa are great sages but were not born into Brahmin families. Valmiki was a

highwayman, (Sumadhwa, 1) while Vyasa was born to a fisherwoman (Subrahmanian, 14). It was through their disposition and choice that they adopted a Brahminical way of life and produced two of the greatest epics in the world.

Lord Krishna was born to Vasudeva and Devaki who were Kshatriyas. But he grew up with the Yadavas, attended the same Gurukul as Kusela but showed the attitude and abilities of a Kshatriya and became a famous one at that. This shows that there were no exclusive schools for different classes and that all learners learnt from the same Guru according to the geographical region in which they lived. Ravana was born to a sage, a Brahmin, but chose to become a Kshatriya and ruled Lanka. Vishwamitra was born in a Kshatriya family but became a very renowned Brahmin. Siddhartha was born in the Royal family, but became the more famous Buddha after he adopted a different way of life. Drona was a Brahmin by birth, while Drupada was the prince of Panchala, but both learnt martial arts under the same Guru. Many more examples can be given to prove the case in point. This sublime system was lost over the ages and has been completely severed off its original sense.

Though today, this system is extinct, it is popularly believed that *Jati* and Caste are descendents of Varna, which apparently are not true. The contemporary practices, however, are dubious discrimination that plagues the society. It is also generally opined that, when the British colonized India, they construed the Indian Varnas to be the sociological equivalents of their Class system, which is a gross misnomer. As Susan Bayly claims the "caste as we see now has been engendered, shaped and perpetuated by comparatively recent political and social developments." (Bayly,4) Thus what existed on equal ground suddenly assumed a hierarchy, destroying the very foundation on which the system was constructed.

In this context it is heartening to know that shades of this system has been recreated in Literature, though in a fantasy world, suggesting that it is not an impossible ideal after all.

### **Recreating Varna in HP**

Strange but true, we are able to see traces of this system in the 'sorting' of students in the first year at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, in the Harry Potter series. That the literary sensation of the third millennium, HP has rather unconsciously adopted this system or so it seems to the reader, and may not be intentionally, only reiterates that social order is a natural phenomena meant to establish balance and equilibrium in society. The fact that the students were sorted to different houses according to their nature, as read by the magical hat, by analyzing their thoughts while they put it on their heads reflects that there is a reason and need for the sorting. However weird it may sound, the logic behind the process shows that the individual trait determines their attitude and behavior. Thus, the sorting procedure ensures that the students are placed in the most appropriate house as reflected and required by their traits.

This assumes significance when, the stratification of the society, in the magical world is unequal. It is based on a type of hierarchy or ranking, resulting in unequal distribution of power which eventually is perpetuated from one generation to the next. Wealth, prestige, class, political power, race, or gender have stratified the society of the wizard world in two ways, viz. slavery and social class. In Labozetta's words, in the editorial of 'Mugglenet,' the HarryPotter site, "The social ranking in the *Harry Potter* universe is complex, especially since class is based, mostly, on a combination of blood status and wealth" (LaBozetta). The Sorting Hat, however, remains neutral, as it relies purely on the

attitude and aptitude of the individual learner, caring little for these social stratifications in the magic world quite akin to the Guru of the ancient times.

The Sorting Hat is a relic that has been endowed with the ability to determine the School Houses to which each new student is to be assigned. There are four School Houses, viz., Gryffindor, Hufflepuff, Ravenclaw and Slytherin. Each school year begins with the banquet. The first-year students are called alphabetically to take a seat on a stool. The sorting hat is placed on her or his head. After considering for a moment or two, the hat announces its choice of the house suitable for the student, who then joins the house. The moment of consideration varies with each student and according to Hermione, it sometimes even talks inside the students ear before making its choice.

In its (The Sorting Hat's) own words, as revealed in one of its songs, it was sewn nearly a millennium ago. It was originally a normal hat belonging to Godric Gryffindor, one of the four founders of the Hogwarts School. He along with Salazar Slytherin, Rowena Ravenclaw and Helga Hufflepuff, decided to magically equip the hat with the ability to read the student's mind. Therefore, they enchanted it with brains and enabled it to sort and divide the students into the Hogwarts Houses, a phenomenon that is never disputed in the entire series.

The hat appears absolutely worn out and tattered, despite surviving for well over a millennium. Only one instance of an attempt to destroy the hat was seen in recorded HP history -when Lord Voldemort in the final book, HP and the Deathly Hallows, set fire to it while it was on Neville's head. But the hat survives, as Neville draws the Gryffindor Sword from it to kill Nagini.

### The Sorting Hat's Song



The Sorting Hat, stored in the Headmaster's office

Source: <http://images.wikia.com/harrypotter/images/7/7c/Head.JPG>

*By Gryffindor, the bravest were  
Prized far beyond the rest;  
For Ravenclaw, the cleverest  
Would always be the best;  
For Hufflepuff, hard workers were  
Most worthy of admission;  
And power-hungry Slytherin  
Loved those of great ambition.*  
(from 'HP and The Chamber of Secrets)

The hat recites a new introductory song at the beginning of every new academic year. These songs differ both in length and content though they reiterate their role and the significance of the sorting process to the new students.

Ron Weasley believes that the Hat spends the rest of the year creating its next song. The song generally introduces the new students to its history and occasionally foretells imminent danger apart from sorting the freshers.

### **Sorting of some of the characters:**

The Sorting of Harry Potter was perhaps the most challenging for the Sorting Hat. Its' first choice for Harry was Slytherin as this house comprised students who aspire for great fame and glory, which was very much characteristic of Harry though. Harry specifically wanted to be spared of that fate, knowing his parents were killed by the heir of Slytherin. Harry seemed equally befitting to be a Gryffindor or so he felt. He therefore requested the hat to place him in Gryffindor. The Hat obliged. This choice was later proved right when he was able to retrieve the sword of Gryffindor, which only the truly brave can, in the 'HP and the Chamber of Secrets.'

Neville Longbottom, who was also sorted into the Gryffindor despite his apparent fearfulness, proved his valour when he drew the Sword of Godric Gryffindor, to behead Nagini, Lord Voldemort's snake, in 'HP and the Deathly Hallows.' Interestingly Neville wanted to join the Hufflepuff, but the Hat with a better understanding of Neville's traits, placed him along with Harry and others in Gryffindor. Thus, it cannot be argued that the hat obliges every time the student makes a request. The hat decides what is best for the students.

Another instant where the Sorting Hat had a dilemma was in the sorting of Hermione Granger. Her expansive intelligence and a potential 'best student' in her year, meant that she was well suited for Ravenclaw. But her brilliance combined with valiance suggested that she belonged to the Gryffindor House. To put it in her own words, the traits of a great witch shows that friendship and bravery are more important than mere knowledge from books and information.

Some characters were chosen because they possessed traits common to the family as Ron Weasley, Draco Malfoy wherein all the members have been placed in the same house. But show of traits belonging to the house is mandatory. Although all the members of the Black family were Slytherins, Sirius Black was a Gryffindor, for he showed bravery and not aspiring power or fame.

An instance where personal attributes are defined, can be seen in the sorting of members in the Slytherin house. This house supposedly takes in only those who are descendents of magical parents generally referred to as 'pure blood'. But the fact that Tom Riddle, (later Lord Voldemort) who is half blood ( muggle father and witch mother), Severus Snape, head of the Slytherin house also a half blood belong to this house reveals that the traits alone and not parentage that is relevant in sorting.

A striking feature of this sorting is the fact that all students belonging to a particular house attend classes together, share the same dormitories and continue to remain together even after their graduation from school. The kind of work they pursue is very much in keeping with their mental disposition. There are many instances when people belonging to the Gryffindor house are seen working together especially in the Ministry of Magic. This unity is their biggest strength. It is this unity that helped them defeat the Dark Lord in the last book.

We could notice that people belonging to the same profession have their shops/work places together even today. This perhaps is the smallest example that we can produce as evidence of the Varna system that prevailed several centuries ago. There is a certain unity among the professionals usually traders, when they work in unison, despite the fact that they may actually belong to different caste / community by birth. It is therefore possible to read just more than unity here, if only we can translate this feature into other

professions and other walks of life, sustained progress in society is not just possible but becomes the order of life.

The similarities between the Varna System and the Sorting procedure are too obvious to be ignored. That the Sorting Hat can impartially identify nascent qualities in a student and thus place them in the House that will challenge them the most, is perhaps the modern realization of the ancient System. Besides, these qualities though innate in the students, do not fully surface until they learn to believe in themselves. This is where practice comes into the picture. And to practice one must follow the codes of conduct appropriate to their respective houses/varnas.

### **Conclusion**

Although, the Varna System is too ancient and far too idealistic, it may be incredibly challenging to reconstruct society on their lines. But the fact that a recent literary sensation has recaptured its essence perhaps suggests that it is not impossible after all. A conviction from deep within oneself, to submerge personal exterior differences and see eye to eye with each other, and acting for the welfare of the whole and not in parts, can go a long way in reconvening this system in the present world.

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## Ngugi wa Thiong'o's *The Black Hermit* and *I Will Marry When I Want*: A Study in Mao Tse-tung's Revolutionary Aesthetics

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“There is no state that can be in permanent revolution. Art, on the other hand, is revolutionary by its very nature as art.” (*Penpoints, Gunpoints and Dreams*: 13)

Ngugi in the beginning of *Decolonising the Mind* writes:

I shall look at the African realities as they are affected by the great struggle between the two mutually opposed forces in Africa today: an imperialist tradition on the one hand, and a resistance tradition on the other. The imperialist tradition . . . is today maintained by the international bourgeoisie using the multinational and of course the flag-waving native ruling-class . . . The resistance tradition is being carried out by the working people (the peasantry and the proletariat) . . . (*Decolonising the Mind*: 2)

This broad binary opposition between the forces of oppression on the one hand and the forces of resistance on the other, emerges as one of the important subjects in Ngugi's *oeuvre*. For him the endeavour to forge a unified nation post-independence is always explored with a keen emphasis on the class structure. “His exploration of the colonial, postcolonial/neocolonial situations takes as its central problematic the category of class” (Dasthakur 184). Whereas Fanon in his *The Wretched of the Earth* regards the racial differences between the settler and the colonized as the most important determinant of their economic differences, Ngugi understands the phenomena of neocolonialism as manifestations of capitalism that enacts the class-conflict of the subaltern and the bourgeoisie. His analysis of the African reality begins with class. The following paper will analyze Ngugi's two notable plays, *The Black Hermit* and *I Will Marry When I Want* against the background of the revolutionary aesthetics laid down by Mao Tse-tung in his *Talks at the Yen-an Forum on Art and Literature*.

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Mao Tse-tung is often credited with having creatively developed Marxism-Leninism by integrating its ideologies with China's revolution. He has also developed Marxist thought on art and literature, “making it fully systematized, highly scientific and powerfully militant” (Mo-han 1), which is clearly evident in his *Talks*. The class with bourgeois artistic and literary ideas has tried to either eliminate or revise Mao Tse-tung's thought on art and literature which only goes on to prove that they are an extremely sharp weapon; one which is extremely disadvantageous to bourgeois concepts.

When one claims that Mao Tse-tung developed Marxist and Leninist thought on Art

and Literature, it becomes necessary to first understand the ideas of Marx, Engels, and Lenin on art and literature. In the time of Marx and Engels, although the working class had made its entrance on the stage of history, the proletarian revolution itself was in its infantile stage. No truly proletarian writer had then appeared. Marx and Engels thus only demanded that writers reflect the life of the working class. They “shatter the optimism of the bourgeois world, and instill doubt as the eternal character of the existing order” (Engels: 17). Realist literature should reflect the working-class struggle against oppression. Further, they demanded that literary works not only portray the working-class life and struggles, but they portray the working-class accurately - not as some passive mass rather one that is capable of liberating itself. Marx and Engels actively contributed to the formation of a proletarian revolutionary trend in literature.

Lenin took this revolutionary spirit further with his famed article *Party Organization and Party Literature* where he put forward the principles of literature having a Party spirit. It was written after the first Russian revolution of 1905. Lin Mo-han notes, “the world proletarian revolutionary movement was by then much further advanced than in the era of Marx and Engels (6-7). In his article, Lenin laid down the principles of Party literature: “Literature must become part of the common cause of the proletariat . . . Literature must become a component of organized, planned and integrated Social-Democratic party work.” Lenin also made it clear that only proletarian literature is truly free literature, because politically conscious persons with the intention of serving the labouring people write it and it is free from the shackles of bourgeois individualism.

Lenin did point out that art and literature must be part of the Party's cause and serve the workers and peasants. But he did not explain in detail how it could truly become Party's art and literature and genuinely serve the proletariat. Mao Tse-tung gives a detailed solution to these questions in his *Talks*. The *Talks* were given against the background of nation-wide people's war against imperialist Japan. The revolutionary forces led by the party were unprecedentedly strong. The working class had its own bases and armed forces. A large number of artists and writers were getting involved in the revolutionary work. But their outlook was yet not completely a proletarian one; they still had the bourgeois or petty-bourgeois thoughts and ideas. Thus, to solve this contradiction, it became necessary for Mao to deliver his *Talks*. Mao expresses the idea that art and literature ought to be “a component part of the whole revolutionary machine . . . a powerful weapon for uniting and educating the people and for attacking and destroying the enemy, and to help the people to fight with one heart and one mind” (459). This remains the most fundamental principle of Mao's *Talks*. Now let us examine how Ngugi embodies these tenets in his plays.

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It is too well known that Ngugi is a politically engaged writer who believes the intelligentsia has a special commitment towards the society. Ngugi's choice of his native language and rejection of English display his political commitment and uncompromising critique of imperialism. Ngugi gave up writing in English in 1986 as he had called for a complete overhaul of the colonial legacy of education. In his opinion, the Eurocentric curriculum is detrimental to the growth of indigenous literatures and it denigrates indigenous traditions. Ngugi's search for a viable and non-Eurocentric aesthetic lead him to write in his native language. Also the failure of the postcolonial Kenyan state to deliver on any of its promises, the governments' authoritarianism, the spiraling corruption of the

ruling class and a growing disparity between Nigeria's rich and poor led him to think more concretely about radical change through cultural work. Ngugi unequivocally asserts that literature is class-coded and seeks to replace the elitist concept of art and its increasing commodification by a more democratic and participatory art. Ngugi, thus gravitates towards his native language and theatre, as these are for him the most effective tools for political mobilization.

Ngugi's *The Black Hermit* and *I Will Marry When I Want* in their conception, adaptation of African local theatrical techniques, choice of characters and thematic issues, and formal innovations to critically engage the audience, represent his synthesis of Mao's ideas of art and literature. Further, the two plays elucidate Mao's revolutionary aesthetics which demand the simplicity of language, understanding of the culture of the people, empowerment of the proletariat, and the functionality of the message expressed. The plays under scrutiny are an exercise in self-discovery and mark Ngugi's return to the community, his indigenous culture, to one's land where he writes for the peasantry and the proletariat. This is best expressed by Ngugi himself in the Preface to *The Trial of Dedan Kimathi*, co-authored by Ngugi and Micere Githae Mugo: "We believe that good theatre is that which is on the side of the people, that which, without masking mistakes and weaknesses, gives people courage and urges them to higher resolves in their struggle for total liberation" (vii-viii).

*The Black Hermit* has been regarded as the first full-length play by an East African author. The Makerere College Students Dramatic Society first performed it on 16 November 1962 at the Uganda National Theatre in Kampala. The play was written with an intention to "counter the prevailing dominance of European plays which have 'little appeal to Africans or, which is about the same thing, [are] of little relevance to conditions and problems in East Africa' (BH vii), but also continue the cultural hegemony of Europe" (Bartels 167-168).

As the title of the play suggests, Ngugi is primarily concerned with the role of the native intellectual in the newly independent Kenya. Contrary to ordinary belief, the hermit figure here is not someone hiding in a rural place, but is somebody who has left the village for the city. Remi was a political activist, a potential leader of the people who fought the white colonial regime for independence but now lives in a self-imposed exile in the city, alienated from his community. The reason for his exile is the custom in his Village according to which he had to marry his dead brother's wife. He feels trapped by the tribe, and therefore, runs away from it.

Ngugi notes in the Preface that the agenda of the play is to "expose and root out the cantankerous effects of tribalism, racialism and religious factions" (BH viii). Tribalism "is an ideology created by colonialism to cause antagonism between different ethnic groups with the intention to divide them as well as to prevent them from identifying their common enemy" (Bartels 168). This mindset continues even after independence as is reflected in the play by the elders of Marua: "who of our tribe is in the government? . . . Our tribe waits under a government composed of other tribes" (BH 13) and then later on in the play they want "a D.O. from the tribe" (BH 40) to truly represent their needs. The masses are shown as unable to reach the root of the problem because of its blind and obsessive tribalism. Remi, can see that their tribal loyalties are tearing the nation into shreds. He says: "I hate this. Even at college I hated the many small political and social organizations based on tribe and race" (BH 30). Remi on his return to the village defies his elders by furthering his idea of what a



nation should be: "We must all turn to the soil. We must help ourselves; build more schools; turn our hearts and minds to create a nation, than will tribe and race disappear. And man shall be free" (BH 64). Remi transcends tribalism by taking his friend Omenge, who belongs to a different ethnic group, on the stage with him. Remi wants to transcend the effects of tribalism and Christianity to forge a new nation. The singing of the national anthem becomes a means of consolidating this vision of a new nation.

But despite this short-term success, Remi is bound to fail because he is unable to come to terms with the concrete postcolonial reality as he tells his friend Omenge: "You are like any of those politicians who oppose the government. They don't realize that the problems posed by independence are different from those of colonial days" (BH 30). Remi is unable to understand the neo-colonial power structure, which is nothing different, rather an extension of the colonial regime. In fact, it is his friend Omenge, who shows a better grasp of the situation: "But people have a right to destroy a government, any government that continues the practice of the colonial regime" (BH 30). Remi's "idealistic bourgeois nationalism" (Dasthakur 192) gradually gives way to a loser and depriver on both counts, his city-girlfriend, Jane leaves him and his wife, Thoni commits suicide.

The foremost difference between *I Will Marry When I Want* and Ngugi's former plays is his decision to no longer write in English, but in Gikuyu, his mother tongue. Ngugi believed that African literature written in English is ultimately a product for the petty bourgeoisie and most of the masses (peasants and workers) could not understand it, even if it was written for them. Also, the production of *I Will Marry When I Want* was a completely collective enterprise, which involved the two authors, professional actors, and the ordinary people living in Kamiriithu. "The whole project became a collective community effort with peasants and workers seizing more and more initiative in revising and adding to the script, in directing dance movements on the stage, and in the general organization." Through this kind of active participation, people became thinking agents rather than passive recipients.

The play *Ngaahika Ndeenda (I Will Marry When I Want)* was first performed on 2 October 1977 at Kamiriithu Community Educational and Cultural Centre (KCECC). It focuses upon the effects of neo-colonial capitalism where Kenya is still governed by a tiny, wealthy group and the workers and peasants remain at the bottom rung of society. To illustrate the social order prevalent in neo-colonial Kenya, Ngugi uses two sets of corresponding characters. Kiguunda and his wife Wangeci as well as Gicaamba and his wife Njooki represent the workers and peasants who still work under atrocious conditions for minimum wages. Contrasted with them are Ahab Kioi and his wife Jezebel as well as Samuel Ndugire and his wife Helen who belong to the petty bourgeoisie and thrive on the exploitation of the masses. The two classes come into closer contact for different reasons: on a personal level, the daughter of Kiguunda, Gathoni, has a relationship with the son of Ahab Kioi, John Muhuuni. At the same time, Ahab Kioi wants to cheat Kiguunda out of his small one and half acres of land where an ecologically hazardous factory of a western multinational is supposed to be built.

The play explores different forms of exploitation based on gender and class. The affair between Gathoni and John is an example of sexual exploitation, because after impregnating her, John not only abandons her but also attempts to label her as a prostitute, an example of the exploitation of the peasants and workers by the bourgeoisie. The situation of the peasants and factory workers is aptly summarized by Gicaamba when he complains:

“Wages are never equal the work done/Wages can never really compensate for your labour . . . We are the people who cultivate and plant/But we are not the people who harvest/The owners of these companies are real scorpions./They know three things only: To oppress workers,/To take away their rights, And to suck their blood” (IWM 33). Gicaamba informs Kiguunda that since he had joined the factory, twenty-seven people in the cementing section have died. Further exploitation of workers becomes evident when Ndugire proudly brags about the fact that “I give them this month's salary/In the middle of the next month” (IWM 78), a stratagem that the workers doesn't leave their jobs.

The conceptual debates in the *The Black Hermit* take place between Remi and Omenge in the city. But such debates in *I Will Marry When I Want* take place primarily between Kinguunda, Wangeci, Gicaamba and Njooki. They “educate themselves politically in a dialectical process, by making mistakes and learning from experience, through an intense involvement in the language of real life” (Dasthakur 197). Here is a progressive and potentially revolutionary working class who has become increasingly self-reliant in their battle against neo-colonial imperialism. The peasants and the workers here are clearly aware of the cause of their problems: “The fact is/That the wealth of our land/Has been grabbed by a tiny group/Of the Kiois and the Ndugirres/In partnership with foreigners” (IWM 62).

Ngugi draws a stark contrast between Kiguunda's house, which is made of mud, and Kioi's well-furnished house in luxurious surroundings. The people from the comprador class are “ . . . the real bedbugs, /Local watchmen for foreign robbers” (IWM 31). The workers and peasants struggle with poverty and suffer from inflation while the surplus money from the foreign-owned factories goes to Europe, the U.S or Japan without letting the workers have their share. Gicaamba tries to convince his friend that “the labour of our hands is the real wealth of the country./The blood of the worker/Led by his skill and experience and knowledge/Is the true creator of the wealth of nations” (IWM 37-38). But Gicaamba is totally aware of the harsh reality: “Exploitation and oppression/Have poisoned our land” (IWM 42). And the title deed of the land of Kiguunda, of which he was so proud in the beginning of the play, is subsequently lost to greedy Kioi.

The utter abject poverty of the masses results in drinking problems and the emergence of various religious groups, which only regard the poor as “the rubbish heap of religions” (IWM 9). Anke Bartels notes that religion can be seen as an “ideological state apparatus supporting the comprador class” (178). Thus, the new elite adheres firmly to Christian principles. The religious hymns used by the bourgeoisie are put into stark contrast to the traditional songs of the proletarians. These songs become a way of celebrating the political events like the 1948 general strike and the Mau Mau fight for liberation and traditional cultural practices such as the Ngurario marriage tradition. Also, these are tools used for uniting the peasantry and the working class by awakening their communal consciousness.

Thus, Ngugi's development of a 'collective theatre' or 'a theatre of the oppressed' exemplifies Mao Tse-tung's ideas of Art and Literature. These plays constitute a 'literature of praxis,' intended to portray and inspire the potential of the people of the 'resistance tradition' to achieve total liberation. What Marx does with the *Communist Manifesto* and Mao Tse-tung with his *Talks*, Ngugi achieves that through his plays.

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## Resuscitating Displaced Identities: A Study of Leslie Marmon Silko's *Ceremony*

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### Introduction

The colonial history of Native Americans is a highly constructive story which has remained a source of contention among the natives and the whites. This history took a new turn in the twentieth century when colonized continents witnessed movements of decolonization in various forms of the arts and culture. It was a time when the colonized nations realized the destruction meted out by the combined forces of colonizers in the historical, political, sociological, cultural and economic areas. The colonized nations wanted to break the shackles of colonizers and they started the collective indigenous movements to resist the settler forces. The literary works, coming from the indigenous people, became charged with the politics of decolonization to produce an autonomous national or ethnic literature to depict their problems.

The revolutionary activities to decolonize through the literary works had a great impact on Native Americans and it heralded an era of Native American Renaissance. The writers of this period tried to revisit the longstanding roots of tribal myths and traditions. One of the great Native American authors who appeared on the scene to write about the issues of Native Americans, was Leslie Marmon Silko. She was born in Albuquerque, New Mexico having a mixed ancestry of Laguna-Pueblo and Mexican-White. Although Silko grew up on the reservations of Laguna yet she was never allowed to participate in the rituals of her people because of her mixed heritage. She grew up having isolated feelings because neither the white society nor the native society accepted her. She herself said that she was of mixed-breed ancestry but what she knew was Laguna. Having faced the complications of mixed-ancestry, Silko reflects on the vexatious issue in her writings and emphasizes the need to revive the old traditions of Laguna-Pueblo as a possible way to construct the displaced native identities.

Keeping this heritage of author in mind, this paper will focus on the displaced identities of Native Americans due to the clashing perceptions of the cultures in which they are living. Her award winning work, *Ceremony* is about a young Native American and World War II veteran, Tayo, who suffers with shell-shock and is also struggling to find his identity. He struggles to adapt to a world where he has to choose between the path determined by the whites and the one hosted by his native culture. His will to survive is almost eroded at the beginning of the novel when he returns from the World War II to Laguna-Pueblo reservation. His return to the Laguna Pueblo reservation only increases his feeling of estrangement and alienation. The other returning soldiers find an easy refuge in alcohol, and senseless violence but Tayo searches for another kind of comfort and resolution. His quest to find comfort leads him back to the native past and its traditions,

beliefs and to the ancient stories of his people. This search itself becomes a ritual, a curative ceremony that defeats his despair and estrangement. Tayo's struggle to find his own path has been compared to other Native Americans who are also straddling on two different cultures to fight and find their own path to survive.

Leslie Marmon Silko has constructed the displaced identity of Tayo who like her is of mixed ancestry. He is not able to place himself in either of the culturally hybrid environments that leads towards his alienation. He becomes a mouthpiece for Silko to describe a problem of hybrid displaced identity. He is grappling with the double-consciousness and this situation has its direct relation with other Native Americans who also suffer with double consciousness. Du Bois in *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903) explained double consciousness as "sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity" (Du Bois, location 85). This double consciousness has distorted Tayo's identity and he feels alienated in the mainstream American world and Native American world. Thus, Silko tries to assert various clashing perceptions of both worlds which alienate the natives from their culture and it results into distorted identities.

The profound insights regarding the displaced identity start forming a constructive contour when the varied perceptions of healing emerge at the beginning of the work. The variation between the healing methods of the whites and the natives causes an upheaval in the mind of Tayo. The author being a woman of mixed ancestry knows well about the power of traditional native healing through Medicine Wheel. She contends her view regarding the scientific methods of the whites to cure a person who needs a spiritual help. She has posited her view-point through Tayo's recovery in the novel. Tayo's recovery in a hospital of the white men contends that the scientific methods of healing in the white society stand apart from the traditional practices of Native Americans. Janelle Palacios in "Traditional Storytelling in the Digital Era" has commented that the concept of healing has its associations with perception of 'self' which has diverse connotations in both societies. She has asserted that the white society of America tends to break one's 'self' into physical, emotional, and spiritual parts; whereas, for the natives the 'self' is integrated and perceived as a unit of whole. Further, she opines that while the Americans lay emphasis on success of the individual, Native Americans praise their oneness, balance, harmony and connectedness. This assertion can be signified by the different healing methods used in the novel to cure Tayo from the mental trauma.

During his stay in the white men's hospital, Tayo finds himself enshrouded with white smoke. The white colour in the Medicine Wheel of Native Americans symbolizes 'death'. Hence, the white smoke connotes a force of negativity which has surrounded Tayo. Tayo realized that "for a long time he had been a white smoke and this white smoke had no consciousness of itself" (Silko, 14). The doctors in the hospital teach him to think only about himself. They do not want him to use words like 'we' and 'us.' They also yell at him because he finds himself unable to define in the terms of white society. This reason to give stress on oneself and not on others leads towards Tayo's worsening situation until his recovery through the native method by the medicine men. The healing methods of Native Americans are the reflexive acts which are a give and a take between healer and patient. Tayo's illness symbolizes his spiritual illness that stems from his hardships during the World War II as well as his association in the society in which he is considered as an outsider. The moment

Tayo leaves the hospital; he starts recovering from his sickness although in a slow manner. The medicine men Ku'oosh and Betonie as well as spirit woman Ts'eh help him to heal in an efficient manner by relating his place in nature and with other human beings. St. Andrews in "Healing the Witchery: Medicine in Silko's *Ceremony*" has asserted that for a native healer this world represents a circularity and interconnectedness and a lack of acknowledgement of spiritual sickness is itself a spiritual sickness. Tayo, after stepping out of the white men's hospital, learns to become his own medicine man by seeking an alternative treatment of the natives. The native 'ceremony' helps him to cure of his spiritual sickness, thus enables him to relate himself as a part of great chain of being.

*Ceremony* chronicles how the pangs of alienation experienced by the natives are often accompanied by a self-initiated identity crisis. The self-initiated identity crisis in the novel is presented through different view-points regarding individuality as practiced in both cultures. The characters in the novel try to mimic the white men's culture in order to attain superior individuality but it has proved fatal for them. Allan Chavkin in *Leslie Marmon Silko's Ceremony: A Casebook* (2002) writes that Native Americans, according to Silko, suffer from a kind of general drain of cultural identity after coming into contact with the whites (127). Silko has also asserted that Native American culture seems to be "buried under English words" (Silko, 69). This self-inflicted identity crisis by difference regarding individuality has been delineated by the character of Laura (Tayo's mother), Rocky (Tayo's cousin) and the war veterans who are inclined towards the mainstream American culture and refuse to accept their Native American culture.

Tayo's mother remains spellbound by the white men and also entices the white men as she looks and dresses more like English women. She presumably wants to mimic the culture of her master and intentionally suppresses her cultural identity. Her desire to be a part of English society has brought disgrace to the whole community when she gives birth to Tayo out of marriage with a white man. For her behavior, the native community believes that "what happened to the girl did not happen to her alone, it happened to all of them" (Silko, 69). Homi Bhabha in his essay "Of mimicry and man: The ambivalence of colonial discourse" posited that mimicry is often seen as something shameful and black or brown persons who engage in mimicry are always derided by other members of his or her group for doing so. Bhabha claimed this notion in words "the desire to emerge as 'authentic' through mimicry—through a process of writing and repetition—is the final irony of partial representation" (Bhabha, 126).

Like Laura, Tayo's cousin Rocky is also mesmerized by the culture of mainstream American society. He is averse to his native cultural values and traditions. His hostility towards celebrating the 'deer' pictures his hatred for the old custom of Pueblos. He makes fun of the native traditions because he believes in scientific explanations given to him in his school. His teachers at boarding school are proud of him and tell him that "nothing can stop you now except one thing: don't let the people at home hold you back" (Silko, 51). However, his charm for the white society leads towards his destruction. The war veterans in the novel have similar feelings for their native culture. They are excluded from the public life and they spend most of their time in pubs by drinking and remembering their old days. In their old days, they experience respect and admiration for being a part of the mainstream American army but this respect and admiration of the white people for them is lost in the post-war period. The position of all these characters can be explained by giving reference of Homi

Bhabha who has asserted that mimicry sometimes describe itself as unintentionally subversive. In his thinking, mimicry acts as a kind of performance which exposes the artificiality of all symbolic expressions of power and explains the hollowness of the codes of mimicked culture (Bhabha, 125).

The alienated identities of the natives are evident in the notion of land because it embodies different meanings for the whites and for the natives. Native Americans are strongly associated with their land because for them the land comes from the Great Spirit. Kelli Mosteller in "For Native Americans, Land Is More Than Just The Ground Beneath Their Feet" has asserted that the issue of ownership of land has always remained at the center position to depict the bitter relationships between the whites and the natives. In *Ceremony*, the relationship of Native Americans to their land has been depicted as crucial part of identity. Silko has posited her opinion that the settler states have perceived land merely as an asset and a possession. Their viewpoint regarding land does not correspond with the views of the natives. For the settler states, land is just a property to be used as an asset. For them, it is a means to extract minerals for the production of weapons as well as to get food. This view of the whites can be ascertained from an incident in the novel when Tayo's grandmother tells him about a blast that has taken quite near to their house. She describes the blast as "It was still dark; everyone else was still sleeping. But as I walked back from the kitchen to my bed there was a flash of light through the window. So big, so bright even my old clouded-up eyes could see it" (Silko, 245). This land abuse by the whites is in conflict with the ideas of Native Americans for whom land is an important part of their identity. They think that land can be taken care of besides exploiting it. Ts'eh, the spirit woman is the best example who treats land in its best possible way. She has a sound knowledge of plants and admonishes Tayo to plant a herb named Datura which brings rain to end the drought.

The land plays a significant part to construct identity not only for the natives but it has a deep connection with the animals also. It has been depicted through the journey of Tayo and the spotted cattle whose state is inter-related. Katelyn Remp in "Using the Land to Heal: A Warrior's Journey in Leslie Marmon Silko's Novel *Ceremony*" has asserted when Tayo and the cattle lose touch with the land they become mentally and physically ill. The cattle have been represented as natural inhabitants of the land. Tayo realizes that once "the spotted cattle" find their way to native land, they "would not be lost anymore" (Silko, 146). Thus, the land and the cattle form a spiritual basis for Tayo to understand and accept his biracial identity and heritage after relating his condition with the cattle and land.

It can be deduced from above analysis that the alienated and displaced indigenous identities have been caused by the denial of rights by the white society. The natives do not have rights to control their development based on their indigenous values and needs. The writers of Native America have extensively portrayed this problem in their literary works to make the indigenous population of America understand their right to practice and revitalize their cultural traditions and customs in order to make up for their displaced and alienated identities. However, Silko made her point clear that the natives must change their ceremonies and traditions according to the need of time as old ceremonies cannot survive in ever changing world. The medicine man, Betonie, told Tayo that "the ceremonies as they had been performing were enough for the way the world was then. But after the white people came, elements in this world began to shift; and it became necessary to create new ceremonies" (Silko, 126).

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## Book Review

**Basavaraj Naikar. *Nirad Chaudhuri as a Critic of Modern Culture.*  
New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers & Distributors, 2018. ISBN: 978-  
8126925780. Price: INR 895. Pages 328.**

**Dr. Ajay K. Chaubey**

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Nirad Chandra Chaudhuri (popularly known as Nirad Chaudhuri sans his middle name) was an “extraordinary” genius who was an idolized ivory tower in the east and the west concurrently as he carried forward the legacies of both the Indian and the British writers. His creative zeal is a fine amalgamation of Nehru, Radhakrishnan, Khushwant Singh and few others from India and Carlyle, Huxley, Swift, etc. from England. However, he defers and differs from these writers in style, approach, form and contents. Naikar asserts, “his prose is neither exhortative like that of Vivekananda, nor romantic like that of Nehru nor incantatory like that of Radhakrishnan, but is realistic, analytical, satirical and scholarly at the same time” (1). Chaudhuri's creative *oeuvre* contains nearly two dozen fictional and non-fictional books written in English and Bangla.

Chaudhuri invited the attention of critics from time to time because he has been proactive throughout his literary career. If one looks at the secondary sources available on Chaudhuri's works, only a few critics have taken pain to work on his entirety of literary creations. After 2000, there is a wide chasm on Chaudhuri criticism but Basavaraj Naikar, a retired professor of English from Karnataka University, has recently brought out a compendium entitled *Nirad Chaudhuri: As a Critic of Modern Culture* published this year to fill that chasm. However, there emerged a volume entitled *The Thought of Nirad C. Chaudhuri* (Cambridge UP 2015) by Ian Almond of Georgetown University, Qatar. But, the scope of the latter one is very limited to the Indian scholars. Hence, it is quintessential to review Naikar's critique on Chaudhuri's intact corpus of literary works.

The volume spread over sixteen chapters, offers a linear critique on Chaudhuri's works. Naikar's 'Introduction' to this volume deals with the life and works of Chaudhuri, on one hand, and concisely contextualizes his literary taxonomy on the other. After the introduction, a series of chapters are unfolded. The next chapter entitled “*Autobiography of an Unknown Indian as Descriptive Ethnology*” disentangles the conundrums of an unknown “author” whose 'autobiography,' written by Chaudhuri, presents “a picture of the growth of consciousness of the man including the inevitable crisis and conciliation of conscience” (11) and also offers “an ethnological picture of a culture” (29).

The following chapter on *A Passage to England*, Chaudhuri's *magnum opus*, delineates an “analytical picture of the English character” (46) while the fourth chapter on *The Continent of Circe* incisively examines how the author outlines the book as an 'essay.' To quote Naikar “the essay that Chaudhuri writes is not of the length of two pages to twenty-

five pages of close print. Naturally, Chaudhuri's 'essay' resembles Hobbes' *Essay on the Human Understanding* in its length. He justifiably calls it an essay on the peoples of India" (48). Both of the aforementioned chapters based on *A Passage to England* and *The Continent of Circe* explicate the dichotomies of "the English Character" and "the Peoples of India" respectively.

The other ensuing chapters on *To Live or Not to Live* and *The Intellectual in India* overtly study the narrative structure of the aforementioned non-fictions while the next chapter on Chaudhuri's *Scholar Extraordinary*, which is 'an epical biography of Max Muller,' according to Naikar, seriously critiques the 'biography' and outlines its palimpsest significance in Indian academia. He further asserts that, "[i]t is a happy coincidence that one serious scholar has written on another serious scholar..." (99). In the same modus, Naikar posits an undeviating reading of *Clive of India*, a political biography of Lord Clive, in the chapter nine.

The chapters eight and ten on *Culture in the Vanity Bag* and *Hinduism: A Religion to Live By* respectively offer a discursive analysis of Indian culture and Hindu religion. The former meticulously examines, according to the critic, the sartorial significance and its "connection between the Indian clothing and the Indian history" (110) while the latter one offers both historical as well as panoramic view of the Hindu religion. According to Chaudhuri, marks Naikar, "Hinduism is a human phenomenon of immense magnitude and bewildering diversity" (170). Thus, Naikar has established that every Indian reader should read these books by Chaudhuri in today's political scenario as the present Indian society is demarcated by politicians in the name of being pro-Hindu and anti-Hindu.

In the next chapter on *Thy Hand, Great Anarch!*, the author strives to establish a structural transmutation between biography and autobiography. However, *Thy Hand, Great Anarch!* may be said to be "an extension of *Autobiography of an Unknown Indian*" (172). Additionally, the author (Naikar) has also argued, in this chapter, that, "*Thy Hand* has a big biographical chunk devoted to the life and career of Tagore" (180). He concludes that *Thy Hand* is one of the "great cultural records of India with epic proportions" (188).

In an analogous manner, the last few chapters on these texts – *Three Horsemen of the New Apocalypse*; *From the Archives of a Centenarian*; *Why I Mourn for England*; *The East is East and the West is West* – are pedantically and critically surveyed. In the penultimate chapter 'Chaudhuri's Prose Style' followed by 'Conclusion' Naikar intelligently equates Chaudhuri's significance as a prose writer in the modern times and tenaciously places him in the galaxy of great writers of the east and the west. Naikar concludes, "Like Goldsmith's school teacher his (Chaudhuri's) small head contains a large wealth of ideas and notions which are inspiring and proactive at the same time" (326).

Thus, the volume is a fine critical feast on Nirad Chaudhuri's fictional and non-fictional corpus which may be useful not only for young researchers but also for teachers and academicians. Naikar must be appreciated for bringing out this volume well on time.

## POETRY COLUMN

### *Back to Roots*

Prof. R.K. Bhushan\*

Clinging to the past  
Blocks and blinds  
The vision of the future;  
The glamour of links  
Is irresistible.

Intellectual pursuits  
Are individual  
Even if the persons and the places  
In the surroundings,  
In the vicinity,  
Are uninspiring,  
Dull as the pond.

Vigorous pursuit  
Of the pursuits  
For long, long years,  
Was unwelcome  
And even scoffed at.

This scandalous neglect  
Delighted and easily pushed them all up!

It did yield  
Enviably potential-  
Personal and professional-  
And did cause 100% burns  
To the termite-eaten  
Men, minds and morals.  
Blissful darkness  
Was their sole, soul, blessing!

Writing off the conscious self  
And going down  
Into the regions  
Of the unconscious  
Became a conscious choice.

Destination we reach  
May not be our choice  
But the paths trodden  
Remain ours!  
What a fulfillment!

It is there  
That the haunting desire,  
A natural yearning, intervenes  
To return to the roots,  
Woke up, may be none is there  
To take care!

After the long unending travel,  
I'm seeking earnestly  
On the alienating patchy and broken  
Paths leading nowhere,  
A turn, a U-turn,  
Or even T  
To shun the dismal  
And disgusting dread-  
And harness the high-rising tide,  
In clear sight!  
Of course, not an illusion!  
To keep mobile,  
Even in stagnation,  
Is the loud message  
Even from the off-tracks  
Obstructing the reach  
To the SOUL  
And the SELF!

---

*\*Prof. R. K. Bhushan is an established poet, critic, short fiction writer, book reviewer and editor. Author of six anthologies of poetry, three books of Literary and general criticism and an anthology of short stories, he is a fine human being moored in aesthetics.*

## *Dreaming Homewards*

Dr. Lalit Mohan Sharma\*

### I

As centre of his private universe  
He could be insanely sensitive  
To the world around him  
To its needs and urges  
He would be awake and so alert  
To his own give and take  
That he would rather suffer  
Than hurt a fellow around

There could he always see  
The dull carrot-pink turn  
Into a giggling red urn  
Of clay in a calm repose

With the pause in-between  
Reaction and action per se  
Reaction turns into response  
A moment in utter privacy  
Turns into a prayer most holy

### II

Living with oneself or friends  
Can often allow easy amends  
Like a crumpled sheet on bed  
As when you rise in morning  
See what the wall clock tells  
And the twilight on the terrace  
Words faces float in and out  
Like birds fly and alight soft  
On a mind unaware of walls  
And so eager to seek a new day  
After a brief time spent in  
Trimming the household

### III

Living with men and women  
Who hunt for hurts within  
Even in innocent remarks  
Whose self-respect like a feather  
Does swirling go up and down

Nursing resentment with rancor  
Present feuds flourish  
With feedback from past events

Seeking solutions  
Through comparisons  
Of varied persons  
Fair judgement befuddled  
With murders most foul  
Of genuine cravings  
And simple yearnings  
Of minds hungry and harassed

You begin to doubt your own drives  
Ruffling your moments of utter privacy  
Shining colors begin to turn vague  
Dust and fog engulf the sky above  
Stars twinkle in only nursery rhymes

Begin to grope the periphery  
Of the very private universe  
Agouti to recline on the sheet  
Spread/ still not crumpled

#### IV

Dreaming felt it was only real  
Moving into the serene ambience  
Of a sacred place  
A terrace of a calm mist  
And in the luminous courtyard  
A master beckons me in a way  
I as if float unhurried smooth  
Dressed in a loose black gown  
With silken shades of colors  
The magenta maroon the yellow  
And the yellow-ochre gleam  
Stretches the arm of the master  
And I begin to dance to the gesture  
Whirling and whirling smooth  
Aware of the joy and smiles  
My mind had never known  
The whirl is the dance  
Dance has me into a whirl  
Cannot focus can see nothing  
Not the master

My arm keeps me whirling  
None holds my hand  
No one whatsoever

V

I am as if the dance  
I move in rhythm  
Motions rhyme with moods

Then I am not alone  
Everybody is there  
So many in flesh and bone

Leaving I turn once more  
Hold a dear friend  
In a gentle half-embrace  
Turns fuller and warm  
On her cheeks are blossoms  
And orchids in the hair  
With a touch of marigold  
The palms fold and unfold  
The dream stays whole  
Even as I say goodbye  
And go up the stairs  
Like a prayer unknown  
To the praying mind

---

*\*Dr. Lalit Mohan Sharma, former Principal, Govt. College, Dharmshala (H.P.), has published eight books, including four anthologies of English poetry and a poetic English translation of Urdu Poetry, Three Step Journey. Dr. Sharma's creative pursuits persist in myriad ways.*

## *Reverie*

**Dr. Manpreet K. Sodhi\***

Very oft  
on the weary moonlit nights  
with serene ambience  
permeating the voids of being  
mind takes off ethereal runways  
as the trees sway,  
in sheer delight  
I get lost in a reverie.

An invisible presence clasps  
in a gentle embrace  
plays upon virgin strings  
as lilting notes of music  
caress the fibres  
of my being.

Divine notes  
stars hear  
as moon seems to dance  
and tender night goes gay  
in flamboyant radiance  
and eyes are dazzled  
in a deluge of lights  
Strange pulsations  
Loud and clear  
I feel I hear  
Though lost  
in a reverie.

---

\*Dr. Manpreet K. Sodhi, Assistant Professor of English, University College  
Miranpur, Distt. Patiala.



## *Time*

**Rohit Singh Bedi\***

Time, the subtle thief  
governs human lives  
snatches stealthily  
loved ones permanently  
and painfully reminds  
of transience.

It hovers and lingers  
Sharpening the absence  
of dears departed,  
flies away on its luminous wings  
as one savours  
joyous moments of union.

In our lives  
Time alone  
deprives and bestows  
name and fame  
money and wealth  
leaves in its trail  
sweet memories.  
Alas! Missing are the ones  
who made the memories  
so memorable and cherishable.

---

\*Rohit Singh Bedi, Sr. Teacher, Harvest International School Jassowal-Kular Distt. Ludhiana.

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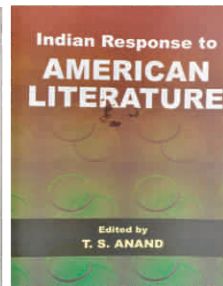
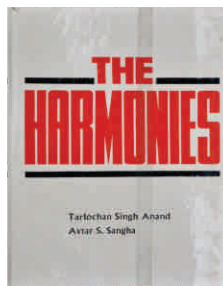
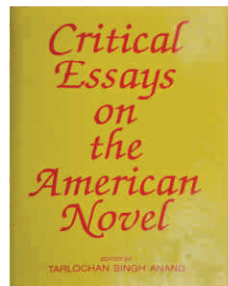
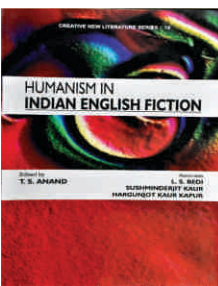
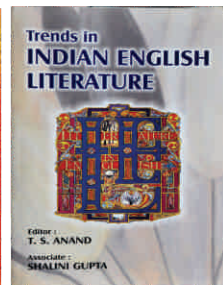
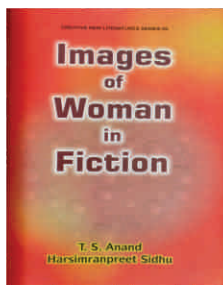
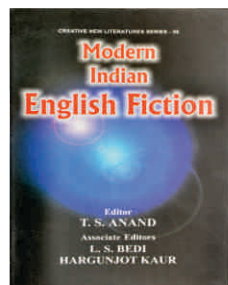
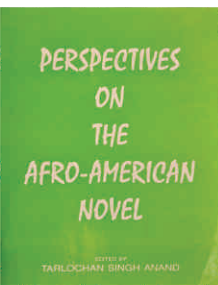
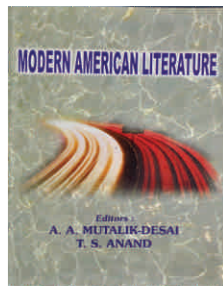
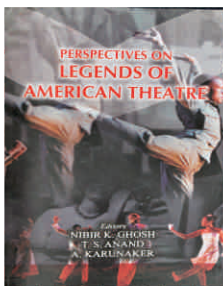
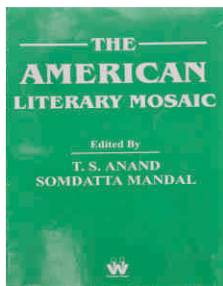
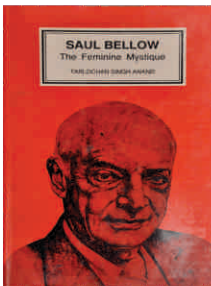
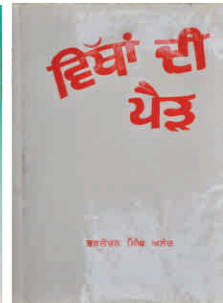
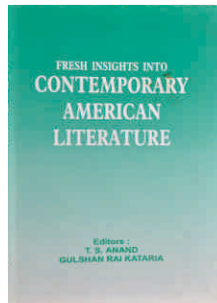
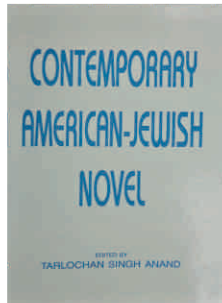
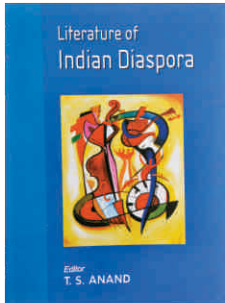
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