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Editorial Note

Literary Voice September 2017 offers a variegated cerebral feast—from the delightful childhood experiences of Mulk Raj Anand, in *Seven Summers,* narrated from the vantage point of the writer's mature, philosophical and psychological knowledge and its resonance in fictional representations meticulously analyzed by Prof. Basavaraj Naikar—to Amitav Ghosh's *The Hungry Tide* which espouses the cause of environment and pioneers an effort to bring into focus the necessity of needed assault on human avarice and self-centred interests. On a different plane of emotional mediation, Nature takes on anthropomorphic characteristics in Anthony Goicolea's paintings as a new, uneasy equilibrium is created as human and animal bodies merge. From the charms and richness of the five non-scheduled languages of Uttarakhand in terms of local ethos, cultural-behavioral patterns and folk lore of the inhabitants, the focus shifts to the changing face of modern day English language as it is transformed and enriched by the use of slang, hence the emergence of an innovative and vibrant variety of English language.

Two literary texts by the Dalit writers project a strong sense of defiance, revolt and assertion of their identity, through rebellious historiographic outlet of identifying past and defying the prevailing literary edifices by its enunciation of cultural and caste discrimination. In spite of the age-old social roadblocks, the Dalit protagonists in Bama's *Karukku* and Laxman Mane's *An Outsider* empower themselves through education to register their intelligent revolt against the repressive socio-cultural iniquities, and rise above the straitjacket of victimhood.

Dr Sumathi Shivakumar's superb analysis of a postmodern historical novel, *The Queen of Kittur* by Basavaraj Naikar, offers a probing leap into the colonial past of India, and glorifies the heroism of Rani Chennamma, the second wife of Raja Mallasarja of Kittur as she combated both Peshwa kings and the East India Company, the later day British colonizers.

Feminism from Past to the Cyborgian Age, in all its

peculiarities and manifestations, finds resonance in Bharati Mukherjee's *Desirable Daughters* which portrays the predicament of the female protagonist, Tara as she oscillates between her native spiritual values and traditions of the restrictive Indian culture and the liberating foreign culture, and eventually she negotiates the existential dilemmas thrown up by diasporic issues of home, exile, dislocation, assimilation, alienation and identity crisis. Rupa Bajwa's *Tell Me a Story* brings in sharp focus Asha's tale of woes, poverty and gender discrimination, and the barbarities unleashed upon the subalterns by the fake and ruthless upper class society.

Dr Lalit Mohan Sharma's recent poems, *A Prayer on the Bridge* and *Two Halves*, enrich our endeavours to offer an idea of the freshness which Dr Sharma's poetic sensibilities bring to bear upon the contemporary Indian English poetry.

Two Book Reviews about two distinct and emerging Indian English Poets and one on a new vibrant voice in Indian English Fiction, add to the depth and richness of the present number of *Literary Voice*, and we promise much more in the days to come with the help of your inputs, sustained encouragement and blessings. Amen.

T. S. Anand

The Bliss and Wonder of Childhood Experience in Mulk Raj Anand's *Seven Summers*

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Indian English fiction abounds in the depiction of adult experience but the depiction of childhood experience is conspicuously rare due to a variety of reasons. In fact, childhood experience can be depicted properly only by a grown-up man and that too retrospectively in the light of his subsequent and deep experience of life, knowledge and reading etc. When a man is still a child he can have his childhood experience without being able to understand and analyze it properly at that time. However, his experience is stored rather vaguely in the storehouse called his memory until the flowering of his intelligence, which enables him to understand, analyze and depict it in a retrospective and coherent manner. In recent years Ruskin Bond has written some novellas like *A Room with a Roof* and *Vagrants of the Valley* depicting some of his boyhood experiences. But there is definitely some difference between childhood experiences and boyhood experiences. Mulk Raj Anand's *Seven Summers* (1951) is a significant work of art in the sense that it is not a biographical but autobiographical novel dealing with his childhood experiences. Childhood experience may involve the growth of one's personality from innocence to experience involving the concurrent bliss and pain and wonder and shock and an interrogative spirit silenced by a sense of mystery of the whole life. Hence this work provides ample material to modern psychologists, who are interested in the description of psychological development of a child from his birth up to his old age.

Any childhood experience can begin only with the emergence of consciousness of the world and clear memory of

things, beings and events. The emergence of consciousness takes place around sixth or seventh year after birth when a child is forced to be sent to school. The child begins to open its mind to the phenomenal world around it and absorb the experience as much as possible and gradually. Quite in keeping with this principle, the boy Krishna, the protagonist of the autobiographical novel, *Seven Summers*, observes the immediate environment including his house and its surroundings which happen to be the first vivid memory of his life:

> Sunshine scatters like gold dust. A buzz in the air, as though the pinpoints of gold are flying hither and thither. The green trees of the grove spread the shadow of their protection on the white-bearded spirit of Mian Mir which, mother has told me, lives in the Persian wheel well. On one side of our house are the straight barracks, where soldiers live, on the other side are the bungalows of the Sahibs, with their gardens, white-washed and still, and hazy with their mysteries before my eyes. Dividing the barracks and the bungalows is the road, lined with casuarinas trees, which stretches from end to end of the horizon. I stand for a long while with my thumb in my mouth wondering where it comes from and where it goes. Then I run round in circles on the little clearing under the grove surrounding the Persian wheel well in a wild delirium of movement, oblivious of the past and the future, excited by my own happiness at finding myself wandering freely in the wide open world… (7).

The boy's first interaction with persons other than his parents, begins with the gardener, who takes up the child in his arms and tosses him in the air, thereby giving him a hilarious experience.

The child's experience of plucking a rose in the garden and being pricked by the thorns is also a new one for him. At the same time his sense of possessiveness may be seen in holding the flower in his hand. The joy of playing and the attendant accidents and agonies may be seen in Krishna's life. For example, Krishna is eager to play and indulge in childish pranks, falls on the earth, hurts his knees and finally consoled by his mother's affectionate hug. The child is always parasitical and depends upon elders,

especially mother or elder brother or father. Thus the experience of the protective care and concerns of the parents gives the child a sense of security.

After the affection of his mother, Krishna enjoys the affection of his father and appreciates his bushy moustaches. He remembers the kisses received from his father from under his ticklish moustaches and the nickname of 'Bully' given by the latter. At the age of about 4 or 5, his father had come to be a legendary to him, an avatar of Raja Vikram. "Culled from the gossip and rumours current in the household were various other myths and legends about my father, but the ceremony of jinns and *bhuts* and fakirs dominated them all" (13). As life seems to be very mysterious to him he cannot understand it totally at that age.

As the boy's consciousness of the world begins to open up, Krishna becomes aware of his three brothers at home: little brother Prithvi, brother Ganesh and eldest brother, Harish. Even at that young age. Krishna notices certain qualities (both physical and behavioural) of his brothers. For example, his little brother, Prithvi was a pale and shriveled up creature, who had an angular face with high cheekbones and was frightening to him. His elder brother Ganesh was jealousy pure and simple. He had a fiery temperament behind the outer façade of a saint. Krishna feels more adolatrous towards his eldest brother. Harish was tall, lanky and came riding his steel-horse (i.e. cycle).

Even as a child, Krishna notices the contrast between his mother and aunt, who were so different from each other. "My mother was, as I have noticed before, milk and sugar, but my aunt Aqqi was like the essence of curds" (16). Krishna describes the motherly affection in the hug of his mother and aunt and how he was nicknamed as Bully. Krishna likes his uncle, Jhanda Singh (shortened as Jai Singh) who became his friend as he brought the first kite for Krishna and helped him to fly it high in the sky.

Another person that Krishna comes to know and love early in his life, was Gurdevi, the wife of Baba Chattar Singh, the Quartermaster's clerk in his father's regiment. He is taught by his father not to call them big names, but to consider them as 'little mother' and 'little father.' Slowly Krishna learns the social etiquettes and fine manners, as part of the growth of his personality.

While Krishna is immersed in the radiant childlike happiness he is jolted into the shocking experience of seeing the first death in his family after his birth. The death of his little brother Prithvi makes him vaguely aware of the miserable and frightening thing called 'death'. "I did not know the name of this shadow. Nor could I see it. I only heard its name spoken in lowered tones and hisses by the people who thronged at the door outside our house as I came back after a whole morning during which my brother Ganesh and I seemed to have slept on a charpoi in the verandah of Babu Chattar Singh's house, fanned by 'little mother' Gurdevi"(21). Mulk Raj Anand describes the dismal and mourning atmosphere in the house meticulously.

Acquaintance with new persons, who may be relatives or friends, is obviously part of extension of one's awareness of the world. Now Krishna comes to know his uncle, Pratap and aunt Devaki, who come from Amritsar to offer their condolences to his family. But the departure of his elder brother Ganesh to Amritsar along with his aunt and uncle, gives an experience of oppressive and miserable loneliness. He, therefore, pontificates about childhood, which is not always happy. " In the light of those days I am now inclined to think that childhood is not altogether the happy, golden time sentimentalists make it out to be, as a compensation for the rigours of the grown up world, but that it is characterized by long patches of loneliness when children are condemned , for good or ill, to the prisons of their own sensibilities, exiled from the adult world and left to their own devices if there is not available a crèche or a kindergarten or swing and the company of their children"(27).

He also thinks about the mystery of the past and future of his life. "Still there seemed to me from this period, apart from the misery of solitude, a peculiar strength of temperament. I learned to live on my own resources and to be in tune with the shade of the dense trees in the grove where I roamed, the grasses and flowers of the Sahib's garden, where I occasionally strayed, and the ever-changing life of the road – the road which I crossed from the protection of one line of casuarina trees, stirred by the nimble breeze, to the other, the road in whose dust I rolled, the road where I held conversation with men and beasts and birds, the road which dominated my life with its unknown past and its undiscovered

future" (28). The boy's brooding over the mystery of the past and the uncertainty of the future is at once poetic, symbolic and philosophical.

Childhood has its childlike delights and pleasures which cannot be laughed at or wished away. Krishna's sight of a juggler accompanied by a black bear gives him a lot of childlike pleasure and extends his experience of life.

Dreaming is an important experience of childhood. Perhaps no normal child is free from this delightful experience or wish fulfillment. "Obviously, in those days I was my own master, supreme ruler of the phantasmagoric kingdom of my strange visions and stranger dreams" (52).Sigmund Freud has already shown the extraordinary importance of dreams and fantasies in human life.

In the second part of his autobiography Mulk Raj Anand narrates the next stage of his childhood experience. When the child's intelligence is awakened, his curiosity about his own origin and past is naturally aroused in him. The child therefore begins to ask such fundamental but embarrassing questions to his parents. One is quite familiar with such situations in Tagore's poetry, especially *The Crescent Moon*. Mulk R aj Anand presents a similar situation here. One afternoon Krishna asks his mother, "Where did you find me, Mother? Where did I come from? (53) But the mother invents a fairy tale manner and answers him thus, "You were in my soul, my darling hidden like a secret. You were in my body like a pearl in a mother of pearl. You were my innermost desire. And I tried to find you. But I searched and searched and couldn't see you anywhere. So I prayed to God to give you to me. And God being a very kind person made you for me and put you in a little alcove in our house at Peshawar…" (53).

Then Krishna asks the next but philosophical question, "Who made God, Mother?" (53) Then he wants to see the fairy godmother. Like this, Krishna goes on asking a number of questions, which is in keeping with the awakening of intelligence in most of the children. It easily shows the child's quest for knowledge and a desire to understand the mysterious world into which he has come.

The child has a right to play to fulfill his hidden dreams and desires and to while away his time joyfully. Krishna takes up a

bamboo pole and rides it like a horse. Perhaps there is no child in the world who has not played this game. The mock experience of riding a pole naturally shows his dream of riding a real horse in his later life or his adventurous spirit.

Krishna seems to be a precocious child. His father considers him to be an auspicious child and a man of destiny and therefore thinks of sending him to *vilayat*. Because of the cultural contrast between Hindu culture and the British culture that was found in the regimental atmosphere, Krishna had developed an exaggerated respect for the West, the blessed isles.

Perhaps there is nobody closer to the child both physically and cordially than his mother. Krishna has observed his mother closely and understood her nature in general. What he learns from his mother is that she hailed from a strict religious and disciplinarian background of patriarchal Sikh society. The details of her life provide a sharp contrast to those of a Western mother. "In these years my mother too, often used to tell us the story of her own life. She herself had been married early. She had been a wild child in the village home of her parents, head bare and feet unshod, till the responsibility of helping her mother to look after younger brothers and sisters fell upon her, as she was the eldest child of the family. Then the shadow of her impending separation from her family had descended on her, for she was engaged to be married to my father before she was eight, and the responsibility of preparing for the marriage weighed heavily on girls in those days as they had to make their own trousseau. But she had borne the burden of all her duties quietly enough, because hers was a home of perfect worship. Her father was a devout Sikh peasant-craftsman, lost in the love of God. He always had holy men come to stay in his house, and as the personal care and service of these, the feeding and tending, devolved upon the household, my mother had learnt many a sage truth before she was in her teens"(68). This shows the early marriage so common in Indian society and the strict discipline forced upon children.

Krishna tells us further about his mother, who was brought up in a religious atmosphere of high ideals, which bordered on the religious. "'Be like Savitri,' had been her father's blessing, 'be like the suttees of the gurus, loyal to your husband unto death.' And her mother had told her stories and sagas of gods

and goddesses and devoted wives. She had been imbued with the sense of responsibility that it has been customary to inculcate into the minds of young brides. She was to go to her husband's home as to a temple. And she had promised to live up to all this advice when she took her bridal farewell between tears, except that she had felt then what she had never told anyone else, a sense of strangeness at going to the house of a man whom she had never seen. Mixed with the fear that he might hate her, because she was not beautiful and leave her to bear the consequences of his desires. Only her mother's injunctions about serving her lord and master without any expectation of reward and living by the happiness of having children and bringing them up, had smothered that feeling till now; she had forgotten that she had ever been a young girl who wanted to live by love and not by the duty to the unborn" (68-69). Her story shows the sanctity of marital life and the great responsibility of a wife in the family, who has to become a cog in the wheel by living for others and enhancing the happiness of others in the family like husband and (unborn) children. This ideal of a Sikh wife provides a sharp contrast to the modern feminist ideal which teaches a young wife to assert her identity and live for herself primarily and for others only secondarily.

His mother hails from Daska. Krishna suggests the fact of a woman's displacement in his mother's coming from Daska to Amritsar. "Coming with all the shyness of the rustic from the open skies and landscapes of Daska to the four-storied house of her husband in the narrow alleyways of Kucha Faqir Khana at Amritsar, she had been disillusioned first by her environment, then by the treatment of her mother-in-law and her husband" (69). Krishna describes the patriarchal role played by his mother and father in the house without any demur or choice. Both his father and mother had accepted their irreversible fate as there was no concept of divorce in the Hindu or Sikh laws. "And there could never have been any idea of divorce between them, because there was then no divorce in the laws of Hindus and because the most ill-matched couples compromised and accepted the fate which willy-nilly put them together, my mother and father had accepted quite so ill-matched: she obeyed her lord and master; he recognized her homage by taking her for granted, so that she was lifted from complete servitude and placed on a kind of fictitious

throne" (72). In other words the marriage of his parents happened to be an inescapable prison.

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Now Krishna attains the school-going age. He starts going to the school. "For, to go to school had been my ambition of my life during the whole of the previous year" (76). As he is quite short, he always worries about his height. "I had secretly wished and prayed to god to make me grow to the same height as my elder brother somehow, except that I was afraid that if my prayer was granted and I did grow up overnight to be like Ganesh I might find that I had acquired his flat nose, his shapeless ears and his general angularity into the bargain. But I had not seen any appreciable change in my height corresponding to my prayers to God" (77). This shows his anxiety about his physical development. Krishna's desire to grow and belief that his prayer may help him accomplish his task instantly or immediately show his childlike innocence and ignorance of the hard and harsh realities of life.

Krishna's childhood experience happens to be a new awareness of the cultural difference between Hindus and Muslims. For example when he goes to his friend Ali's house and, being attracted by the colourful chicks and tries to catch one of them, Ali's mother warns him, "You Hindus must not kill little chicks; they are for us Musulmans to eat" (79). For the first time Krishna becomes aware of the difference of the eating habits of Hindus and Muslims and this awareness helps him to grasp the consequent cultural contrast between the two in so many details later on. Krishna constructs knowledge through the cognitive processes of his own experiences rather than by memorizing facts provided by others. Another cultural difference between Hindus and Muslims that Krishna observes is that the Muslims do not believe in taking bath every day compulsorily. He confirms this fact by observing his friend, Ali. "Ganesh stood talking to Ali, who crouched on the dust gingerly sprinkling water on his hands and his face from a big kettle-like copper jug, as if he were afraid of the water, which he was, for, unfortunately, Islam does not enjoin daily ablutions as a religious duty" (79-80).

After observing the cultural contrast between Hindus and Muslims, Krishna happens to observe a similar contrast between the Indians in general and the British rulers. The

British Rule in India had necessitated the colonial juxtaposition of Indians and the British people in India. The contrast between Western culture and eastern culture was especially conspicuous in the regimental life in which Krishna's father had been working. Krishna, therefore, notices the contrast between the two cultures quite early in life. He observes the British officers or *Sahib log* and their way of life with great curiosity. He observes many aspects of British/Western life with initial incomprehension and subsequent appreciation. Thus attraction and disillusionment with Western culture go on alternating in his approach. For example, the first thing that puzzles him is the Western music which looks like meaningless noise. But when he is initiated into it by Mr. Clayton, he begins to understand and appreciate it. "The regimental band practiced as a full orchestra under the shadow of a porch, morning, noon and afternoon, about fifty yards away from our house. At first I was struck by the meaningless noise of angrezi music. Then when I had persuaded Clayton to teach me to read the hieroglyphs on the books from which he played his flute, and when I had been privileged by the Drum Major to beat the drum with my own hands, my feet began to thump to the tunes of the waltzes, fox-trots and march-music like those of a wild animal and my body swayed to the airs of "Home Sweet Home," "God save the King," which, along with a few others, constituted the main items in the repertoire of the regimental band. And the clarinets, the saxophones and all the strangely shaped brass and ebony instruments looked so polished and fine, and the sight of Mishta Jones, the Indian Christian bandmaster, standing on a raised box and waving his pointer up and down in zig-zag curves over the loose leaves spread on the iron rests before him, looked too ridiculous and sublime not to be the favourite item in the repertoire of my own mimes. I kicked up a continuous row with my shrill squeaks, loud raucous noises, beatings of an empty kerosene oil tin, and often brought the house down" (97).

The systematic drill of soldiers captures the attention of Krishna. Consequently he wants to become a soldier. Sometimes he wants to join a circus. Some other time he wants to be like Angrezi sahibs. His desire to become like everyone, who is attractive or important, is in keeping with child psychology. A child has unlimited ambition to achieve everything without

knowing the practical difficulty of doing so. The contrast between British things and Indian ones is noticed by him conspicuously. The British items like bicycles, motor-cycles, felt-hats, pistols, forks, knives, cricket bats – create a deep impression on him and he feels that Indian life looks sordid by contrast.

Because of his attraction for the strange nature of the British Sahibs he dreams of going to the West and becoming like them. "Compared with my own people, however, my parents, the sepoys, the bandsmen, the followers, the banias in the bazaar and the shopkeepers in the town, the Angrez Sahibs seemed so remote and romantic that I soon wanted to be like them even as I wanted to go to Vilayat. Possessed by this sense of sense of otherness, I had come one day and asked my mother to get me 'one of the *topees* which the Sahibs wore.' … As I waited for the fulfillment of my desire for the Western hat, I built up an idea of Englishness in the light of which all the details of my home like seemed a sordid drudgery, an interval of lusterless existence, relieved only by the few rays of the exotic which entered our home. My mind devoured the pictures of Englishmen in raincoats, of Englishwomen in lingerie and of English children in Eaton collars and school kits . . . These wonderful products of western civilization illuminated the course of my imaginings so intensely that I built up a vivid dream-world Vilayat on the basis of this rubbish and went about dressed in paper clothes cut to the English pattern and ordered about dummy figures of fuel wood as if I were a full-blown Sahib. The fervor of these early desires sank into the labyrinths of my mind, soaked me in the colours of this fantasy and filled me so that though it became a less superficial and more conscious inclination afterwards, my first goings inwards into dreams had made inevitable the course of my later destiny" (98-99). It is quite satisfying to know that the initial, superficial and fantastic dreams of Krishna were materialized in his later life in a very serious way.

Krishna's visit to Delhi along with his father and the latter's regiment to witness King George V and Queen Mary, who had come to India to officially inaugurate the transfer of Indian capital from Calcutta to Delhi is quite interesting. He is awed and impressed by the sight of marching soldiers, battery and horsemen. This experience is both thrilling and frightening at the

same time for Krishna. "The strangeness I felt with these aliens baulked all the pleasures of the spectacle of Coronation Delhi, though so voracious a curiosity as mine could hardly be completely crushed. My all-seeing eyes, which never tired of looking, feasted on the welter of confusion, saturated themselves with visions of the immense pavilions glistening in the nimble sun of the cold morning as I progressed in a *tonga* with my guardian on the smooth, well-oiled road, bordered by beds of chrysanthemums and stretches of grass, through the giant entrance courtyards of the camps of princes and noblemen, more sparkling and resplendent and huge than anything I had ever seen before.

"While we were yet on the way to the town there was the reverberation of innumerable guns booming out somewhere. Babu Haveli Ram assured me that it was the Royal Salute being fired.

"Just as there is a salute offered to the Jarnel Sahib at Nowshera, Uncle?" I asked.

"To be sure, but this salute is being fired in honour of the greatest Jarnel that there is in the world, the Badshah George Panjam," he said. And in order to prevent me from being frightened, he continued:"Look, the guns are in the fort there" (101).

Krishna is deeply impressed by the gorgeous spectacle of King George V and Queen May being received with all the military pomp and grandeur.

He gets lost in the crowd temporarily and experiences a sort of forlornness and loneliness. (Perhaps Mulk Raj Anand developed this theme in his story, "The Lost Child" later.) Krishna finds himself lost in the crowd and cannot trace his companions. But when somebody identifies him and takes him to his father, he learns that his gold bangles are also lost. Later his gold bangles are recovered with great difficulty. But this experience caused a good deal of tension to the boy as well as his father and his caretakers. At the end of the programme, the transfer of the capital from Calcutta to Delhi is announced by the Viceroy.

This gorgeous programme is not without its dangers. Krishna witnesses an explosion of a bomb near the place where King George V and Queen Mary were to be taken in a grand

procession.

A few days after this grand function at Delhi, Krishna sees his father's anxiety about another incident, i.e. the Pathans stealing about seventy guns from their regiment."For one day, suddenly some Pathans descended from the low-lying hills beyond our barracks, disguised so as not to arouse the least of suspicion, at a time when the chill mist had settled on the dry river bed which separated the barracks from the hills. It was said that they bound and gagged the sepoys on 'sentry-go' at the quarter guard, looted seventy rifles from the magazine and disappeared into the hills" (113). This incident disturbs Krishna's father deeply and consequently he begins to suffer from a sort of persecution mania. After a few days Krishna witnesses the celebration of the Bara Din i.e. Christmas Day by the regimental staff and enjoys its various aspects.

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In the next phase of his life, Krishna notices a conspicuous change in his father's relations. He is beaten by his father for stealing a mango. He experiences a sort of humiliation both at home and at school, where he is flogged by his classmates as ordered by his teacher. The loss and recovery of a silver spoon, the performances of a legendary man called Dumri in the lanes, his going into somebody's maize field and getting bound hand and foot, and events such as these go on happening in Krishna's life. His horizon of experience has been widening slowly. Meanwhile his mental powers are growing and propelling him to pose deep philosophical questions to his father, who cannot answer them easily at all. "Father, why are there so many things in this world? Who made the world? And why is not possible to know everything?" My father merely smiled at my impetuosity and patted me affectionately in a way that seemed to indicate that he was please with me" (146).

Krishna happens to be adventurous in spirit. Although quite young, he used to accompany the bigger boys and sit near them while they played. Once it so happened that a friend pelted a stone at somebody, but it hit Krishna's head and wounded him mortally. Consequently he was hospitalized and had a vicarious experience of death. "I seemed to have a strong enough hold on life, however, somewhere in my bones. For as I was carried to the

operation table from time to time and Colonel Bailey…leaned on me, unwrapped my wound and probed it with a long needle and dressed it, I lay fear-stricken but patient, as if with fear of death before me I had ceased to be whiner" (157). When anesthesia was given to him in the hospital he experiences a fantasy of fighting with and conquering the witch of death, which is quite interesting from the viewpoint of child psychology: "Helpless under the gas, my brain wheeled and fought imaginary battles with an imaginary knife. One of these aberrations I still remember vividly: A dark, ugly witch with flashing white teeth was coming towards me as I sat by a steaming cauldron. I felt that she was going to throw me into this sizzling pan by rolling me, as I had grown very strong and heavy, across a board. But I was determined that I would dodge her and, putting my leg across her as the sepoy wrestlers did to their adversaries, threw her into the cauldron instead. She was coming. There I had caught her. Heave, push, strain and lo, I had toppled her over into the pan. She was frying in the grease. And I laughed but –'There now, you will be all right,' Colonel Bailey was saying in his queer Hindustani. And the stretcher was being brought to the table, and sleep was creeping into the pupils of my eyes…And I woke later to find my mouth parched, my nostrils dilating, my heart beating eagerly, my eyes exploring the room to find someone to touch, to contact, to hold. I was beginning to conquer Death" (158).

Although in his world of fantasy Krishna seemed to conquer Death, in his post-illness period he was afraid of death. "The illness left a permanent mark on me, however. I felt a curious dread of everyone and everything, and became touchy, like a sensitive plant, so that tears would spring to my eyes at the least little thing. I was never to be the bonny, healthy child again and was always overshadowed by the fear of death, a kind of horror, which this illness left as a black mark on my soul, intensifying my eagerness, my impetuosity and zest for experience, making me grasp at life with both hands and yet having my nerves taut, my body unwq.ual to manual labour" (161).

Interrogation, the articulation of the growth of one's mind is part of one's childhood experience. Krishna goes on asking a number of fundamental, philosophical questions to his mother now, although she cannot answer all of them satisfactorily. Mulk

Raj Anand not only narrates his childhood experience, but also analyzes it retrospectively and microscopically with his subsequent mature knowledge of life. “My curiosity became devouring. After the earlier phase of life when I had been more or less egocentric, regarding the whole world as an extension of my wishes, when people and things outside were grasped with the natural warmth of the hand and the eye, through the stage when I had begun to cultivate the gift of speech, but exercised it only to express myself, I now began to evolve a cocoon of self-intoxication by absorbing the outside world more intensely through my whys and wherefores. I was going to leave nothing to chance” (162). As a result of his devouring curiosity, Krishna goes on asking a series of questions to his mother. For example, 'What are the stars, Mother? And how can the sun move all day without any feet? Where do the clouds go? What is beyond the sky?' Perhaps every sensitive child wants to know the answers to these questions.

Still another aspect of childhood experience happens to be the desire to listen to fairy tales and stories of fantasy. Pestered by Krishna, his mother tells him man fairy stories including the one about Raja Rasulu. These stories indirectly help him to develop his moral sensibility, high ideals and a sense of adventure in his later life. As he is growing older biologically he begins to enjoy the sensuous pleasure of touching or being touched by members of the opposite sex. For example, whenever Rukmini, a twelve year girl hugs him or touches him he feels an unmentionable thrill. In Freudian terms, it may suggest the awakening of his sexual awareness and point to his psycho-sexual development. But we cannot stretch it far in the Indian context.

Going to school, being taught as well as punished by teachers and being loved helped and harassed by classmates in part of childhood experience of any child in the world. In accordance with this general rule, Krishna is admitted into the local school and he takes some time to acclimatize himself to the school atmosphere and earn the love of his class teacher. His father teaches him arithmetic at home. Finally Krishna passes the examination, which makes his father proud. He learns and improves his language remarkably. Language learning is an important stage in the development of a child. Through the cumulative experiences of his life, Krishna has been forming his

sense of identity stage by stage.

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A new chapter opens in Krishna's life when he visits his mother's parental home at Daska to attend his Mama's wedding. There he meets his maternal grandfather and maternal uncle Sharam Singh. This place is quite different from Nowshera where there is a colonial atmosphere. Daska happens to be a country side place with its own beauty, abundance of Nature and natural resources. His visit to Daska gives him some thrilling experience. He learns that his grandfather fought for Khalsa and appreciates his patriotism. He likes the friendly nature of his Mama, Sharam Singh. He has some other memorable and thrilling experiences of his childhood. For example he likes his Mama's buffalo and rides on its back and is about to be drowned in the water of River Lunda when the buffalo dashes into the mid-water of the river. But he is saved by Sharam Singh. He swims in the River Lund a and enjoys the new experience. He hears the Durgi songs sung by the relatives of his mother. He listens to the story of *Hir Ranjha* (composed by Waris Shah) recited by Uncle Sardar Singh. In addition to these thrilling experiences, he has a bit of disconcerting experience also. He observes the misunderstanding between his mother and her sister and the quarrel, which were rather jealousy-oriented. He is happy to see the quick reconciliation also between the members. Finally, Krishna attends the marriage of his Mama, enjoys eating a number of sweets. Then he returns to Nowshera with a heavy heart by bidding farewell to his mama and grandfather. All these experiences hold mirror to his emotional development by helping him to interact positively with his blood-relatives on his mother's side.

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After returning to Nowshera, Krishna observes the condition of his family closely and notices the hypocrisy of family honour. Although his family boasts of being a combatant dynasty now, he learns that originally they were not combatants but only craftsmen (like silversmiths/coppersmiths). The honesty and frankness of Mulk Raj Anand has to be appreciated in recording his childhood experiences without hiding anything that is unsavourable. “I was vaguely conscious of my father's position. Of course, we all like to feel a bit superior, and out of the kind of

pride that derived from my hero-worshipping attitude to my father I took it for granted that ours was the most distinguished family in the brotherhood of silversmiths and coppersmiths in Amritsar, and that my father was a highly esteemed and influential Babu, a learned man. But with that naive, frank eye of the observant child, quick to see the hypocrisy of our prestige. I noticed the contrast between the poor standard of life in our household and the comparatively luxurious fare which even the bandsmen in the followers' lines enjoyed" (219) Krishna confesses that the standard of life in his house was not high, but quite ordinary, which was marked by the simple food, simple clothes and simple shoes that they had.

Krishna happens to be an adventurous and ambitious boy, who feels that his dreams are suppressed by his family. There is a steak of frustration in his childhood experience. "All my wild dreams and fancies, all the fugitive emotions that welled up in my mischievous frame were suppressed and the hours stretched into days, days into other days, long, long and interminable, and it seemed it would be ages before I would grow up to be tall and free… Of course, in spite of the fear of being taken to task, I did not obey the injunctions strictly… My impressions of the surreptitious adventures on which I went were some of the most intense of my life, yet they were all baulked by an inner fear, by the oppression of that home discipline which derived not a little of its severity and harshness from the effect of the British Army code on my father's mind" (220).

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In the last part of his autobiographical novel, Mulk Raj Anand thinks seriously about the seven years of his childhood that he has spent and tries to analyze his psychology. He learns that he has not developed any definite plan or goal in life and that his future is still uncertain and without any particular direction. "I really see a child nowadays without wondering on what mysterious course or violent act his mind is drifting, what strange and unforeseen adventure he is deliberating, how the colours of his soul are changing. For, as I look back upon the first seven years of my own half unconscious and half conscious childhood, I see myself, despite the rigours of the restricted, narrow routine world of the cantonment with all its taboos, flowing like a stream, now

bright and vivacious with the sunbeams which played upon it, now gloomy with the tears of my sorrow, but always flowing, trickling through the dams and barriers placed in my way, or charging across them so as to demolish them and sweep them aside, lean and starved by the majesty of the sun or swollen and blustering, but unstayed. I did not, of course, know the direction in which I was going, and often I was apt to change my course, but in the main I flowed with the other streams which flowed by me, as if, I and the deep creative urges in me, were drawn by some inner magnetic attraction to each other and to the big broad river of life which flowed not far away" (230). Although Krishna has not found his direction yet, he has to flow with the current of time until things become clear to him with the growth of his age, intelligence and comprehension of life. Until then he continues to observe the life around him.

He observes the beauties and horrors of frontier landscape. Although he does not remember exactly when he observed them, they remain as indelible impressions on his mind and influence his later life also. "But I know that when I was nearing the age of seven, certain sights and sounds became indelibly fixed on my mind and formed the stable background of all my memories of later years. So vivid, indeed are these impressions that even now, if I close my eyes, I can beckon the exact texture of the atmosphere at noon in the Nowshera cantonment, with all the minute rainbow-coloured particles of light revolving before my eyes almost as though in a kaleidoscope. And of course, the bigger things in that landscape are to me mow like fables of my early imaginings which can never grow old with repetition" (231). For example, he observes the magnificent beauty of the ranges of the Hindu Kush Mountains, which he describes as 'ladders of heaven', the Pathans putting the ghosts of the Tommies that they have killed into the scarecrows, the caravan of donkeys, the metalled Grand Trunk Road, the tonga carts in higgledy-piggledy confusion in Sadar Bazaar, the meat market, the barbers and the wayside whores. He enjoys his picnic on the bank of River Lunda. Thus, Krishna's childhood experiences of joys and sorrows and surprises and adventures come to an end when war is declared between two groups of nations. Krishna's son explains the details of the war as follows: "Son, the Kaiser of Germany, the

Sultan of Turkey and the Badshah of Austria, are on one side and the Angrezi Badshah and the whole world are on the other side" (236). Krishna's father fears that he may have to go to the war by leaving his entire family and country and not sure of returning alive or safe. He does not want to go to the war, but rather retire and be safe. "Unlike the time after the outrage on Lord Hardinge, when he had wished and prayed that he might not be out of favour with the Sahibs, he now earnestly wished that they might dismiss him or ask him to retire" (238). When Krishna's mother tries to offer a mythological interpretation of the war, his father dismisses it outright. "Apparently her prognostications seemed not to come true, for my father received orders that he was to stay with the depot at Malakand in the Frontier. As my father knew that his war service would be an important asset when he returned from abroad, he was a trifle disappointed. In fact, however, he did not seem to care about anything as he seemed relieved to get the news and to end the suspense and he resigned himself to all the readjustments by this event" (238).

Although autobiographies are in quite a large number in Indian English written especially by national politicians, those written by non-politicians are rare. But those written by academic scholars exclusively about their childhood days are rarest still. From this point of view Mulk Raj Anand's *Seven Summers* happens to be an important contribution to the genre of autobiography of one's childhood. It is highly perceptive in its recording of childhood experiences with graphic details. It is at once realistic and poetic and philosophical. In it Mulk Raj Anand not only narrates his experiences, but also analyses and interprets them in the light of his later mature philosophical and psychological knowledge. *Seven Summers* offers a great wealth of material for the child psychologists to build up their theories or revise them also in the light of the novelist's childhood experiences. In revealing his childhood experiences, Mulk Raj Anand reveals a chunk of colonial and regimental history of North-Western part of India also. Since the novelist happens to be the son of a military employee, he had the opportunity to observe and live in the company of the British officers and able to comprehend the cultural contrast between Indian/Hindu/Sikh culture and the British/Christian culture also from a boy's point-of-view. It is not

a priestly experience of going to the temple and worshipping the dead icons of gods and dealing with only flowers and coconuts, but something robust and rigorous that is rare in Indian English Literature.

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Non-Scheduled languages of Uttarakhand as reflection of Rich Cultural Patterns

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As biodiversity is the reflection of the plentiful flora and fauna of the region and cultural diversity reveals the amalgamation of rich cultural values of that area, the linguistic diversity elucidates the creativity of the versatile human mind of that particular province. All languages created by human communities are world's collective cultural heritage. So preservation of a language is necessary for the preservation of the community that puts that language in circulation. But it has been found that the communities that are already at the periphery within their regional or national context, the ones that are already in minority within their linguistic expose, the ones that have already lost their power to articulate their genuine concerns and the one, having the language not being translated in other widely used languages are naturally placed at the front line of the phonocide. UNESCO's Atlas of the World's languages in danger lists 170 languages endangered. Among them Rasigka and Tolchna languages of Uttarakhand have been declared extinct, Bangani, as critically endangered: Byausi, Darmi, Rangpo Jad Jaunsari as definitely endangered and Garhwali and Kumoani as 'Vulnerable.'

There can never be mainstreaming of languages by excluding and marginalizing smaller languages and cultures because they represent cultural heritage at a grass root level. Orality cannot be called an instance of shortcoming on the part of a living language. Extinction of smaller languages can lead to the extinction of bio-cultural languages. Indians can never be monolingual because it has originated from multilingualism. Sometimes smaller languages are denigrated by calling them dialects but Prof. G.N. Devy feels that dialects (sub-languages) impart languages an enriched sensitivity and ability to express. A

language without dialects will become a meaningless bundle of clichés without living consciousness. So dialects become the backyards of languages. It can be accepted without an iota of doubt that languages having dialects, language varieties and backyard tongues cannot be taken for museumising on the basis of its lack of printed form. The present paper takes under its ambit five non-scheduled languages namely Bangani, Garhwali, Jaunpuri, Kumaoni and Ranwalti of Uttarakhand to bring home the significance of smaller languages in revealing the local ethos, cultural-behavioral patterns and folk lore of the inhabitants. In other words, preservation of a language entails the preservation of the community that puts that language in circulation.

Bangani- Bangani is spoken in the Bangan area of the Mori Tehsil of district Uttarkashi. It also has a very rich folklore to its credit. Folksongs like *Chode* and *Laaman* are very popular in *Bangani. Harul , Chopoti* and *Tandi* are the songs sung with the folk dances of this area. A song dance called *Thotha* is organized in *Bussu* fair. *Thotha* is a combined performance of acting and dancing. The performers hold bow and arrow and wear a special costume for Thotha. Chode are the tragic songs of separation sung at night in closed rooms during marriages. Many times the throat of the singer chokes while singing and tears start rolling down the audiences' eyes.

Folk Songs-As far as folk songs are concerned, the researcher has focused his attention on *Chode*, *Kujji* and *Harul* songs. In them Chode songs have the traces of positivity amidst an ocean of sorrow. These songs try to impart the lesson that the hardships encountered by the Pandav brothers eventually pave the way for solution of the period of distress, "if winter comes can spring be far behind." There is no one who has not been encircled with sorrow but the real strength lies in facing it and coming out of this situation. The following lines reflect the positive frame of mind:

Smile, play, eat and share because no one has to carry a load.
Man has to live on this earth for four days.

Kujji song under review throws light on the intimate conjugal relationship. A wife describes the pain of imagined widowhood when a living wife has to think in terms of burning her body over the corpse of her husband for saving herself from the indignities of widowhood. The following lines reveal the

intensity of love and bemoaning the loss of their blissful life

Beloved Kujiye! You don't burn uselessly.
You would not be able to keep your body over fire.
Then brother Sukhnand had a high gallop/jump.
Whose living wife you are killing with the corpse?

The Haarul (Aarul) songs are sung by both men and women during some rituals like *Jagrey* and *Bisu*. Their passionate performances accompanied with many musical instruments, fill the audience with enthusiasm and bravery. The researcher has been able to get hold of a Haarul song of Bangani tradition which depicts the invasion of Mughals in this area. This unwarranted invasion of their territory has affected them lock, stock and barrel and so they graphically describe their army, their armed entourage and the impact it left on the inhabitants:

Mughals came and a great preparation stirred up.
Horses' hoofs will go yards deep in the soil.

Similarly folktales of Bangani are an articulation of their religious leanings. In one of their stories under review we find a description of four Mahasu brothers who provided a much needed succor to a Brahmin of this area. That is why these four Mahasu brothers were worshipped in different ways. Gotha Mahasu was worshipped in Hanol, Basheek Mahasu in Bavar, Pavasi Mahasu in Bangaad and a wandering status was given to Chalda Mahasu.

Garhwali-Garhwali is the language spoken by around twenty five lakh people residing in the Garhwal area of Uttarakhand. No doubt there are many regional forms of Garhwali. Greierson has divided Garhwali into nine linguistic varieties on the basis of sounds and pronunciation. Despite these twenty varieties of Garhwali most of the written literature is available in Srinagari and Salani. Most of the scholars regard the centralized Srinagari to be the standard Garhwali language. Despite the abundance of Garhwali written literature in the Devanagari script it is also rich in folk forms, folk songs like *Khuder* song, *Chaunfla* song and folk tales rule the roost.

Folk Songs -In the category of Garhwali folk songs, Kudher songs have carved their own niche. They are the treasured traditional folksongs. Khuder word has formed from the noun Khud. It means the anguish of being separated from home and hearth and

the longing to meet one's loved ones. The Khuder song which has been under review in this research paper describes the pain of a newly-wedded motherless woman lamenting at her in-laws home. She says that other married daughters of the village came to their maternal homes but she could not enjoy this bliss as she does not have the bountiful shelter of her mother. She resorts to an umpteen analogies of nature to compare her condition with that of trees and birds.

But I am unfortunate, I am motherless.
O mother! This thought envelops my entire being in dreadful weariness,
Just like the valleys of mountains engulfed in dreadful fog.
O mother! In the month of Chait, Mailwari bird sings in its sweet voice.

Thereafter, she addresses her heavenly mother that her father has ruined her life by taking money from her in-laws for the marriage. With the result, her husband has gone to far off lands to earn for repaying the loan. She feels dejected on being deprived of conjugal bliss. Moreover, he has not sent any letter to her. This agony comes out in a graphic manner in the following remarkable lines:

Mother! While waiting for my husband from far off lands,
My youth has wilted away
O Mother! after going away since our marriage, my husband has not sent any letter.
My heart is overshadowed with dreadful weariness
As mountains and the valleys are enclosed with dreadful fog.

It is a well known fact that the economy of Garhwal hills was based on money-order because a large number of youths went away from their homelands to distant lands for earning their livelihood and to get some economic stability for their family living in hills. As they are not able to take their family along with them to these urban centers so the women folk have to face the tragic predicament in terms of emotional and physical deprivation. This aspect is the real facet of their life so folksongs also revolve around this theme. These *Khuder* folksongs become the capsules of anguish for these young women.

In another *Khuder* song the researcher is able to find the same aspect permeating in them. Again, a young woman is the

speaker and she is longing for visiting her maternal home. Her emotional affinity with the surroundings comes out in each and every word pulsating with pain. She expresses her pain in these lines which exemplify her anguished soul in a most glaring manner.

O elevated summits and peaks!
Bend down!
O dense pine trees!
Please thin down.
Memories of my maternal house are troubling me…
… They married the unfortunate me,
To a far off country on the other side of the rivers and mountains,
From where I cannot return to my maternal house.

There is another Khuder folksong which again brings out the love of a daughter for her father after observing his depression melancholy and anxiety with regard to her marriage solemnized lately. This folksong is a kind of a conversation between a recently married daughter and her father. It explicitly brings out the real sensibilities of a daughter for her father in the time of emotional and financial crises. An empathetic touch is quite writ large :

I am not restless, sad and impatient.
O Daughter! I am bent with the load of debt and exhausted due to fasting.
The daughter consoles her father.
Father, roam outside to amuse yourself.

At the far end of the folksong we find the advice of the daughter bordering on selfishness because she wants her father to bring that horse on which the groom is riding by holding its bridle. It can also indicate the plain acceptance of the social rules of the nuptial pressures imposed upon the girl's family. As she is not sure on which the groom is riding so she suggests that palanquin may also be shouldered by her father as it carries the groom.

In another variety of folksong known as *Chaufla* song, the difficult terrain of the hills is described with an advice to the pedestrian to enjoy the beauty of nature by taking rest under green branches of the tree. It is advised to get freshness by washing his face with cold water for ending the weariness of the entire journey as some villages are not connected by roads in the hills and people

have to travel on foot. This becomes a grueling exercise, so the advice is given underlining the boons and beauties of the hills. Altogether, the folksongs are the expressions of the creative minds who have remained in the lap of nature and felt the hardships of hilly life. It not only refreshes but revitalizes them to face the rigors of life.

Jaunpuri -Jaunpuri is spoken in the Jaunpur block, situated on the border between district Uttarkashi and the Jaunsar area of district Dehradun. In this tribal society, folklore holds a special place. They have many unique customs, different from the rest of Garhwal. The practice of polyandry, freedom from incompatible marriage, jwar, practice of black magic and witchcraft etc, are special features of this community. The flavor of the folk culture of Jaunpur is embodied in its own folksongs, folktales, maxims and riddles which are quite popular among the people. In spite of some laudable attempts to compile the folksongs and folktales of the Jaunpur area, there is an urgent need for a systematic compilation of the folk literature, traditions and rituals of this area and specially the genre of folk drama as during marriages and auspicious occasions, the people sing their folksongs and organize *Swaan* mimicry with songs and theatrics for humor and entertainment.

Folk Songs-As far as folksongs are concerned, *Dubdi, Ropni* and *Maun* songs come under that category. *Dubdi* song is sung during Dubdi festival. It describes about the different significant days of different months when people remain in a mood of celebration. In other words, it reflects the richness of their customs and traditions. One community can give weightage to different milestones of a month when they are associated with anything significant in their cultural pattern. As they lead a very simple life cut off from the urban hustle and bustle so they try to get recharging moments for getting meaning in life through these celebrations of days. Folksongs always are the expressions of the life led by the people and so the plantation songs also reveal their agrarian life. As they are evolved in terrace farming and they cannot support the keeping of bulls for that purpose on their own. So they are dependent upon their relatives for supplying these essential items as per their requirements. This necessity of life finds its full expression in the songs produced by this community. In this way,

they exemplify the old proverb which says that folksongs are those which reveal the living reality of life. The following lines substantiate the viewpoint taken above:

You all come and bring two more people with you
People from my maternal home, you all come,
You all come, along with plough and bull.

Besides, some folksongs are also centered on close relationships that exist between maternal uncle and his niece. The researcher has selected a song which bears testimony to the eternal music of birds, natural beauty of the serene landscape wherein flow two rivers, Ganga and Yamuna, along with the cementing of relationship taking place through the show of love by Kauro and her Uncle. The maternal uncle has come to give his niece her share of the festival goodies and the niece in turn serves food to her maternal uncle. In this way, the folksongs also reveal the intensity of relationship based on selflessness.

The Ganga-Yamuna are flowing, lots of water is flowing down.
Tell me the truth my niece Kauro, lots of water is flowing
down the river.
I drank liquor to my heart's content.
Kauro, I am intoxicated much intoxicated

The *Maun* song relates to the fair of Raj-Maun held on the river Algarh. Such fairs were inevitable as these provided recharging moments and revitalizing forces for the tribal people. Their simple life moves from one participation in fair to another celebration. The king of Tehri also participated in this fair that celebrates the fishing season. This song describes the preparations a strong man is making before going to the fair. He wants to collect his fishing equipment before his departure. He is asking his elder brother for many things for food items and other necessities required for participation at the fair:.

Give me a small basket for keeping fish, my brother.
I will go to king's Maun tomorrow, my loving brother.
My brother, give me my bottle of liquor.
Give me my brother.
Tomorrow I have to go to the fair of Maun.
My brother, to the fair of Maun!

The folk tales in circulation in the rural areas of Garhwal region arouse humor. The life of the people is very tough because

they have to go on foot by crossing rivulets and ascending the hill tops for procuring items of daily use. Their life especially the life of the women becomes a vicious cycle where one trouble leads to another. Salubrious moments in the form of enjoying life by listening to amusing anecdotes and watching skit, adds spice to their lives and they attain the sustainable vitality..

Kumaoni -Kumaoni is spoken in the Kumaon division of Uttarakhand consisting of six districts, Nainital, Almora, Pithoragarh, Bageshwar, Champawat and Udhamsingh Nagar. Originally the Kumaoni language was a group of ten dialects of Kumaon. It has a rich tradition of oral and written literature in Kumaoni, its folklore has a treasure of folksongs, folktales, ballads, maxims, idioms, children songs and riddles, etc. The folksongs and folktales of Kumaoni have also been recorded and broadcast through Akashvani centers of Lucknow, Rampur, Najibabad and Almora. Around the year 1980 the ballads sung by folk singers Gopidas and Mohansingh were recorded by the German scholar Messner Konard. The ballad sung by the folk singer Jhusiya Damai have also been recorded by Girish Tiwari and his associates. The performances of the traditional folk dramas of Kumaon, *Hirancheetal* and *Hiljatra* are quite popular in district Pithoragarh. The rich folk tradition of Kumaoni is also reflected in the 'Parvatiya Ramlila,' a dramatized and musical performance of the legend of Lord Rama in the local language and 'Holi,' the seasonal songs sung around the festival of Holi.

Kumaoni folksongs abound in wisdom. One of the folksongs highlights that people find fault with others when the same fault in greater proportion might be present among them. Through various analogues, the song accurately describe the hypocrisy of society, and uges for self introspection. In the following lines of Gaurda song the same aspect has been beautifully captured:

Their own son seems to be as thin as a needle,
Others' son seems to be thick like a cudgel
…They consider their coquettish wife to be a goddess,
And they give bad names to other women and defame them.

Some of the folksongs describe about the yearning of the lover for the beloved and the feeling of nostalgia for a grown up lady. Known for its magnificent mountains and places of scenic

beauty, the region at different periods of time is enveloped by fog, a symbol of despairing moments. On the contrary the clear atmosphere mountains, fields and forests become a symbol of joy and happiness. The lover portrays the condition of his heart with these analogies from Nature. Thus, Kumaoni folk songs reveal the passions of love, gems of wisdom and the beauty of Kumaoni hills. These folk songs are the symbiosis of thoughts and emotions as evident in the following lines:

I yearn for you, I call you, I look for you in forests and mountains,
Come at least sometimes to that place where fog has settled.
At least come now my beloved for I am very lonely,
How do I survive without a support?
Come at least sometimes to that place where fog has settled.

The Kumaoni folktales appear to be amusing anecdotes from the times when magic, prince and princess occupied the minds of the people. This Romantic escape into such regions was deemed as antidote to the humdrum aspects of life, and a source of fun and frolic. Due to poor connectivity, the children of these deprived people might not be able to get educational enrichment through comic books. Maybe, the architects of folk tales tried to compensate for this vacuum in the life of the children.

Ranwalti -Ranwalti is a language spoken at Ranwai, the north-western area of district Uttarkashi, with predominace of the tribe called *Kolta*. It also has very rich folk literature. Folksongs of Ranwalti have many genres like – *chho Re, taadii, chhoptii, baajuband,* etc. One maxim about choro thjat is popular in the Ranwai area *Kattha kathhii ki ar chor sacc* 'the inference about the moral of the story depends on the perception of the narrator but *Chhore* are reflections of the truth.'

A popular folk genre of the Ranwai area is *taadii. Taadii* means a line thus, *taadii* songs are sung by the singers standing in a row. *Chopatti* are conversational folk songs. *Baajuband* are amorous songs sung in seclusion by man-woman especially in forests. They are also called *jaangu*, *duaa* and *shilko*. They are sung in continuous long rhythm and are full of verbal dexterity and repartee.

Folk Songs -In this category we find *Chhora, Taandi, chopatti* and *baajuband* categories for making a thourough analysis of

understanding the thought process of the creators of these songs. As far as *Chhora* subcategory is concerned, it moves around the expression of the intensity of love which a lover shows for his beloved Malari. As people pass their time in different folk dances organized for celebrating different seasons and so men-women come into contact with each other. They participate in the dance whole-heartedly and so, it also becomes instrumental in generating the emotions of love in them. In the song under review, the poet in the form of a lover shows his heart-felt passions and it is responded by his beloved in the same form with a kind of a reprimand. She asks him the reason under which he has gone in for Khasiya's daughter in place of her. She also expresses her displeasure at the remarks made by her mother-in-law. Again the lover tries to ascribe the fault onto his parents because of them that this love has not been able to materialize. The following lines capture the agony of the lady who has not been accepted by her lover:

You neither brought a Brahmin lad, nor a king's queen.
You have brought Khasiya's daughter, is she better than me?

At this, the lover replies in his own hyperbolic manner as he has been expressing from the beginning of the folk song. The lines are quoted below for expressing his emotions.:

Bridges cannot be built for all the rivulets and streams.
One cannot marry all the beautiful girls and bring them home.

In *taandi* song there is a description of daily chores of the villagers who keep buffaloes and sheep for milk and wool. So they are describing their necessity in their life. There is an ironic punch in the song about polygamy as the "husband of two wives washes his own plate" as this custom vitiates the domestic peace. In other words, folksongs offer a rich mine information about the social life and the hardships of rural life.

Thus it is found that these languages and dialects may be at a lower order in hierarchical organization of languages in terms of actual use but it cannot go into oblivion because they get strength from lasting cultural patterns of the people. They represent collective cultural heritage of the people. So long as they are allied with their culture, the language getting sustenance from it cannot lose its hold. The only aspect that is needed is to dovetail these languages with changing requirements of the society and the

world.

Then only these languages can remain in the heart and mind of the all and sundry. There is an urgent need of adding new words as per the latest trends prevalent in forward looking people.

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Bama's *Karukku* :Voice and Vision from the Periphery

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The word 'dalit' originated from the discrimination, inequality and injustice predominant all over Indian society. It is said that Marathi Dalit literature is the forerunner of all modern Dalit Literatures in India. The credit for it goes to Mahatma Jyotiba Govind Phule who marks a shift of the literary current from the splendour of courts and genteel society to the regions where a large group of the community has been dragged behind the shadows of gloom, poverty, illiteracy, invisible identity and humiliation bearing the burden of oppression and injustice, and later to Ambedkar for making it a popular voice. Research also shows that Dalit literature had long before acquired a distinct language through its heterogeneous and plurivocal character which challenged dominant literary canons. The ancestry of Dalit literature has been traced to D. Javalkar's essay, "Desaca Dusman" (1926), debunking Chipulankar and Tilak. W.N. Wankhede has argued the boundaries of 'Dalit' and admits, "The word 'Dalit' does not refer only to Buddhists and Backward classes people, but also to all those who toil and are exploited and oppressed" (Wankhede 317). Lakshmi Holmstrom in her Indtroduction to *Karukka* (xviii) avers "Dalit writing--as the writers themselves have chosen to call it--is significant that the preferred term is Dalit, implying militancy, an alliance with other repressed groups, and a nationwide."

Bama, born as Faustina Mary Fathima Rani in 1958 in dalit Christian family in Puthupatti village, Viruthungar district, Southern Tamil Nadu, brought with her novels the vigour of whirlwind to prototypically Dalit theme and language of her

community. Bama herself bore the pains for being the member of the deprived class of society and her status as an outcaste kept her tormenting all through her days and nights. In fact, her voice got platform through her autobiography *Karukku* and S*angati* when in 2001, Lakshmi Holmstrom's English translation of *Karukku* won the Crossword Award in India and established Bama as a distinct voice in Indian Dalit literature. Bama has published five major works: an autobiography *Karukku* (1992), two novels *Sangathi* (1994) and *Vanmam* (2002), and two collections of short stories *Kisumbukkaran* (1996) and *Oru Thathavum Erumaiyum*. *Kisumbukkaran* (1996).

Dalit literature to Bama, is not merely literature about Dalits, but a critique of the Hindu social order, with special focus on Dalit women. In Dalit literature, autobiography as a literary and cultural countenance has produced a practice which has defied the prevailing literary edifices through their enunciation of cultural and caste discrimination. In order to voice the protest of the marginalized, Dalit literature often pursues the rebellious historiographic outlet of identifying past. Therefore, autobiography is the most persuasive and often implemented formula of fiction formed in Dalit Literature.

Autobiography in the broader sense of the word is used almost synonymously with "life writing" and denotes all modes and genres of telling one's own life story. Autobiography as a literary genre signifies a retrospective narrative that undertakes to tell the author's own life, or a substantial part of it, seeking (at least in its classic version) to reconstruct his/her personal development within a given historical, social and cultural framework. While autobiography on the one hand claims to be non-fictional (factual) in that it proposes to tell the story of a 'real' person, it is inevitably constructive, or imaginative in nature, and as a form of textual 'self-fashioning' ultimately resists a clear distinction from its fictional relatives (autofiction, autobiographical novel), leaving the generic borderlines blurred.

According to Bama, woman's autobiographies should not exhibit lamentations, animosity, antagonism or humiliation of oneself. The characters and their ideas in her writings do not solicit for pity and solace but reckon with inner powers to continue with respect. "Part autobiography, part analysis, part manifesto,

Bama's is a bold account of what life is like outside the mainstream of Indian thought and function" (xxv). Karukku means palmyra leaves, which, with their serrated edges on both sides, are like double edged swords. After reading one finds great affinity between Bama and the saw edged Karukku. It also encompasses the community around her, and their troubles and tribulations, their struggle for existence, etc. Bama in the Preface to *Karukku* writes "The driving forces that shaped this book are many, cutting me like Karukku and making me bleed; unjust social structures that plunged me into ignorance and left me trapped and suffocating; my own desperate urge to break, throw away and destroy these bonds, and when the chains were shattered into fragments, the blood that was spilt then, all these taken together" (xiii).

Karukku proved to be an intervention to articulate the voice of woman whose heart had an unbearable and inexpressive pain. It is the first autobiography of its kind to appear in Tamil, not only it narrates the life of the author alone but "is also at the same time a powerful sense of engagement with history, of change, of changing notions of identity and belonging" (xix), and reflects too her memories of her childhood, education, dalit perspective on Christianity, development and expectation from and within societies. Through *Karukku,* she intends to rediscover herself, capture moments that contain a paradox as she seeks an identity and paradoxically seeks a change which means an end to that identity. In Bama's own words, "It was a very personal endeavour that helped me resolve certain tensions in my life. When I left the convent, I didn't know how life would be! I had no hopes or dreams or any expectations even! My only aim was to get a job in order to survive . . ." (*Littcrit* 2007). When her book *Karukku* was published, Bama herself recalls with hesitation: "there was a lot of misunderstanding among the villagers about the book. They thought that I was revealing the secret aspects of their life to the public . . . Later with the help of the youth in my community, I tried to convince them that I was not degrading them. So they understood my sincerity and commitment and they now extend their support to me" (*Littcrit* 2007).

Set as the first person narrative, *Karukku* moves from the past to the present in exploring the varying manifold sets of

different incidents from her life. From mere portrayal of her village, five streets that made up the part where her community lived, its forest, rocks and fields with mythological stories, she offers a scathing critique of the hegemonic ways of the upper caste communities *Karukku* also reflects the hypocrisy, inadequacy and unacceptability of institutionalized Christianity. A nagging perplexity which pervades the work is the unfathomable divide between truth and fiction within institutionalized religion--the deep rift between belief and practice. Bama shows how the church and the convent are in league with the society at large to keep the Dalits at the lowest ebb. It is not only the patriarchal Hindu system but the Christian organizations too that are inhuman to the untouchables. She focuses on the pathetic state of her community with ironic humour. She narrates that until her third standard in school she had never heard of untouchability and how one day while returning from school, she finds an elder from her street was holding out a small packet of snacks tied on a string. The elder was presenting the packet to a Naicker of the village by holding the strings without touching the packet. The incident raised many questions in her small mind: "What did it mean when they called us '*Paraiya*'? Had the name become that obscene? (16). Her brother Annan who was studying in University gave her a solemn advice, "…if we study and make progress, we can throw away these indignities. So study with care, learn all you can. If you are always ahead in your lessons, people will come to you of their own accord and attach themselves to you. Work hard and learn" (18). These prophetic words made a deep impression on her mind and later the adolescent Bama was able to resist in the public but alas, she loses her voice in the convent school. Bama narrates the oppression she and her fellow dalits faced as student and teacher. One comes across many childhood traumatic memories. In one interview Bama says, "We were very poor. I was witness to many instances of violence against Dalits. I also saw the humiliation my grandmother and mother faced in the fields and homes of Naickers." She narrates that her family would go to Naicker's home quite early at dawn and do the sweeping of cowshed, collect the dung and dirt, and in turn were given left over rice and curry. When Bama said to Paatti that they should not accept leftovers, Paatti replied: "These people are the mahajans who feed us our

rice. Without them how will we survive?" (17).

It was her brother Annan who explained to Bama the reason of marginalisation and oppression of Dalits. For him too, education was the only way they could throw away all these indignities. Small episodes here and there give us insight about the ill treatment meted out in school, on basis of caste. One day Bama was playing with other children, she climbed the coconut tree and at mere touch the ripe coconut fell down. She narrates, next morning in the assembly, the headmaster called out her name, "You have shown us your true nature as a *Paraye*" (19). Such lines always haunted her, "What did it mean when they call us *Paraya*? Had the name become obscene? But the two are human beings" (16). But she says because of education she managed to survive among those who spoke of caste difference and discrimination. Bama further re-counts that she took her studies very seriously and she always stood first in her class. In fact, because of that she says, "Many people became my friends, even though I was a Paraichi" (15).

As the saying goes, the grass looks always greener on the other side, Bama felt that Christianity shall make their way smooth and give them equal status in society. "It was this train of thought that lead me to the foolish desire that I could become nun and enter a convent, and in that way work hard for other children who struggled as I had done" (77). At the age of 26 she took the vows to become a nun. But in the seminary and later in the convent, she apprehended the bitter truth that the situations within or outside are same. She narrates how the Dalits are not allowed to join the Church choir. There are separate schools in the same campus, one for the rich, the elitist upper caste Christians and non-Christians and the other for poor and Dalit Christians. She portrays beautifully the prejudices and discriminations faced at all levels by Dalits. "I knew I should not touch their goods or clothes. I should never come close to where they are… these were their rules" (46). The nameless narrator clearly indicates the subjugation of her family, but also of the whole Dalit community. Bama while acknowledging the governmental affirmative programmes, points out the isolationist tendencies among the school administration to humiliate the studious Dalits, "All the same, every now and then our class teacher would ask all the

Harijans to stand up either at the assembly, or during the lessons . . . we felt really bad then . . . hanging our heads in shame, as if we had done something wrong. Yes, it was humiliating" (21). It is under the systematic and overwhelmingly oppressive system that she experienced the brutalities and pretence of the religious order. The oppressive atmosphere in the convent robbed her of her spirits and braveries. At last, Bama realized she could "not get rid of the caste business easily wherever she went" (22). The worst part of this discrimination is that the oppressed have internalized their self-worth and gives numerous examples to show how at various levels they were humiliated. Bama lost her temper and challenging them "head on stood her ground. I managed to get my way at last. . . because I had the education, because I had the ability, I dared to speak up for myself. . ." (22). Soon she started taking pride in resisting.

When Bama became nun, it was in the stubborn hope that she will have a chance to put her aspirations of equality, social justice and alleviating the sufferings of the oppressed into effect. She discovered that the perspectives of the convent and the Church were different from what she had perceived. She says about the shallowness of the nuns: "Before they became nuns, these women take a vow that they will live in poverty. But that is just a sham. The convent does know the meaning of poverty… I began to think, soon after I entered the convent, Chi, is all there is to the life of renunciation (77-78). She wonders if there is an understanding of poverty in the Church.

About her people she refers her community Paraya's as bonded labourers, "People of our community work for them (Naicker), each Paraya family is attached to a Naicker family, as panniayaal, bonded labourers" (48). In her episodic narration she points out that in this society, if one is born a Dalit, then he has to live a life of humiliation and perversion until death. Bama in her narrative discourse recounts that during her holidays she too worked in the fields, like pulling groundnut crop, cleaning and sorting the pods or collecting stray onions left in the field. Bama says: "It was always the girl children who had to look after all the chores at home. The older women would come home in the evenings after the day's work, and then see to the household jobs" (52).

In multiple episodes Bama observes how the caste-based stereotypes are created and imposed to insult the untouchables. She seems to overturn the spurious assumption that sees conversion of the Dalits as a way to form an alternate identity, and debunks the sham, greed and hypocrisy that obtains in the Christian religious order, thereby strongly pleads, "we should speak up about what we believe. That is being true to oneself" (106). While the stifling system silences them, teaches them to shut their eyes, shackle their arm, "Dalits have come to realize the truth . . . they have become aware that they are too created in the likeness of god . . . urging them to reclaim that likeness" (109). Leaving her religious order to return to her village, made her realise the special bonding and affinity towards her community, and which pushed her to live the life of a Dalit woman. This autobiographical piece of writing as a speech act is a bare but bold account of a Dalit woman's struggle against the hegemonic structures. She proudly says, "Each day brings new wounds, but also new understanding, new lessons that experience teaches, sufficient mental strength to rise up even from the edge of defeat" (138). At the end of all the struggles, she triumphantly proclaims, "I have courage; I have a certain pride. I do have a belief that I can live; a desire that I should live" (122).

Bama's new vision is the result of unending chain of trials and tribulations that eventually engender in her new found belief and confidence in her human worth to live "a meaningful life, a life that is useful to a few others" (122) in spite of the contraries that assail it. *Karukku* highlights the arc of the narrator's transcendent awareness both through the nurturing of her belief as a Christian, and her gradual consciousness of herself as a Dalit. The questions--"Are Dalits not human beings? Do they not have common sense? Have such attributes as a sense of honour and self-respect? Are they without any wisdom, beauty, dignity? What do we lack?" (24)-- assail and torment her but pursuit of education opens gates of new vision, empowering the Dalit woman to rise above the straitjackets of victimhood through the intelligent revolt against the repressive patriarchal/social prejudices. Bama's work has spawned new literary cannons by disturbing the usual language available in the pre-existing canonical literary circles. Her works today have established unique as a new mode of literary/aesthetic

imagination and writing. Guy Poitevin (2002) rightly pointed out, "Women testimonies make us discover a female world of hidden feelings of dissent and moves of subdued revolt under the yoke of endured humiliations as memories drift back and past days and years are recreated. Specific ways and motives of a shared feminine sensitivity and cultural creativity are highlighted, as nowhere else."

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The Hungry Tide by Amitav Ghosh*:* An Eco Critical Perspective

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The modern concern for eco-system and its disturbing conditions due to over-indulgence of science and technology, it can be said that there is a close relation between eco-criticism and literature. Needless to say that literature reflects, not in case the few litterateurs subscribing to the view that literature is an art and it is for art's sake with little or no serious concern for human life, for the most part what relates to living, life and human concerns about peace, harmony happiness and all qualitative aspects of humans and humans' relationship and participation with material order, plant order, animal order and rest of nature. Therefore, Eco-criticism is an inter-disciplinary study of Ecology alongside Literary Criticism; it is taken as unusual because then it becomes a combination of a natural science and a humanistic discipline, the latter included in Anthropology. We may understand eco-criticism as concerned with manifold relationships between literature and environment or, so to say, how man's relationships are viewed with his physical environment and these are reflected in literature. Writers, therefore, exercise preference for creating awareness of the consequences of human actions and activities which damage the planet-earth's basic life-support systems. It is pertinent at this point to state that a few technologically advanced nation-states are in the process of establishing manufactories in the outer space, as it is thought that quality-wise the products made there would be excellent, taking shorter operating cycle and rendered cheap. For examining preservative qualities, the U.S.A. has sent to the space some articles like fruit and vegetables, which the U.S.A. has not precisely declared, before embarking upon implementation of a major project. It may not be as smooth as deemed in the present; there may be problem of debris, wastes and other kinds of pollution. Nation-states may not use the open space peacefully; there might be clashes of interests. This paper

discusses the term eco-criticism and the role of eco-criticism in literature. It cites examples of how the theme of eco-criticism can be interpreted through the reading of Indian novel, *The Hungry Tide* by Amitav Ghosh.

The Present Study

Agreed that our modern time is an epoch of progress in science and technology yet it also is an era of environmental damage and destruction which is the consequence of man's parting with natural world order (phenomena). All the developments in science, technology and commerce in the name of growth are mainly anthropocentric and certainly an abject abandonment of the claims of our natural environment. India is a country blessed with a variety of ecosystems which transcend from the Himalayas in the North to the plateaus in the South and from the eco-rich and dynamic Sunderbans in the East to the dry Thar in the West. However, these ecosystems have been indiscriminately affected due mainly to the pressure of increasing population and greed (not need) of mankind. Nature and literature go hand in hand and the world of literature throngs with the works dealing with beauty and power of nature. Indeed, the concern for ecology and the threat that the continuous misuse (or overuse or exploitation) of the environment have caught the attention of writers since mid-eighties - not only of science but also of humanities. The writers are realizing the stark truth that environment is being ruthlessly degraded; this realization has given rise to a new branch of literary study called Eco-criticism, which asserts that the literary world must include the entire ecosphere of the universe as their field of observation and plot for literature study. It might define a departure from the beaten track of writers.

Amitav Ghosh was born in Kolkata (India) on July 11, 1956 but grew up multifarious cultures in East Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Iran and India, with. an M.A. in Sociology from Delhi University (1978) and a Ph.D. in Social Anthropology from St. Edmund's Hall of the world-famous Oxford University (1982). Apart from this brief stint in Journalism, he has been distinguished Professor of Comparative Literature at Queens College, New York (1999-2003) and Visiting Professor at Harvard University (2004). These impressive credentials made his personality sensitive to social and human issues and power of his pen made his views known not only to the literary world but also to environmentalists, teachers,

students and the authorities. Ghosh has declared that his fundamental interest lies in the "people" and their everyday life, the convincing reason adduced is that these aspects slip through the fingers of an academic historian or social anthropologist. This statement may be true only partially but it indicates his intense interest in 'people' and their 'life' as they engage themselves in the variable social and environmental settings. He is interested in history only if it provides instances of 'unusual and extraordinary predicaments' (Hawley, 6). Ghosh as a celebrated anthropologist, sociologist, novelist, essayist, travel-writer and teacher outrightly rejects the lines between fiction and non-fiction writings. The fiction of Ghosh deals with de-territorialization and re-territorialization that moves rather negotiates between two lands separated by time and space, history and geography. This sets his writings apart; this approach of Ghosh makes his writings redefine the present through a nuanced understanding of the past. His essays reveal a political sensibility that interweaves politics and aesthetics, as elaborated so well by Rancière. The re-writing of history and a concern for consequences of hegemony of the British over a number of countries, and particularly over those countries in context, infuse motivation to Ghosh to grapple with the problems of the marginalized sections in society (Bose 19, 78). Ghosh's outright rejection of the dominant style of writing earns him a distinctive place in literature. His writings refuse to be strictly categorized under a specific genre. The political commitment of Ghosh's non-fiction does not show up prominently; it gets immersed in rich imagination, and it shapes his remarkable fiction: *Dancing in Cambodia* (1998), a reporter's notebook, an anthropologist's series of observations and a historian's musings issue forth again with same ethos and incision of analysis and observation as in *The Glass Palace* (2002). Ghosh is credited with another work of non-fiction *Countdown* (1999) that pour forth voices of genuine protest against nuclear tests conducted by India in 1998. The publication *The Imam and the Indian: Prose Pieces* (2002) presents Ghosh's ideas on art and craft of writing. His fiction includes *The Circle of Reason* (1986), *The Shadow Lines* (1988), *In an Antique Land: History in the Guise of a Travellers' Tales* (1993), *The Calcutta Chromosome: A Novel of Fevers, Delirium and Discovery* (1995), *The Glass Palace* (2002), *The Hungry Tide*

(2004), *The Sea of Poppies* (2008) and *River of Smoke* (2011).

Ghosh's *The Hungry Tide* deals with the study of the writing with 'nature' in the centre-stage, and the book is about one of the most dynamic natures of ecological systems of the world. This novel clearly brings out the wrath of nature in the form of calamities and disasters, and fragility of humans who are always at the mercy of nature though much advance has been made by science and technology. In short, this novel is about the struggle of each person to find a place in the world and his existence against the 'natural' barriers. By writing this novel, Ghosh proves himself to be an articulate and successful craftsman who has brilliantly fore-grounded the multicultural and multilayered intricacies of the islanders and inmates of the Sunderbans. This novel raises national and global awareness about the history of violence inscribed in the Sunderbans, throwing into relief the continuing exploitation of the place.

The Hungry Tide reveals through the eyes of two aspiring, educated individuals who undertake a journey to the tide country. The aim of this novel is to unearth the eco-political and eco-social issues that it addresses in the context of the contemporary, the historical and social events that are crucial in determining the conservation policies of the 'Sunderbans'. The novel shows its own servitude to the Sunderbans through section headings titled *The Ebb* and *The Flood*, as well as a plot in which nearly every turn of events/environmental variations is predicated by an act of nature highlighting the helplessness of frail human being who is subjected to the vagaries of weather or, so to say, the harshness of whimsical natural wrath. Ghosh, in *The Hungry Tide,* has much on his myriad thematic mind, reproduced in the novel in sophisticated but direct manner, and the writer's concerns, ranging from the ironies of the human "translated world" (Ghosh 14) to the fragility of various ecosystems and sub-systems. The term 'Sunderbans' translates literally into "the beautiful forest" (Ghosh 9). The Sunderbans are an archipelago of islands in the Bay of Bengal known as "tide country" (Ghosh 10). They are made up of islands, sandbars and mangrove forests, rivers, creeks and channels.

In *The Hungry Tide*, Ghosh presents Nature as violent, adverse, unfriendly, and vengeful on the humans. Therefore, in 'Sunderbans', everyone is an equal sufferer and participant in the

struggle to survive in the hostile environment. The tides change the environment daily breaking the essence of every person down to its core (shattering a man's ego and pride which is the result of his scientific discoveries and innovations), and obliterating all social distinctions, and making closer and bonding relations on common plane.

The plot of the novel is derived from the 'Sunderbans' in Bengal state of India. The entire action of the novel takes place obviously in India's Sunderbans. The sheath of the book tells about the setting and depicts clearly that there are no borders to divide fresh water from salt water, river from the sea, even land from water.

The HungryTide begins with the expedition of Piyali Roy and Kanai Dutt to the tide country. The narrative proceeds with Piya, an American-born Cytologist of Indian origin, traveling to the Sunderbans for conducting a field study on the endangered Gangetic river dolphins, marine mammals as well as adverse effect on Indian nation, its culture, boundary, ethnicity, immigrants and history of the ecological consciousness among the inhabitants. Kanai Dutt undertakes journey to Lusibari to claim a package left for him by his deceased uncle, Nirmal. Piya's expedition into the waterways of the Sunderbans reveals to her the plight of not just the dolphins but of the people who were facing odds in their day-to-day struggle to survive. In the course of her stay in the islands, Fokir, an illiterate fisherman saves Piya's life twice. He guides Piya and Kanai through the treacherous canals in search of the dolphins, which are portrayed as the most unprivileged species, vulnerable to both the natural hazards and the oppression of officious bureaucratic machinery. Fokir, with his enormous knowledge of the tide country, also serves as a counterpoise to Piya and Kanai, equipped with their language; both are dependent on him for their safety in the Sunderbans. The setting of the novel is the Sunderbans, the vast delta of the Ganges--the most sacred and the great river of India--where the mighty river meets the sea throwing up numerous paradoxes and contradictions.

In the course of their interaction with the natives, of course, with the help of Fokir, they collect a storehouse of myths held in the folk-tales since centuries. So, the novel is an overflowing repository of local myths as the writer includes them

in the narrative. Therefore, the novel provides a creative outlook on the life-cycle in the learning of man's fight against nature, the eternal and inherent instinct of man. It is the arrival of Piya and Kanai that disturbs the emotional, social and economic ebb and flow of the settlement of life in the tide country. The environmental crisis becomes apparent to Piya during her expeditions through the crisscross waterways of the island country guided by Fokir. The importance attributed to the wilderness is essentially a First World ecologist's perspective that aims for a bio-centric world, which is represented through Piya's convictions as an environmentalist. The novel brings to attention that the people of the island were facing hunger and catastrophe because of the presence of salty water of the river which also rendered the land infertile. This condition drove the people into the occupation related to fish culture and hunting to overcome the disaster thrust on them; the fall-out of this reason was that the climate of the Sunderbans got affected. The fishermen do fishing and take out everything they want from the water and also the lucrative prawns. For that (lucrative prawns), they get a fair amount of money income which creates complete ecological disaster due to over-exploitation of the prawn-species. Ghosh wants to invite attention of the common people, to pay attention to the people in the 'Sunderbans as well as to save the life of human beings under constant stress and to save also the animal world of the Sunderbans. This novel portrays the terrifying beauty of the forest and the river that bring forth a perfect connection to the ecological studies. Ghosh draws masterly a mediating line between his work *The Hungry Tide* and eco-criticism that opens the eyes of man to look upon the plight of the Sunderbans where both animals and humans live a life of animosity, and finding no better alternative for an escape.

This novel highlights the features or characteristics of the place and human relationships. In that place, Kanai and Piya both are fond of nature; Kanai being showing more caring for the lives of human beings than the predators. For Piya, animal life is also important alongside human lives. Viewed from an ecological point of view, the lives of both the human beings and the animals are equally important to maintain the balance of an ecosystem. If any of the species disappears totally from the land (becoming

extinct as far as the Sunderbans are concerned) then the ecological imbalance will occur and the ecosystem will get endangered. The spirit of ecology is seen in every chapter of the novel which makes the people aware of the natural happenings, against the philosophy of co-existence, that lead man to end up in devastation or destruction. Man's reason for demolition with the help of science and technology plays a primitive role in the text but, at the same time, the motivated spirit of devoting to preservation and protection of ecology is well portrayed by Ghosh through his characters. Nature and humans go hand in hand in these islands and each stands as the best demolisher of the other.

The novel is a fine presentation of real life situation. It states that Ecosystems have been adversely affected due to increasing human population coupled with the avarice of mankind. Literature could not remain unaffected from this depletion.

The present article focuses on how concern for Nature changes in Indian literature from reverence and co-existence to destruction. The book is about one of the most dynamic ecological systems of the world. The 'Sunderbans' is one of the fifteen most important 'hot spots' from tourism point of view also. This novel clearly brings out the wrath of nature and fragility of humans – both lying at the mercy of volatile nature. Water is of special significance in Hindu mythology and is worshipped as 'deity.' Water is chiefly associated with fertility, immortality, place, creation and the feminine. Running water is deemed sacred in Indian mythology. According to the Rig Veda (one of the few holiest of Hindu scriptures), a river is a continuation of the divine waters that flow from heaven to earth–bestowed as boon by the Almighty God on mankind and animals, birds and all that spontaneously grows on earth. Mythology has it when the Ganges descended from the heavens, so mighty were its currents that it threatened to drown the earth itself. Lord Shiva (Indian deity of high order), anticipating the deluge, captured the river in his hair locks. It is only when the river nears the sea (Bay of Bengal) that it untangles into a thousand strands forming a vast archipelago of the Sunderbans. The water that shelters tigers, crocodiles and snakes and nurtures the mangroves also protects the area from large-scale deforestation and even frequent natural calamities like

storms and typhoons.

Another reason for concern is the expanding tourism industry in India that helps in inflow of foreign currency, so very badly required to repay debts, pay oil bills and import of modern technology. Sahara India Parivar's mega tourism project proposes to take over large areas of the Sundarbans to construct floatels, restaurants, shops, business centres, cinemas, and theatres which would further disturb the fragile ecosystem and threaten the already endangered biodiversity of the region. Ghosh vehemently opposes this gigantic hotel project in the name of conservation and lucrative tourism in national interest.

Conclusion

The publication of *The Hungry Tide* played a crucial role in garnering worldwide support against the Sahara Project. This support persuaded the Central Ministry of Environment and Forests to terminate the project. The novel's publication in this sense is political to the extent that the fictional narrative gave Ghosh the liberty to talk about the violence meted out to the natives, the flora and fauna of the Sunderbans. Ghosh's *The Hungry Tide* boldly and effectively reveals how ecological concerns and conservation efforts served as mere disguises to camouflage the pursuit of political ends with little concern for the human life and the biodiversity. Literature of this kind espouses the cause of environment and pioneers an effort to bring into focus the necessity of needed assault on human avarice and self-centred interests of humans.

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Kittur Through Literary Narration:*The Queen of Kittur b*y Basavaraj Naikar

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Postmodern historical novels, regarded as historiographic meta-fictions, permit different voices and alternative, plural histories essentially by subverting the historical documents and events that they refer to. However, not all historical novels subvert history to give vent to the creative imagination of the writer. An actual record of historical facts in the form of a third person narrative can lend greater interest in the reader than archival material or a text book with the same information. Such an historical narrative is usually written from the fictional character's point of view or perhaps as the story of a real person from history who has participated in the event. The novel, *Queen of Kittur* is a retelling of history from neither a contemporary of the event / times, nor an historian, but from the eyes of a creative writer, through the reconciliation of several binaries like historical objectivity vs nationalism, cultural present vs cultural history, historical facts vs literary imagination etc. What distinguishes a successful historical narrative from the rest is the presence of an engaging story without meddling with facts. Historiographic understanding of history forms the nucleus of this paper, claiming that it not only represents past events but unravels the underlying meaning in them as well. As a signifying system, therefore this narrative converts historical events into historical facts.

The paper analyzes Basavaraj Naikar's *The Queen of Kittur* as an example of a historical narrative where the blending of fact and fiction is convincingly accomplished.

The narrative as historiography

Historiography is the history of history. It can be a literary narrative that does not subject the actual events to historical

analysis. Conversely, the subject of historiography is the record of the history of the event: the way it happened. It may, at times reflect conflicting objectives followed by different writers of different eras. Such differences arise more from perception of the times, rather than the events themselves. Therefore,
such factors do influence the shaping of our understanding of the actual event, besides the nature of history itself.

Historiography, while constructing historical facts, selects certain past events and omits others, for ideological reasons. This reflects the fact that a select group is unintentionally denied an official voice by the dominant ideologies. Hence, history is relegated to being monologic, representing the dominant discourse and therefore as Orwell says , "History is written by winners". Hayden White, in "The Historical Text as Literary Artifact" vehemently argues that historians recreate history through "historical imagination". In other words the historian employs narrative strategies of a literary writer to convey his/her message. He coins the term "meta-history" which very succinctly blurs and sometimes blends the boundaries of facts and fiction. He further claims that history is essentially narrative prose, an amalgam of literary conventions and the historian's imagination. In the process, perhaps historical narrative can include types of "plots" or "emplotments " that include the tragic, comic, romantic, and satiric elements. (Ricoeur, 31). Such an 'emplotment recalls Aristotle's claim that Poetry (Literature) tends to express the universal, history the particular. White questions the existence of the balance
between factual reconstruction and imaginative recreation of the events. He probes into the "value neutral" aspect of retelling events. He endorses the need for examining fiction in history, a point raised by Orwell too.

As is clear from the above, it is possible to infer that the underlying attitude of historiography is one of skepticism. This stems from the belief that historians, particularly as writers *do* have agendas and *do* select sources with the intent of *proving* certain preconceived notions. History is, in this sense, never really *objective,* but is always deemed a construct that presents the historian-writer's perception of events or things. At its objective

best - which is contestable - history (re)presents basic *facts* (dates, events etc., as recorded in the available sources.); the task on hand for the writer would be to *interpret* these supposed facts. This very *interpretation*, which, by definition a subjective mental process renders the product – a book, novel etc., as less objective as possible.

Historiography permits foregrounding history as it unfolds in the literary narrative. Unlike historians, litterateurs do have the license to dwell deeper and unravel a profound historiographical insight. However, debatable its veracity may be, such insights help in forming a certain perspective about historical events. These are especially true in the case of colonialism when recordings were indeed one sided and whose authenticity may be questioned. The natives somehow never really worried about serious documentation processes that have coerced both historians and literary writers to rely on the colonizers point of view.

The story of Kittur: Fact versus Fiction

The Queen of Kittur is a post modern historical fiction that glorifies the heroism of the Rani, while combating both internal (Peshwa kings) and external (The East India Company, later day British colonizers) forces. The novel deals with the life of Rani Chennamma, the second wife of Raja Mallasarja of Kittur, a small kingdom beaming with pride in tradition and culture.

The plot may be captured in a nutshell. Kittur, as a kingdom, is not overwhelmingly powerful in comparison to more prominent Mughals and many other neighbouring kingdoms. However, Raja Mallasarja has led the land with impeccable integrity, despite clandestinely escaping from the clutches of the Peshwas. His son Sivalingarudrasarja, not as able an administrator as his father, is issueless. Therefore, Rani Chennamma, decides to adopt a child – Sawai Mallasarja - from the village. As the king dies even before the formal adoption takes place, the ceremony is held before the final rites are performed for the king. This invites the attention of the British, as the 'Doctrine of Lapse', wherein, any king who dies without an heir to the throne forfeits the land to the British, had just come into effect. Thus begin the confrontation of the natives and the colonizers. The Queen sends emissaries with positive yet firm statements, refusing to

give in to their demands. Notwithstanding the loss of Thackeray, two other generals and several others imprisoned, the British army repeatedly attacks Kittur. Displaying courage even in the face of defeat, the Rani symbolises 'shakti' in terms of female valor. Having tasted victory once, she is motivated to continue her confrontations with the British, consistently defying their orders. Her countrymen loved her audacious attitude and were highly supportive of her actions. Unfortunately for her and India, the internal feud and self destructive betrayal by her own courtiers and the deceit and foul play on the part of the Company soldiers, ensure that the brave kingdom is brought to its knees. The ruthlessness of the colonizers, forces the helpless people to surrender. The valiant Queen is eventually imprisoned in the Fort of her own town, though the imperialists found it hard to subdue their admiration for her bravery. She dies in confinement.

The story of Kittur's history

Kittur's history is very much the story of Indian history, recorded in the view of the outsiders rather than the internal players. Several factors have influenced the course of documenting the history of this kingdom. Dearth of archival material, rigid imperialism during the Colonial regime that lasted for more than 300 years, a ravaging independence struggle that destroyed several human lives, lack of authentic documentation in the native language, and the eventual collapse of the kingdom have left the people of kittur and India both powerless and speechless. Ignorance of English among
the natives, and ignorance of Kannada or any other Indian language on the part of the British, rendered communication or a two-sided dialogue impossible between them. The conflicts within Kittur are of a varied nature and incomprehensible to the colonizers who lack an in-depth knowledge of the complexities within Indian cultural history. Lack of unity among the neighbouring kingdoms as they disagreed intensely on the issue of nationalism vs beneficial subordination, compounded the problems; thus making it extremely difficult for a collective fight. The failed attempt by the British to overawe the natives "by exhibiting the military wealth of the Company government" (Naikar, 168) resulting in the death of Thackeray himself reflects a total lack of understanding of the native strategising abilities,

particularly in war. Such incidents forced the colonizers to resort to cunningness to conquer both lands and minds of India. Perhaps, this is the impetus for the author, Basavaraj Naikar to intensely preoccupy himself with the colonial past of India in this novel and reveal the richness of the Indian cultural history that encompasses the intellectual superiority of the people.

The novel projects loyalty, patriotism treachery of the natives and the scheming shrewdness of the British - the essential ingredients of an intriguing novel. It is this quality that demarks historical writing from literary writing.

The narrow divide between historical discourse and literary discourse, which, at times, is almost a slippage, as pointed out by Hayden White, is very relevant here. This enables reading the novel, primarily as a literary artist fictionalizing history solely for the sake of keeping Kittur alive and seeing it in books. In order to achieve this, he draws heavily from historical and quasi-historical sources for firsthand information. Such a method should provide an authentic historical dimension to his works.

Much of the action that is described in the novel is faithful to recorded history. Both in terms of dates and persons, the novel merely weaves the happenings into the narration. Some of the more easily accessible sources do mention the actual events as sequenced and presented in the novel. But the literary sources, mentioned at the beginning of the book give a clue to the role of imagination in effecting the narration in particular, the stringing of the different events. Starting from the first meeting of Raja Mallasarja and Chennamma as a brave girl capable of hunting and archery, their marriage, the rituals, their personal relationship, and many other socio cultural revelations
do carry colourful imagination. It is in these instances that the author's creative energy releases full steam.

The fascinating recreation, nevertheless offers the writer the choice of facts and the fictional element to interweave. It is only natural that writers conveniently omit certain facts to suit their contexts and perceptions. However, this novel transcends such methodical omission and presents history as 'it happened', with clear cut literary overtones. This novel can thus be described as a double-voiced discourse where, the people of Kittur, led by their Queen's impeccable authority and power, is subverted by the

cunningness of the Company regiment. The dominant voice of imperialist eventually subverts the voices of the people. The author's expertise in blurring fact and fiction is at its creative best in these contexts.

The alternation of facts and fiction is seamless, and one needs an understanding the ethos of the land and its people to tell the difference between the political or historical clime from that of the cultural and social. For instance, the hurried coronation, with its intricate rituals are presented almost as a live coverage that we can see in the modern day televisions, though it is ostensibly true that the details could not have been recorded. It originates from the author's knowledge and understanding of the cultural milieu rather than extracting them from authentic sources. The songs sung during the wedding rituals of Chennamma and Raja Mallasarja is a classic case in point. This vindicates the intensity of the literary discourse as against the historical discourse.

Naikar provides a fictionalized history of Kittur in particular and India at large during crucial historical moments: the reign on Raja Mallasarja for nearly thirty four years,(Naikar,68), his meeting with Bajirao Peshwa of Pune and the Raja's subsequent arrest and later his death, the controversial administration, illness and death of his son Sivalingarudrasarja, the 'quiet' but brave adoption of Sawai Mallasarja II, Rani Chennamma's war with Company regiment outside the fort of Kittur, the consequent arrest of Company Officers - Stevenson and Elliot, the democratic administration of the native Queen that earned the respect of the opponents, the eventual destruction of the Kittur palace and the death of the Queen.

Naikar's fictional space 'Kittur' is not an artistic construct born out of the narrator's imagination. It is the very embodiment of the first serious struggle for independence from foreign rule. He is intensely pasionate with the history of Kittur and for posterity to have access to its recorded history as well. The urge to bring about the richness of Kittur's history is one of his foremost concerns, particularly when the nation's history seldom recognizes the Queen's prowess and patriotism. In contrast, Jhansi Rani Lakshmi Bai, who under very similar circumstances, defied the colonizers, apparently, is better known throughout the country. Writing, is Naikar's way of opening out to the outside world, at least to the

present English speaking India, to become aware of the earliest instance of patriotic and anti colonial wars. The novel yields very valuable insights into the complex and intricate history of Kittur. The need to fictionalize actual events is inevitable on the part of any writer living in politically distant times and conditions where writing is the only medium of expression. This is especially true at a time when we receive lies as truth, war as peace, and impoverishment as development. Under the circumstances, it's only just that a writer chooses, however unjustly, to offer truth camouflaged as fiction.

CONCLUSION

The general acceptance that popular history is something which we already know, or that the victors write/ rewrite the history, does decimate the entire pursuit of history appreciably. However, a keen sense of historiography can intensify the writer's historical sense, thus enabling re-creation of history through a narrative. Establishing a rapport with the historical events through interrogation and interaction, will engage the writer more deeply with the historical events, may even necessitate consultation of additional sources to get the answers. It is precisely in this context that Basavaraj Naikar's *The Queen of Kittur* blends the boundaries that demark facts from fiction. The narration dovetails with the facts woven into literary imagination as is revealed by the historical events and sociocultural activities. The ratio of facts and fiction can vary with each author and therefore the outcome may not comply with everyone's view of things. Nevertheless, it will allow a better appreciation for the many factors including, one's bias and prejudice, that contribute to the understanding and interpretation of an historical event. This appreciation, in turn, will enhance the quality of historical researches.

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Socio-Economic Tumult in Rupa Bajwa's *Tell Me a Story*

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Rupa Bajwa's first novel, *The Sari Shop*, explores her hometown, Amritsar, and the class dynamics of India. The novel won the writer flattering reviews and Orange Prize for Fiction, XXIV Grinzane Cavour Prize for best first novel in June 2005, the Commonwealth Award in 2005 and India's Sahitya Akademi Award English 2006. Her second novel, *Tell Me a Story,* released in 2012 was met with extreme reactions. It received critical appreciation from some quarters, at the same time creating controversy among the literary circles in New Delhi, since a part of this novel lampooned these very people. In both these novels Rupa Bajwa has picked up a common theme, i.e. the subjugation of the lower-class of society and the role of a woman projected from all stratas of life. The present article focuses on the subaltern class of society, men and women from the real world, their pain, agony, helplessness, frustration and mental turmoil. They are the traditional god-fearing men and women who are ready to bear all but cannot act against the current of their lives.

Tell Me a Story, like its predecessor presents a grim picture of the subaltern class of society which is highly opposite to the fake and ruthless upper class society. The narrative centres on Rani and her family which comprises five members including her aged father Dheeraj Kumar, brother Mahesh, Sister-in-law Neelam and their Son Bittu. They all represent the subaltern class of society, which is extremely overwrought with penury. Rani is the victim of social and gender bias in society. She is a young girl who works in Eve's Beauty Parlour to earn her livelihood. The house in which she lives with her family is completely in dilapidated situation as Bajwa describes the condition of the house with damp walls, leaked roofs, windows and doors with cracks. The only

possessions that her family is left with are " . . . Stacked with battered tin Trunks, rusty, unused Utensils, and old brown attaché case of Dheeraj and various other odds and ends. On the top of one tin trunk sits a small television set, their proudest possession" (6). The author delineates extent of their miserable condition saying that even a twelve rupee soap is a big thing for them to buy. They even seem unable to buy an umbrella worth rupees one hundred and often borrow it from their neighbours.

Rani's father, Dheeraj, is a simple and clear-hearted man who like any other father of a daughter wants to educate Rani. As he asserts, "You Know I still think you should have continued with school" (9). But it is not Rani's cup of tea. She recalls the day when she became the target of physical violence by her Madam, Madhu. She is quite happy and satisfied with her present position as an assistant in a local beauty parlour. This is the place where she feels she actually belongs to. She feels more elated to work with Kavita, Dolly, Navreet, Mani and Shama, who represent the subaltern class of society. The subaltern as Spivak delineates:

> It is well known that the notion of the feminine (rather than the subaltern of imperialism) has been used in a similar way be constructive criticism and within certain varieties of feminist criticism. In the former case a figure of 'woman' is at issue, one whose prediction as indeterminate is already available to the fellow centric tradition. Subaltern historiography raises questions of methods that would prevent it from using such a ruse for the 'figure' of woman, the relationship between woman and silence can be plotted by women themselves; race and class differences are subdued under that charge . . . The question is not of female participation insurgency, or the ground rules of the sexual division of the labour . . . the ideological construction of gender keeps the male dominant. If, in the context of colonial production, the subaltern has no history and cannot speak. The subaltern as female is more deeply in shadow . . . (*Can the Subaltern Speak*: 28)

Rani and her colleagues at the Parlour belong to the lower-strata of

society. They find solace in doing petty things as facial, manicure, pedicure, trimming eyebrows, hairdo etc. Their life is restricted to their small horizon where they seem satisfied with their present scenario. They are the subalterns as Spivak points out, " . . . . subaltern is not just classy word for "Oppressed" for the Other, for somebody who's not getting the piece of the pie . . . In post-colonial terms everything that has limited or no excess to the cultural imperialism is subaltern- a space of difference. Now who would say that's just the oppressed? The working class is oppressed. It's not subaltern . . . (*Can the Subaltern Speak?*: 3). Rupa Bajwa's portrayal of a galaxy of women in both roles: as an assistant and as a customer, is quite ravishing. This is the place, which is visited by women from all stratas of society. Bajwa gives an ample and vivid description of the customers and the girl assistants attending them vivaciously.

As it unfolds in society, so does it happen in the present narrative. Woman is responsible for the subjugation of her own class i.e. a woman. Rani is subjugated at home by the atrocity of her sister-in-law, Neelam. Neelam, who was a soft- spoken and timid wife earlier, behaves like an ever complaining Indian house wife. At Rani's work place, Asha, the boss, plays the role of a colonizer by directing the mannerism of the girls working under her. Both Neelam and Asha become the symbol of hegemony that enslaves the thoughts and actions of Rani. Rani is a brilliant story-teller. She can make up stories according to various situations. She has the potentiality to create and recreate stories from all aspects of life. But the poverty of life bewilders her mind and the death of her father breaks her thoroughly.

In the second part of the novel, the locale shifts from Amritsar to New Delhi as Rani moves from Amritsar to New Delhi as a full-time household help at a novelist's house. In this part of the novel, Bajwa presents a fragile and pompous world of the rich, and juxtaposes with the world presented in the first part of the novel. It is a world of the oppressors, tormentors and colonizers for whom the life is a tale told by an idiot. Antara, Sasha, Vaishali, Gayatri,Nina Choudhury are frivolous rich women who believe in 'chittering chattering party' (163) and roaming around for shopping etc. Though Sadhna is a part of the elite class, she is an exception. The author has presented a world of writers and their

sluggish mannerism. Throwing party and spending money to demonstrate their fashionable way of living is a part of their life-style. Sasha's expenditure worth Rupee 18500, in a party, startles Rani who thinks that this amount could have saved her father's life. This was the amount which could have changed the way of their life.

Rani's agitation comes out in a revolting voice when she exchanges hot words with Ms. Sadhna. Her revolt is indirectly directed toward those members of the elite class for whom spending huge amount of money in petty parties is a casual way of life. On the other hand, Ms. Sandhu is a prominent name who gets fame with her first novel. She starts working on her next novel but finds herself gripped in the clutches of uncertainty. Both the master and slave live in "society fast giving itself over to money – loving philistinism" (182). Rani becomes Sandhu's inspiration that helps her to complete her novel. She resumes her talent of telling story and strives hard to seek her identity only as an assistant in a parlour, the place where she actually belongs to. She realizes the futility of connecting herself to a family where only her sister-in-law and her son Bittu exist. Thus, she identifies herself with the atrocity of sophisticated urban life and its frivolities. In this sense, she equates with Ramchand in *The Sari Shop,* who finding himself unavailable to seek his identity, goes back to his original identity. Just like Ramchand, Rani too revives her spirit by joining the beauty parlour.

Sadhna, Rani's employer, is a novelist. She is a 'literary find' (140). She just like her house hold help Rani, loves to dwell stories in her mind as Bajwa asserts, "Sadhna didn't know when and why the germ of writing had crept into her organism insidiously. She always remembered being at odds with her surroundings aware of a void, aware of the illusions of the world. Reading was her only succour. Writing had been the logical step to attempt to create some sense of the chaos around her" (139). She has a great taste for reading and writing. She decides to leave her corporate profession in order to fulfil her passionate instinct in life. She even refuses to settle down after marriage. Though Sadhna and Rani belong to two separate classes of society, the author has presented some similar traits in both these characters. Both women are great story-tellers. Sadhna being an educated and emancipated

woman has the potential to carve her words on a piece of paper, and Rani, a subaltern and educated upto ninth standard has only got the art of narrating stories with her deep sense of imagination. Woman is a story teller from her birth. She has the natural instinct of dwelling with stories. Moreover, both these women reject the material norm of society to make an identity of their own and plunge into "the world of writers, artists, critics and journalists of all kinds" (141). After the grand success of her first novel she takes the initiative to write the other one. But the more she dives deep into the literary world, the more she finds herself caught in " . . . a dark pit of gloom where words made no sense to her. The very words that had once liberated her now seemed like adversaries, cunningly designing themselves to lie, conceal and lead astray. Still reaching for that elusive glimmer of truth, Sadhna retreated. She became that tortured being, a stalled novelist" (142). She breaks all her contacts with the outer world in order to create something sensible and sublime. But the more she gets aloof of the world surrounding her, the more she finds herself caught in gloom and despair. She avoids people who visit her home. As she says, "No, no, tell her I am out . . . Tell her I am asleep . Tell her I am dead. Tell her anything. Just don't let her in. She will talk and talk" (148).

Though Sadhna belongs to the well-off upper-class, she does not like the vanity of the elite class which believes in mocktail cocktail culture. As she claims in front of Rani that she "can't see much point in them" (159). Her agitation of mind comes out in front of Rani as, "And don't I live in the same miserable hellhole . . . I too loved telling stories, but they just won't come now . . . And do you think I can telephone for happiness and they will deliver it at my doorstep?" (180). The author presents the same bent of mind of both these writers very skilfully. One is striving hard to complete her second novel and the other straining to settle herself in the tumultuous world which does not consider her existence as an individual. Thus, both these women of Bajwa plunge themselves into a world of their own and try to seek solace in it. Both these women belong to the contradictory class hierarchical system of society. The author presents a true picture of women's world where they become the victim of patriarchal set up of society irrespective of their class and creed. Being the most sensitive part of society they become the worst target. Rani suffers from the

scarcity of materialistic wealth for which she loses even her family and Sadhna suffers from the scarcity of creative thoughts to weave the threads of her story to create a novel. Betty Freidan asserts, "The only way for a woman as for a man to find herself, to know herself as a person, is by her creative work of her own. There is no other way" (*The Feminine Mystique*: 332).

Mahesh, Rani's brother, though belonging to the patriarchal set up of society, is out and out a subaltern and becomes the victim of identity crisis. A poor worker in a Power Loom factory, he works under Charan Das who represents the colonial class of society who has provided his workers with uncongenial and unhygienic conditions "oppressiveness of the factory, its lack of ventilation and the constant noise" (12). Mahesh feels congested in this suffocated environment and after spending his assigned time in the factory he wants to celebrate his freedom with 'a *beedi*' and hopes to buy a cigarette one day when his pocket would have been stuffed with sufficient amount of money. Guha aptly demonstrates the condition of a subaltern as:

> Taken as a whole and in the abstract this . . . Category . . . was heterogeneous in its composition and thanks to the uneven character of regional economic and social developments, different from area to area. The same class or element which was dominant in one area...could be among the dominated in another. This could and did create many ambiguities and contradictions in attitudes and alliances, especially among the lowest strata of the rural gentry, impoverished landlords, rich peasants and upper middle class peasants all of whom belonged, ideally speaking, to the category of people or subaltern classes. (*On Some Aspects of the Historiography*: 44)

Mahesh's agitated mind denies listening to the ideological sermons from Swami Vivekanand narrated by his father to Bittu and Rani. As the author describes, "How is my thinking that I am not weak going to help my soul? Or my stomach? No matter what I make myself think, Charan Das is not weak, and I am weaker than them and I always will be" (22-23). Mahesh is quite obsessed with the hierarchal set-up of society that divides a man on the basis of his class set-up. He categorises both classes as 'big men' and 'small men.' He says, "You want to know the truth? The only truth I know is that there are big men and there are small men. And then there are such minuscule, tiny men that they are not even there. Zero Men. Right now we are the small men" (23). An electric bill of 2270 rupees is a matter of great concern for him. He does part-time job at Satish's Electric Shop after spending six hours in a factory, as it gets difficult for him to provide his family with a decent living. As Frantz Fanon delineates:

> This world divided into compartments, this world cut in two is inhabited by two different species. The originality of the colonial context is that economic reality, inequality, and the immense difference of ways of life never come to mask the human realities. When you examine at close quarters the colonial context, it is evident that what parcels out the world is to begin with the fact of belonging to or not belonging to a given race, a given species. In the colonies the economic sub structure is also a sub structure. (*The Wretched of the Earth*: 40)

The sub-structure of society is divided into two categories, i.e. the rich and the poor and this division creates all the differences. The deteriorating health of Mahesh's father, the nagging of his wife, the demands of his son, the responsibility of a young sister and the wretched economic condition become the cause of his misery. Finally, he gives in and commits suicide when he finds no way out to seek his individuality. Charan Singh, his boss, underestimates his calibre and pays low wages to him. Just like Kamla in *The Sari Shop,* he loses all hope in life. Finding no alternate to exist, they drag themselves into a grim world which finally results in their misfortune. They lose not only their identity but also their sense of survival in life. Rupa Bajwa very realistically and aptly portrays the realities of the have nots, their strife, their failure, their miseries and their unpredictable lives. The strands of their lives remain intangible. The more they find themselves to reach their goal, the more complicated their lives become. Thus, both Rani and Mahesh are equal victims of class distinction.

The locale also plays an important part in designing the destiny of Rani. Amritsar is the place where she belongs to. Her life at a small beauty parlour becomes her whole world. Eating *aaloo puri* and other spicy food is the only time of celebration for her. Her dislocation from Amritsar to New Delhi changes the entire way of

her living. However, she finds solace in watching pictures of Shah Rukh Khan, a Bollywood actor and singing songs from his movies. Here, Bajwa presents a completely diverse culture from that of Amritsar. Rani finds it hard to grasp the mannerism of the elite class, which loves to live in untidy conditions. This dislocation results in a huge turmoil in her life. The author describes her arrival at New Delhi railway station as:

> Rani took a deep breath and looked up at the imposing house. She couldn't she had made such a long journey alone. Despite the bewildering New Delhi Railway Station, despite the chaos and the touts, despite the terrifying auto rickshaw ride through roads that she did not know, she had made it (136).

She revives her lost spirit after losing all her emotional bondages. She cooks *aaloo puri* for her madam to make herself feel at home. She again thinks of joining the parlour where she belongs to.

Dheeraj, the oldest member of the family, also suffers from the stigma of belonging to the lower class. He loses his thirty-two years' job "as an accountant in a large store in Guru Bazaar . . . . within a space of one day he was told that the store had been sold and he would have to leave" (23). He searches for some other job in a modern built Super Market when in spite of his thirty-two years experience as an accountant; he remains incompatible in front of the young and active girls and boys. This unexpected loss ruins the rest of his life. His son Mahesh has to leave his studies midway in order to make an earning for the house. He joins a factory and has been forced to work under inhospitable conditions. Dheeraj blames himself for the unfavourable financial situation at home. As he asserts, "I don't even know whether I have been a good father, I don't know if any act or any words of mine have had any value" (88). His lack of financial contribution at home makes him the most miserable and incompetent person in the eyes of his daughter-in-law. Neelam keeps on using ironical words against him saying, " . . . are you not happy for other people? Having lost your wife, do you grudge other people their happiness that you don't join any celebration?" (65). Even his son finds him responsible for all misfortunes in his life. As he asserts: "when you were kicked out of your job all those years ago, at that time had you not been weak, had you tried to speak up, to ask for your rights, then maybe . . . " (23). Thus, Dheeraj becomes the victim of exploitation of his own class because of his incapability to earn his livelihood.

Thus, Rupa Bajwa delineates a unique world of aspirations, hopes and desires. Thwarted by the misfortune of their miserable lives, her men and women try to seek solace in their self-fulfilment which they achieve through self purification, i.e. through the purification of their mind by letting it aside from the harsh realities of life. It seems difficult for them to merge with the world which is deceptive and fragile. In this turmoil of life, they create a self-made barrier between themselves and society. The more they try to sustain this gap, the more isolated and separated they become. Thus, Rupa Bajwa has artistically and convincingly portrayed her male and female characters by imbuing them with veritable local hue and heft.

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"Jat Panchayat" of Kaikadi Community in Laxman Mane's *An Outsider*

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Is the life of the nomadic tribals really going to change? Will they change from within? Will our society allow them to change? Will they settle in a particular place and accept the new way of life? Will they lead a life as partners of a new culture? In the areas of power, prestige, wealth, sphilosophic thinking, arts, will this stream of nomadic tribals merge into the body of a larger human culture after effacing the stigma of Outsider from their foreheads? Will their humanness be respected? Will their basic necessities such as food, shelter and clothes be looked after? Will the society accept them as humans? These are the loaded questions which besiege the consciousness of the phenomenal Maharashtrian Dalit writer Laxman Mane as he grapples with them in his thought-provoking and emotionally stirring novel, *The Outsider*. In fact, its original nomenclature is *Upara*, in Marathi. The novel is informed by its poignant portrayal of life in the Kaikadi community, marked by the authenticity of experience and powerfully calls for social justice. The distinguishing feature of writings of Dalit authors is the projection of a strong sense of defiance, revolt and the assertion of their identity. It will be a fallacy to juxtapose the Dalit writings with the mainstream writings as the Dalit literature cries for new aesthetics of human dignity and social justice.

The narrative focuses on the Kaikadi community. The culture of the Kaikadi community begins from their occupation of weaving baskets, wandering from one place to another collecting canes. They live a life full of strife. "Being nomadic tribe, they have to move their mobile home with the luggage on the back of the donkeys. They have no house, no land, no village and no farm but 'moving from place to another place for generations, loading their hearth and home on the backs of donkeys" (Mane: 1997, 15).

They live in utter poverty on the stale food given by the villagers. Fresh food is available only when the baskets are sold in a good number. They celebrate their festival of Goddess Kurvali and Lord Khandoba with great vigour and enthusiasm.

The mobile Kaikadi community has a significant pattern of governance through a court of their community called 'Jat Panchayat.' It is in this Panchayat that the complaints and the counter complaints are lodged against one community or the other, loans taken and returned, animals sold and purchased, and cases were processed and disputes solved if the inter-community panchayat was present. They lodge a complaint by paying the Panchayat fees. The petitioner or the defendant has no right to plead their own cases. The guarantor could plead either on behalf of the petitioner or the defendant. The village-chief also did not have the authority to punish the guilty.

Jat Panchayat or Caste Council plays a very momentous role in the Kaikadi community. The author's family had to confront the Jat Panchayat several times especially whenever they tried to ignore the legacy and tradition of the Kaikadis and showed the courage to break the set norms of the community. The law could not be violated even if it was for the betterment of the community. The author's father wanted him to take formal education by going to school. It was a step towards disobedience of the Jat Panchayat. In such cases, the Panchayat agrees only if they get a convincing answer. Education was not the Kaikadis cup of tea as per the norms of the Panchayat. They were not ready to accept it as it would spoil the seeker of education. The father of the author assures that education would not spoil the boy. The audacity of the author's father, a member of the Kaikadi community, was viewed as an act of defiance of the prevalent customs and traditions. The wrath of the Panchayat was on predictable lines as it apprehended that it would rupture their tradition. Naturally, the author became an object of hatred of the community.

The predominant role of the Jat Panchayat in the life of its members requires to be seen in perspective. With the arrival of the month of Falgoon, the Jat Panchayat attains a heightened sense of ascendancy and importance. During this time, the entire Kaikadi community comes to life in a couple of weeks for the celebration of

the festival. The Panchayat resolves all the grievances during evening time with a good number of audience.

All the kaikadi families are allotted specific villages to sell their baskets. They had no right to encroach upon a village allotted to another. Anybody venturing to violate the law would suffer the wrath of the community. There would be a fierce fight and the guilty person would be excommunicated. Then nobody would eat with him, nobody would attend a wedding or a funeral in his family. This was a very strict regulation.

Regarding women, in Kaikadi community, a woman must return home before sunset. If she doesn't return, she's suspected of misconduct and her husband would not allow her to enter his house. She had to return to her parents. Nobody in the village had the right to shelter her. Then her father would present her before the Panchayat, and she had to receive the Panchayat's verdict. "Only after that she would be allowed to live with her husband again. Thus, a woman sometimes gets married four times" (101).

The Panchayat was insensitive to anyone's feelings and did not mind giving the cruellest "punishment to the guilty like carrying a pot full of shit and making holes on it to intentionally let it spill on the body"(109). The author narrates of an incident of an unusual complaint lodged by a kaikadi husband against his young and good-looking wife before the Panchayat. His complaint was that his wife had got 4-5 times aborted because of her Vadari lover and at present too she was pregnant because of him. He declared her to be an adultress and made a plea to nullify his marriage. The Panchayat went as per the rules and all of a sudden a commotion started as one of them passed a comment favouring the woman. An uproar started and the Panchayat pacified them. The woman was excommunicated and the husband was permitted to remarry. The fact was that the husband himself had a Vadari woman as his mistress and the Panchayat people were bribed by pouring a lot of liquor in their throats. The excommunicated woman went mad and never recovered from the shock. She delivered a baby but later no one knew of her whereabouts. This indicates that the verdicts passed were cruel at times.

The author's family too had to confront several setbacks

owing to the malicious verdicts of the Panchayat. It so happened that after his degree education the author secretly had inter caste marriage. The marriage took place in the absence of his parents and the presence of his friends and social reformers with a Maratha girl named Shashi. When the family came to know about it, they rushed to the author in anger and expressed their fear of excommunication. This would have a serious impact on his siblings and their marriage. The author was asked not to enter the village and forget the family. Later, after a few days, his maternal uncle and aunt visited his house and informed him about the family being excommunicated. More so his cousin's marriage had been arranged and the entire family wanted both of them to attend the marriage. They told him that owing to the excommunication of the family, no one passed their house. Nobody would eat meals with them. They asked him to apprehend the suffering of his parents and his family. No one would marry his brothers and sisters and the parents couldn't carry on with their old age. They pleaded him to visit the village and request the Panchayat to pardon him and his family. Everything was dependent on the author. At last, the author decided to visit his village. The sessions of the Panchayat started the same evening. He was the prime accused. The Panchayat was ready to compromise only if his relatives were ready to compromise. The parents had to sit like the guilty. The deliberations were in Kaikadi dialect. The author put his stand that he did not believe in caste system and more so his wife belonged to a higher caste, that is, Maratha. The Panchayat did not agree to it and asked him to forsake her. This was not possible. But one of the senior members suggested an option. He should declare that he was not married and she was her mistress. But she could not be his wife. Once he declared that she was his mistress, the Panchayat said that the case would be considered. The narrator tried to convince him in all the possible intellectual ways but all in vain. On the other hand, his education was being cursed for using it to violate the laws of the Jat Panchayat. At last, a senior, experienced, former member of the Panchayat, Appa, suggested a way out. He explained: "Our community accepts the adoption….The orphan whose parents cannot be traced, can be adopted in their community. Such an adopted orphan can be married to a girl or a boy from our community which allows it . . ."

(209). This uneducated man excelled in defending the case forcefully like the one defends with several evidences in the court. The Panchayat continued with their sessions of discussions and finally declared that the Panchayat is ready to give consent only if some family member shows the readiness to adopt her. The adoption ceremony took place with the help of the maternal uncle and aunty. And supposedly the entire case was defiled by the Panchayat followed by a sumptuous dinner to celebrate it. Now their family was free from excommunication. But the matter did not get over there. When the narrator's father came to know that Shashi was pregnant, another storm propped up. His wedding was to be celebrated. But how could it be done when she was pregnant by two months? Once again the Panchayat had to hold its session. The problem was: " . . . The foetus that she is carrying has been conceived before the adoption ceremony is carried out. How will that child have our caste? It has its mother and father but it doesn't have its caste. As it has been conceived before the real marriage, we cannot even call it an orphan!"

The Panchayat directed angry words at the author. But soon Dattu Kaikadi came to his rescue and defended his case. He addressed the present: "You see, when the men in our village perform the ceremony of worshipping the God Satyanarayan, they hold an areca nut in the fold of their dhoti at the waist in the absence of their wives. In the same manner, let Laksha hold an areca nut in the fold of his dhoti and let all the people present here beat their hands announcing that the wedding has taken place…. That's all. Why should there be a dispute about such a small thing?... We have to compromise, don't we? Or if you don't want to compromise say it clearly…." Finally, the wedding ceremony took place accordingly and the narrator was happy that his family resumed its dignity and self-respect in the community.

The foregoing description holds a mirror to the devious ways through which Jat Panchayats hold a sway over the lives of its members, and force their willful ways on the grudging members, trample on the heels of the people, subjugate them to their irrational ways of justice, and thus consolidate their hold on the illiterate members of the community. Specially, in the case of the author who pursues education and develops a mind and thinking of his own (though contrary to the vast majority of

unlettered elders) and unintentionally ruptures the tradition of servility and injustice. The novelist underlines the importance of education which can open the gates of the vision of the people, and throw open the vast vistas of human excellence, human dignity and justice. The concepts like Jat Panchayat or Khap Panchayats are anachronistic in the contemporary postmodern times, and deserve to be confined to the realm of forgetfulness.

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Diasporic Concerns in Bharati Mukherjee's *Desirable Daughters*

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Bharati Mukherjee is one of the distinguished diasporic writers whose novels continuously deal with themes of dislocation, alienation, assimilation and identity crisis. Her fiction portrays the predicament of Indians as they negotiate their existential dilemmas in foreign lands. Mukherjee's protagonists are presented as diasporic subjects as they oscillate between the restrictive Indian culture and the liberating foreign culture. Bharati Mukherjee herself married Clark Blaise, a Canadian-American author, accepting the new land as her final destination. Nevertheless, her novels reveal that she is still Indian at heart and is reverent about her Indian origin, native spiritual values and traditions. The present article is an attempt to explore and analyze various diasporic concerns as reflected in Bharati Mukherjee's *Desirable Daughters*. Through the journey of the protagonist Tara from India to San Francisco, Bharati Mukherjee skillfully weaves a tapestry of diasporic issues as quest for home, exile, multiculturalism, dislocation, assimilation and alienation, in the texture of the novel.

Tara, the female diasporic subject in *Desirable Daughters,* is marginalized in a double manner, first as a female living in the Indian patriarchal society and secondly, as an entity in diaspora. In India, the male-dominated society has fixed notion of home and marriage for women. As per *Manusmriti* women are supposed to be subservient to males, and desired to become good daughters, wives, mothers. Tara's, marriage to Bishwapriya Chatterjee, a silicon valley multimillionaire, was thrust upon her as she recalls her father's words, "There is a boy and we have found him suitable. Here is his picture. The marriage will be in three weeks"

(23). As an obedient daughter, she "married the man I had never met, whose picture and biography and bloodiness I approved of, because my father told me it was time to get married and this was the best husband on the market" (23). Living such a stifling and repressive life in India, Tara's dislocation from her native land offers her a new lease of life.

The narrative, hinging upon Tara's past, is filtered through her consciousness. Consequently, past and present become inseparable from each other as her personality becomes bicultural. In San Francisco, Tara enjoys the freedom and eventually severs her ties with Bish by getting a divorce from him. By rupturing the Indian tradition, Tara finally liberates herself and carves a new identity of her own. Tara assimilates into the American culture , she learns driving, wears jeans, embarks on a live-in relationship with Andy. She summarizes her relation with Andy as "We were exotics to each other, no familiar moves or rituals to fall back on" (26).

Bharati Mukherjee's heroines are rebellious women who tear asunder the traditional moorings in order to change their lives and chart out their own destinies. Tara's capacity to assimilate into the American culture in *Desirable Daughters* is very much similar to that of Jyoti in Mukherjee's *Jasmine*. The *Desirable Daughters* begins with a lengthy account of Tara's ancestor named Tara Lata, *The Tree Bride*. Tara Lata was married to a tree by her father at the age of five as she was considered inauspicious because of the death of her young husband on the very wedding night. Tara narrates this story in great detail before starting her own story. widowhood and unreasonable orthodox beliefs and practices.

Tara Lata, however, being outcast from her own society, turns her traumatic experience into her power. Living alone she devotes her life to helping the poor and giving refuge to the freedom fighters during the colonial rule. Thus, she becomes the bold, brave and powerful woman. Now Tara's ancestral story is crucial to her changed inner self later in her life particularly in the matter of Padma.

Notion of exile is implicit in a state of dislocation. Edward Said in his book *Reflections on Exile* writes ". . . that literature and history contain heroic, romantic, glorious, even triumphant

episodes in an exile's life, there are no more than efforts to overcome the crippling sorrow of estrangement" (Said 5). Tara in *Desirable Daughters* suffers from a tremendous inner turmoil as she tries to assimilate into the American culture but dangles between her traditional ties and the new western culture. Divorcing her husband, becoming a single parent, knowing Rabi, her son's gay sexuality, all bring pain to the Westernized Tara. Bharati Mukherjee through Tara Chatterjee seems to represent the eternal dilemma of immigrants and they fluctuate between past and present.

The opening epigraph of *Desirable Daughters* sums up the torment of the Diasporic subject:

No one behind, no one ahead
The path the ancients cleared has closed.
And the other path, everyone's path,
Easy and wide, goes nowhere.
I am alone and find my way (1)

These words from the novel emphasize the dilemma of an individual in a diasporic state of being, and questing for identity in a state of homelessness. The dilemma of the diasporic consciousness has been aptly mentioned by Swaraj Raj:

"Curious accretion of a homing desire and a state of homelessness; a state of belonging and the awareness of not being able to belong; the contradictory pulls, the nostalgic longing for the home left behind and the desire to feel at home in the new dwelling; and the discrepant centrifugal pull of staying at the margins of the centre to maintain cultural difference and the centripetal seduction of assimilation in the adopted culture" (Raj 17).

Tara in *Desirable Daughters* divorces Bish Chatterjee, and thus, throws herself in a kind of deep isolation wherein she continuously longs for fulfillment. She longs for her homeland but going back is unthinkable as it is America that enables her to realize herself as a free and independent individual. Going back would be loosing that individuality and getting under the yoke of traditional Brahminic culture. After all the exuberance of the west that is enjoyed by Tara, she longs for family ties either with her family or with her sisters for it is there where the essence of life lies for Tara. In this peculiar state of mind, the multicultural identity of

immigrants is in a way an enabling position for in their hybrid status an immigrant can both criticize and cherish one or both cultures at the same time: "diaspora is typically a site of hybridity which questions fixed identities based on essentialisms" (Banerji 28).

Tara's relationship with Andy is simply questionable as it militates against the tenets of traditional Hindu society but the western society is impervious to such unholy alliances. Her rebellion to engage herself into a sexual relation of her own choice, seems to her the only way to realize her sexuality is by engaging herself into a sexual relation of her own choice. Bharati Mukherjee seems to understand the psyche of Indian women so well. Tara living with Andy seems to announce her freedom from the restrictive chains of patriarchy exercised in the name of tradition. Though she realizes the hollowness of their relationship when Andy leaves her in the hour of need, she being determined, finds out the real identity of Christopher Dey. For Tara it is simply unbelievable that her sister, Parvati could have given birth to an illegitimate son, face repugnant to her traditional Bengali upbringing.

Tara as an immigrant shares the two cultures, Indian and American. For her both cultures are inseparable within her. She takes advantage of the opportunities that American culture offers to her, thus creating a balance between tradition and modernity. Salman Rushdie rightly comments in this regard: "What is the best thing about migrant peoples . . .? I think it is their hopefulness. . . . And what's the worst thing? It's the emptiness of one's luggage. We've come unstuck from more than land. We've floated upwards from history, from memory, from Time" (qtd. in Frank: 139).

In brief, Bharati Mukherjee has skillfully described all the major issues of the Diaspora, such as assimilation, alienation, exile, dislocation, multiculturalism and identity crisis. Her protagonist in *Desirable Daughters* is a strong willed woman who carries an immense capacity to change when dislocated from her native land. She is intellectual enough to take every advantage that the new land offers. Tara Chatterjee is a bicultural woman who accepts the independence and modern outlook of American culture, though her traditional Bengali culture forms her very being. She is determined enough to stand against the wrong.

Tara's diasporic status gives her a new identity, a quaint mix of her past and present.

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Slang and Indian Students: Reflections on the Changing Face of English

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Defining the term "Slang" has been a challenge for lexicographers and it has acquired different meanings in different periods of time. It has been often considered a synonym of terms like Cant and Jargon. It was originally used to refer to the language of vagabonds, thieves and criminals. It has been defined in Webster's Encyclopedic Unabridged Dictionary of the English Language as "…speech and writing characterized by the use of vulgar and taboo vocabulary and idiomatic expressions…the jargon of a particular class, profession etc….the special vocabulary of thieves, vagabonds etc." However, scholars like John Camden Hotten stress that the term has a wider significance and is not merely the vulgar language of lower classes. He says that slang is universal and is used more or less by every faction of society. He differentiates slang from cant and asserts that "Cant… refers to the old secret language of Gipsies, thieves, tramps, and beggars. Slang represents that evanescent language, ever changing with fashion and taste… spoken by persons in every grade of life, rich and poor, honest and dishonest."

A similar effort has been made by Elisa Mattiello in her book titled *An Introduction to English Slang: A Description of its Morphology, Semantics and Sociology*. She distinguishes the term from the other similar varieties of language like jargon, dialect and colloquial language. Jargon is the technical and specialized terminology used by people belonging to similar professions or groups and it is usually not intelligible to others. On the other hand, Slang differs from jargon "in its lack of prestige and pretentiousness" (36). Slang also differs from dialect because it is not necessarily restricted to a single region. Whereas slang involves creating new words or creating different meanings from

the existing words, dialect does not aim at creating newer versions of the existing language. It is the variation in the usage of words, grammar and pronunciations of a language by people residing in a particular region. Slang is also sometimes confused with colloquial language as both the varieties are distinct from formal language. Like dialect, colloquial language also depends on the geographical regions and is used in everyday informal speech. However, slang is more informal and "displays features such as secrecy, privacy and vulgarity which are not applicable to colloquial language, and it produces various effects (e.g. humour, impertinence, offensiveness, etc.), which are not obtained by comparable familiar expressions" (39).

Mattiello observes that the scope of slang has gradually broadened with time and today it is not considered only a synonym of words like cant, jargon, dialect, etc. The word now has a distinct identity and stands for the fresh and vigorous innovations in language. *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English* defines slang as "very informal words and expressions that are more common in spoken language, especially used by a particular group of people, for example, children, criminals, soldiers, etc." Encyclopedia Britannica defines the term as "unconventional words or phrases that express either something new or something old in a new way."

To recapitulate, slang is a very informal variety of language and every language of the world, which is used, has its slang. Most of the slang words have a short life-span as the speakers keep coining new words and expressions. It is not necessarily aimed at vulgarizing the language. Slang is usually replete with colourful and humorous expressions that are the outcome of the innovative minds of the users of a language.

English Slang and the Indian Students:

English is not the first language of Indian students. They start learning it at primary level and it is counted as a prerequisite for their professional and personal growth. A number of factors influence their knowledge and usage of English language. They study standard British English for academic purposes and use North American English on internet. Their exposure to the language also depends on geographical, educational and socio-economic factors. Indian English is the result of these influences

which also mark the English slang used by the students. English slang is more prevalent in the elite colleges, IIMs, IITs and universities where students from different regions can be found. Their mother tongues are varied and despite being the national language of India, Hindi cannot serve as a link language as it is not spoken in South India. English allows these students to communicate with one another. However, their proficiency level of English also varies. Here English slang proves helpful and they develop their own system of communication.

Besides the reason stated above, a host of other factors also impel the young people to evolve 'slanguage' despite having various standard and developed varieties of different languages at their disposal. Eric Partridge, a noted British lexicographer, identifies different reasons for using slang. He observes that it is used in playfulness and displays one's wit and humour. Many young people use it because they wish to sound different from others. Slang enables them to break free from the accepted canons and is also instrumental in the enrichment of a language. It fosters a sense of intimacy among the users and its knowledge helps others to find a place in a particular group or a social class. Slang reduces the seriousness of a conversation and allows them to have an easy and informal talk.

In the multilingual context, English slang cannot remain immune from the vernacular languages. The word *hajar* is an example of borrowing from Indian languages. *Hajar* is a numeral and denotes a thousand. However, in student slang, it has undergone a semantic change and is used with uncountable collocates for example "he is *hajar* bore" and "I do not have *hajar* time now." The word *junta* is also borrowed from Hindi and it means people. It is often used to address the other students like "let's meet the junior *junta*" or "pls pay attention *junta*." Many slang words and expressions are derived from the Standard English and are used innovatively by youngsters. The word "Boss" which denotes someone in authority is used to address a stranger in slang. The word "breaker" which means a person who breaks something is used for breakfast. Words are shortened to form new slang words. Hence Gulab Jamuns become G-jams and Samosa becomes hot sams. The word apps is used to denote applications, enthusiasm is reduced to enthu and computer to

compu. Students slang also abounds in acronyms and abbreviations. The slang terms like FBI means full blooded Indian, HMT is used to refer to a Hindi medium type student as well as half milk tea and DOSA for Dean of Students Affairs. Students give scant regard to grammar while using slang. In slang, one does not take tea but "puts chai" and friends are invited to play games by saying "let's billi" which means let us play billiards.

The increasing pervasiveness of technology and internet are also instrumental in shaping the usage of English in India. Indian students are besotted with smart phones and various communication applications and text messaging are a rage among them. India is world's third largest internet user and the social networking sites like Facebook and Twitter are immensely popular among the Indian youth. They prefer these sites over phone calls for the purpose of communication. Their long lists of friends on these sites include people from all corners of the globe and most of the communication takes place in English slang. Like the slang used at the educational institutions, text slang and internet slang is also very difficult to interpret as it is full of abbreviations, emoticons, numbers and acronyms. Words like BRB for "be right back," IMO for "in my opinion," ROTFL for "rolling on the floor laughing," ATM for "at the moment," W8 for "wait", G2G for "got to go" and A3 for "any time, any place, anywhere" can sound confusing and obscure to the people who are not accustomed to using slang. These kinds of words appeal to the youth as they are helpful in saving time and allow them to remain in trend.

Impact on the Academic Performance of Students:

It is believed that regular use of slang leaves a detrimental effect on the academic performance of Indian students. It deteriorates their basic language skills and inhibits their capability to communicate effectively. One can only become proficient in a language when one has the knowledge of its basics and practises it regularly. English is not the mother tongue of Indian students and even their thinking process takes place in their regional languages. However, when students practise English only by using slang while talking to their friends at their institutes and writing only shortened words while communicating online, it inevitably affects their skills to use the language efficiently.

"Textisms" often creep into their writing and they shorten words even while taking exams. Shortened words like B/C for because, Acc for according, B4 for before etc. can be often seen in the writings of students. As English slang does not require knowledge of grammar rules, punctuation and spellings, students tend to commit mistakes in their usage. Some slang words and expressions have seeped so deep into their language that they use them even in the formal settings. Expressions like "ya" instead of "yes," "hows u" Instead of "how are you?" and "wanna" and "gonna" in place of "want to" and "going to" are often used by them.

The use of abbreviated words in the formal and official writings leaves a negative impact on others. If slang is used in a job application or a resume, it will only leave the impression that the applicant is either not proficient in English or is lazy enough to write the complete words. Use of slang in an interview gives an impression that the candidate is too casual in his approach. The students who have the habit of using excessive slang tend to forget the contexts in which they should switch from playground language to classroom language.

Therefore, the need is to adhere to the appropriate registers in different situations. One should be aware enough to adapt one's use of language in any given setting. Slang and colloquialisms should be avoided in a formal context. Moreover, certain slang abbreviations, acronyms, expressions, etc. are not comprehensible for some people, especially those from the older generation. The use of obscure slang terms in wrong contexts will defeat the purpose of communication which is the exchange of information, ideas, emotions, opinions and thoughts. The use of slang gives students a sense of freedom but it should be practiced in a setting in which it deems appropriate.

Slang versus Standard English:

The purists have always expressed aversion towards slang and they usually blame the youngsters for ruining English language. John Humphrys, a British Broadcaster and a Journalist, deplores the text language in his article "I H8 Txt Msgs: How Texting is Wrecking our Language" and remarks that it is "doing to our language what Genghis Khan did to his neighbours eight hundred years ago" and adds that the texters are responsible for

"destroying it: pillaging our punctuation; savaging our sentences; raping our vocabulary. And they must be stopped." On the other hand, the British Linguist, David Crystal observes in his article "2b or not 2b?" that "Some people dislike texting. Some are bemused by it. But it is merely the latent manifestation of the human ability to be linguistically creative and to adapt language to suit the demands of diverse settings. There is no disaster pending. We will not see a new generation of adults growing up unable to write proper English."

Language is arbitrary and there is no natural or necessary relationship between the words and the concepts that they signify. There is no reason why a tree should be called a tree or the fruit "Orange" should be called orange merely because it is of orange colour as then the question arises why only that word can represent the specific colour. Our use of language is guided by a set of conventions and habits that keep transforming with time. In the essay "What is Slang?" Professor Edwin W. Bowen says that even a monarch cannot predict or control the way in which the language of his subjects will evolve with time as the natural order and development of a language cannot be strictly monitored. He asserts that:

> It is the vast body of those who use the language, the people, not the lexicographers and scholars solely or chiefly, who are the final arbiters in a matter of this kind. It is the law of speech as registered in the usage of those who employ the language that decides ultimately whether a given phrase shall survive or perish; and this is done so unconsciously withal that the people are not aware that they are sealing the destiny of some particular vocable. This silent, indefinable, resistless force we call the genius of the language.

A number of slang words like LOL, ROTFL, Selfie, Defriend, YOLO, Twerk, Amazeballs, grats and many more have made their place in Oxford English Dictionary. No word can be labelled right or wrong in a language. If a word is created and used by people for communication and makes complete sense to them, it is acceptable. If it is accepted by majority and becomes a part of their vocabulary, it is bound to find its place in the Standard English because the users of a language are its ultimate arbiters.

Conclusion

Slang does not erode the language. On the contrary, it is an innovative and vibrant variety of language and Indian students are also giving vent to their creativity. In the past, we could not have predicted the kind of changes that are taking place in English language today and inevitably, today is also going to be yesterday tomorrow. So let's not measure the language of today with yesterday's yardsticks or be too quick to pass verdicts. The best thing we can do with language is keep our minds open.

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Decoding the Decay of Nature in Art: A Study of Anthony Goicolea's Paintings

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Nature and art go hand in hand. Since times immemorial, artists have made art a source of self-expression. Artists usually transfer their inner emotions to outer objects in order to study them objectively. Nature has liberally been used by artists for the purpose of self-reflection. With growing emphasis on need of preservation of nature and natural resources, ecology has become an important branch of study. Not only novels, poems and science fiction, but movies and paintings have also foregrounded the themes of Nature conservation.

In this context, it would be appropriate to talk about pathetic fallacy as a device which has been employed by artists to study Nature and its impact on man. Pathetic fallacy is the association of feelings, sensations, or thoughts to inanimate objects, such as when a writer describes a 'cruel sea' or a 'brooding cliff' or an 'unyielding boulder.' Nineteenth-century critic John Ruskin was not being pejorative when he first described the concept *pathetic*, not to refer to something pitiful, but to something associated with feeling.

Bond's work *Modern Painters* III (1856) explains that emotional distortion has characterised art and literature since the Romantics. Bond places major emphasis upon the fact that "an excited state of the feelings" makes a person "for the time, more or less irrational" (205). He explains, "All violent feelings have the same effect. They produce in us falseness in all our impressions of external things, which I would generally characterize as the 'pathetic fallacy'" (205).

According to Bond, when man attributes to Nature the characteristics of a living being, he tells us more about his state of mind than about the world which exists outside his mind. It is this psychological truth that moves and delights the reader. Thus, the

device of pathetic fallacy presents the world as experienced by the artist under the influence of powerful emotion. This device can, in fact, tell us much about the inner life of the author. Hence, pathetic fallacy allows one to glimpse the passions which convulse the mind of the person who employs the device of pathetic fallacy. Pathetic fallacy, then, allows the artist to dramatize grief and joy, communicating these emotions far more effectively than a simple statement would do.

The idea that pathetic fallacy effectively conveys truth of an individual's inner world makes it fulfil what Bond takes to be the role of art, which is, to present things not as they are in themselves but as they appear to mankind. Science studies the relations of things to each other: but art studies them in relation to man.

Bond's original concept of pathetic fallacy and the way pathetic fallacy is used today are essentially different concepts. Bond's idea depends on his underlying belief that the purpose of art is to communicate the understanding of nature. It was a notion which was abandoned by visual artists at the beginning of the 20th century, largely on the grounds that art which is merely representational is simply an inferior kind of photography.

But if we construct an aesthetic which denies attribution of human qualities to objects, then we must quickly reject most of the literature commonly regarded as great. Shakespeare, Milton, Donne, and Marvell were all keen users of this principle, which might more properly be called 'anthropomorphism'. Thus, if we reject Bond's idea, it leads to exclusion of much of the art which is by any other standards 'great.' Hence, the importance of Bond's idea of pathetic fallacy stands validated.

This paper seeks to analyse how pathetic fallacy functions in some of Anthony Goicolea's paintings. They are a collection of graphite drawings from 2011 and are large scale digitally composed photographs named Pathetic Fallacy. The truth conveyed by the pathetic fallacy is phenomenological, the truth of experience as it appears to the experiencing subject. In particular, these distortions of exterior reality through emotional mediation much resemble Ruskin's notion of imaginatively depicted landscape.

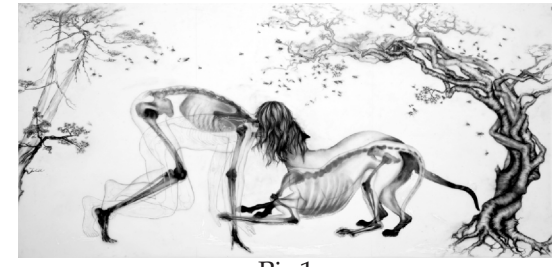
The paintings by Goicolea which will be analysed in this

research paper, depict the tension between the human and animal and the questions how close animals and people are. Goicolea does not shy away from depicting the instinctual natures of acts like sex, birth, and consumption. He sees them as primal necessities and these drives are common to humans and animals. Usually, we celebrate life with beautified images, but Goicolea portrays life as a riot of organic forms, each grasping for light and air with almost violent greed. Goicolea portrays nominal realism in his photography. As signs, these images generate primary emotions, often sadness, loneliness or a sense of loss.

In his drawings, Nature takes on anthropomorphic characteristics. A new, uneasy equilibrium is created as human and animal bodies merge, trees grow hair and pump blood, flies multiply into tornadoes and wild dogs settle in the ruins of an abandoned home. Anthony Goicolea's version of pathetic fallacy becomes an uneasy, tangled version of passing time, transition, loss and decay. Very subtly, the paintings highlight the fact that humans, plants and animals have cross-pollinated; they have merged, evolved and adopted different features from each other. Objects acquire pathos and empathy while the decomposition of material things reflects the world in flux.

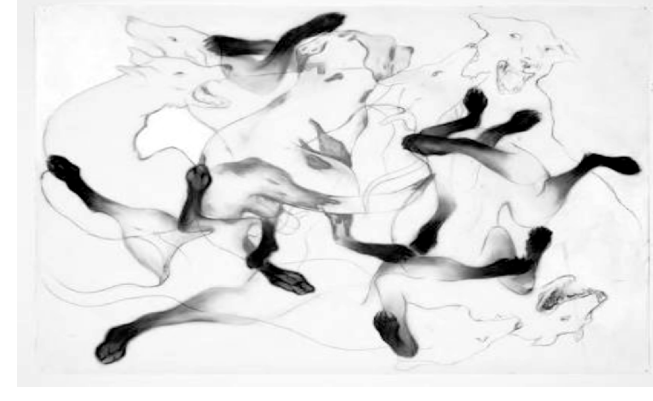
In this painting (1), if we pay close attention to the bone structure of the woman and the animal, it is almost the same. The only difference is in the form that has got varied and altered with evolution. What serves as arms for the former, serves as forelegs for the latter. It signifies the fact that the human and animal are inherently one. The Homosapien is just a developed animal, living under the illusion of supremacy over animals and nature. This picture echoes Darwin's theory of evolution of species.

In paintings (2 and 3), it is difficult to comprehend whether the beings potrayed on the canvas are kissing or attacking each other, which corresponds to the fact that man, animal and nature are closely interlinked. The binary of prey-predator makes them enter the struggle of survival. However, if the chain is broken, it can lead to crisis for survival for many species. Thus, man, by destroying nature is not only paving the way for extinction of other species but of himself as well.



Pic 1

Pic 2



Pic 3

Pic 4

Pic 5

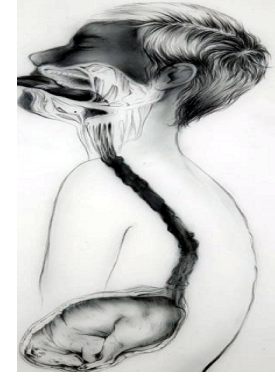
These two pictures (4 and 5) portray the inevitably tangled fates of man and Nature. Just as the tree branches and human hair are woven together, the future of man and nature stands clubbed as well. By destroying nature, man is rushing to his own destruction. Be it food, water, air, light or soil, nature is the source of survival of man. Though man is trying to dominate nature by moulding it in accordance to his needs and benefit, the destructive power of nature cannot be forgotten. Poets ranging from Wordsworth to Atwood have acknowledged the unconquerable power holds on the other side of its beauteous, bounteous self.

Pic 6

This picture (6) can be interpreted in two ways. The different kind of claws that can be seen protruding out of the bunch of leaves can be seen as an indication of nature being the home and protector of all kinds of species. However, if seen closely, the painter has also drawn small red patches in between, which can be interpreted as blood. It is indicative of the ungrateful nature of beings, who rather than being grateful to the Mother Nature, are acting as agents in its destruction.

Pic 7

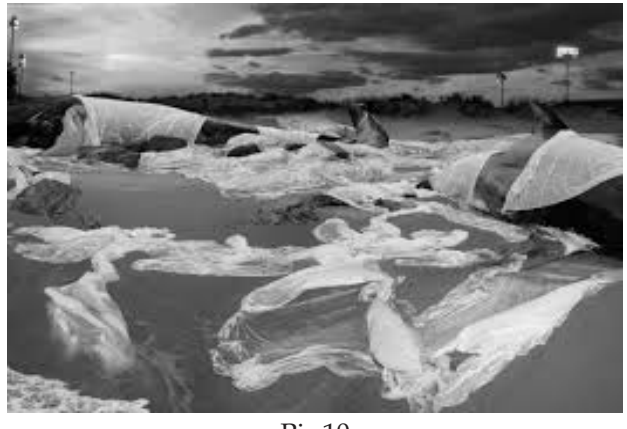
Picture No. 7 seems to represent the soft and cruel sides of nature in a personified form. The soft side of nature represented via the lighter face on the right is shouting for help to save itself. When the pleas for help go unanswered, nature has to take its destructive form (floods, draughts, landslides, tides etc). But, this destructive side of nature is a reaction to mismanagement of man. Nature in itself is not cruel, but a giver, represented by bowed head of the dark face on the left.



Pic 8

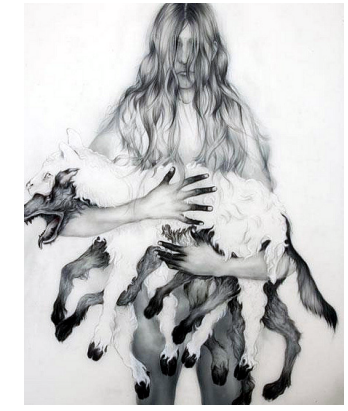
This picture (8) illustrates the double-standards of morality for man and animals. Goicolea has ironically presented an animal foetus in a human womb and a fish in his mouth. For a human, a human foetus is a living being, a symbol of life but a baby animal is a prey. Goicolea, very subtly questions the ethics of aesthetics by raising the concept of child-mother relationship that cannot be said to be differential in man and animals.

Pic 9



Pic 10

Picture 9 and 10 throw light on the extent of filth, pollution, exploitation and decay in nature. The flies in pic 9 represent the unhygienic condition of most of natural resources on earth that need attention and care. Similarly, picture10 illustrates the harmful effects of non-renewable wastes that, as presented in the picture, are acting as coffins of man by choking us with harmful air, water and soil pollutants.



Pic 11

This picture (11) by Goicolea reflects the binary of giver-taker that corresponds to nature and living beings respectively. The female figure represents mother-nature which serves as lap and protector for man by interpreting man as harmless and innocent, represented by the figure of lamb, but is actually acting wolfishly by destructing its own protector.

To conclude, as the title suggests, his paintings address the treatment of the nonhuman as human by humans, and the assignment of humanity to nonhuman animals. One of the major moral dilemmas that arise when we ponder on eating, breeding, and keeping animals is, to what degree do we believe and respect the fact that animals have similar set of feelings, thoughts, and sensations as we do? If not directly addressed in this body of works, the question certainly comes to mind when we see them. It makes one ponder on some grim issues like- to what degree are the actions of humans and animals portrayed in this series possible, natural, questionable, or inhumane? To what degree are the animals human and the humans animalistic?

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An Odyssey of Feminism from Past to the Cyborgian Age

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A woman of today desires her due and rightful place in the society. The struggle to establish her identity and to assert her own individuality has led the woman to wage a desperate fight against the existing social order that perpetuate the exploitation of woman. Feminism, can be defined as the belief that women should be allowed the same rights and power as men and should be treated in the same way. Feminism highlights the subtle forms of subjugation and exploitation of woman in society due to the presence of patriarchal institutions and attitudes.

Feminism is "a practice of questioning hierarchical structures and divisions of labour, power and discourse" (Bartkowski, 14). Although, feminism has taken up different shapes in different countries, it is everywhere a struggle by women for self-realization against patriarchal society. Both early and contemporary feminists have engaged in a fundamental re-examination of the role of women in all spheres of life and of the relationships of men and women in all social, political, economic and cultural institutions. Both have not only traced the origin of woman's subjugation to male dominant social institutions and value systems, but have also represented woman's struggle to deconstruct the identity imposed on her by the patriarchal set up. The discourse of understanding the female space, body and language is an ongoing process.

Woman has contributed as much as man in the advancement of civilization. But, there has been utter discrimination against women, and consequently, one half of humanity has been reduced to a microscopic minority in the matter of rights. Woman is always placed second to man, no matter whatever heights she may score. She is directly under the guardianship of man from birth to death. The woman of today has carved a niche for herself and has been able to revolt against

patriarchy. Woman is now beginning to stir out of the placid stoicism. She has embarked on an odyssey in order to realize the full potential of her complex identity as woman. While woman indulges in the process of self-exploration, she finds that she is the product of a culture and social set up, in the creation of which or in the making of her by this culture, she has no role to play. Her identity is undermined by this culture in such a way that her very existence has been marginalised. In order to save the real self and discover her true identity and the loss she has suffered, it becomes absolutely essential for her to rebuild and reinforce her experience of being a woman, so that she can achieve the autonomy and independence over her being.

Feminist writers have challenged the dominant view that man and woman are essentially different. They insist that the two sexes being complementary, should share the world equally. Through a voluntary entry into the consciousness of female, women hope to write their way out of the cramped confines of patriarchal space. Much of the vitality of women's writing derives from an attempt to subvert the conventional and stereotypical image of womanhood. The awakening of woman's consciousness establishes a new set of values in the contemporary literary writings. Feminist genre fiction is one of the most prominent areas of contemporary literature. It is one of the most innovative and enterprising areas of contemporary literary writings. This is represented in various forms which include science fiction, fantasy, utopian fiction etc. Contemporary women writers have started questioning the dominant patriarchal ideology. They have actively taken up the feminist issues in their literary works so as to present woman's consciousness against the dominance of men. The focus of feminist writers is to move away from the notion of woman as a figure of exploitation and victimization and to look instead, for a more complimentary and challenging representation of woman.

An innate desire for self-discovery and self-sufficiency characterize women's literature of the post-modernist period. The post-modernist woman rebels against the complacent axioms the male domination has attached to the life of a woman. In post-modernist and post-industrial era, women have broken the age old shackles of remaining subjugated and suppressed and have

raised the voice of protest against the male-chauvinistic society. As Yosano Akiko remarks:

> *The day for moving mountains is coming.*
> *You don't think so?*
> *It is coming: for a while mountain sleeps,*
> *But in other times*
> Mountains all moved in fire. If you do not believe that,
> *Oh man, this at least believe:*
> *All sleeping women*
> *Will awake now and move.* (Akiko, 338)

Although, feminist criticism has been defined in different ways by the critics, yet the fundamentals of feminism remain unchanged. A brief recall of the work by earlier feminists will enable us to focus better on our present topic. Feminism, as a movement, began late in the 18th century more particularly with Mary Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication to the Rights of Women* (1792). She stood for equal opportunities for woman in the field of education, economics and politics. Later came John Stuart Mill's *The Subjection of Women* (1869). He writes about the need to rethink the role of women and social oppression against them. An important precursor in feminist literary criticism is Virginia Woolf**,** who in her famous essay *A Room of One's Own (1929)* has analysed the gender biases and injustices against women; how woman looks at herself as a human being with her own distinctive sensibility is emphasized here. She suggests that women must reject the social and cultural ideology about their gender identity in order to emerge as an independent woman. An important landmark in the evolution of feminist criticism in the post-war period was Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* (1949), a work about the marginalisation and oppression of woman in society. She shows how in patriarchy, woman has been forced to occupy a secondary position vis-à-vis man. 'She is defined and differentiated with reference to man and not he with reference to her; she is incidental, the inessential, as opposed to the essential. He is the subject, he is the Absolute – she is the Other (Beauvoir Pg.16).Simone de Beauvoir asserts that the image of woman can be interpreted as that of the second sex, the other for man. Another great pioneer in feminist criticism is Elaine Showalter, who has drawn attention to the creation of woman – centered literary

history. Elaine Showalter in her eminent work *A Literature of Their Own: British Women Novelists from Bronte to Lessing* (1977) states three historical phases of women's literary development – first, the feminine phase (1840-1880) in which women writers imitated the dominant tradition; second, there is a feminist phase (1880-1920), wherein women advocated minority rights and protested; thirdly the female phase (1920 phase – till today) which marks the rediscovery of women's texts and women. Like Showalter, Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar have analysed the position of a woman writer in the nineteenth century. In 1979, Gilbert and Gubar published *The Mad Woman in the Attic: The Women Writers and the Nineteenth Century Imagination*, which focuses on the study of major female writers of the 19th century. They are of the view that women writings were influenced by the patriarchal society to such an extent that women had to follow the male standards of the images of femininity in their literary creations. Judith Butler, in her work *Gender Trouble* questions that sex is a natural given category, whereas, gender is an acquired cultural social category which comes out of social and cultural practices. However, the debate moved much forward with the works of Julia Kristeva, Luce Irigaray and Helene Cixous. These women thinkers have made remarkable contribution in putting up a strong thesis for understanding a woman's body and language through her specificity. Julia Kristeva has been considered as one of the most prominent figures of French intellectual circles in the late twentieth and early twenty-first century. Her works examine the role that language plays in creating subjectivity and maintaining gender asymmetries. Kristeva has made significant contribution to contemporary theory which explains the process through which pre-symbolic (pre-verbal) experience enters into language, thereby, entering the symbolic. In *Desire in Language*, Kristeva describes the symbolic as the space in which the development of language allows the child to become a 'speaking subject' and to develop a sense of identity separate from mother. This process of separation is called abjection. During this phase, the child moves away from the mother so as to enter into the world of language, culture, and the social system, which is termed as symbolic. Kristeva disrupts the symbolic system which is closely associated with the masculine structure. In her essay, *Approaching Abjection*,

Kristeva remarks that abject is 'neither subject nor object (Kristeva ,1) which is capable of disturbing the order and the system. Luce Irigaray, a prominent feminist philosopher, disrupts patriarchal ideology and considers woman as a subject. In her seminal work *Thinking the Difference*, Irigaray curiously argues, 'sexual difference, which constitutes the most basic human reality, is treated like an almost non-existent problem (Irigaray, ix). Irigaray further suggests that woman can become a subject only if she assimilates to male subjectivity, a separate subject position for woman does not exist. Another pioneer post-modern feminist Helene Cixous, in *The Newly Born Woman*, critically refers to the masculine structure which has been imposed on women. In the context of duality of activity and passivity, woman is always passive. Cixous threatens the very stability of this masculine structure. She states that there is an urgent need to subvert the rigid, binary structure of patriarchal language.The main emphasis of the prominent feminist thinkers like Simone de Beauvoir, Judith Butler, Elaine Showalter, Julia Kristeva, Luce Irigaray and Helene Cixous is in evolving the differential woman aesthetics. The post-industrial and complex technological society that we live in has generated a very distinct space for women, where they continuously explode different kinds of Oedipals to realize their multiple potential.

In the post industrial and complex technological era, due to intensive globalisation, the national boundaries are getting diminished and blurred. Consequently, some pre-existing metaphors are steadily losing their relevance. To explain the shifting reality of woman and to understand her position in the post-modern and globalised society, Donna Haraway has introduced the metaphor of cyborg. She is of the view that to fully understand the potential of the female body and the woman's experience in the late 20th century, the Cyborg is the most appropriate concept. Haraway's concept of cyborg has provided a fresh hermeneutics to understand the women's experience and to generate fresh insights into feminist discourse in post-industrial society. The Cyborg is a fictional or hypothetical person whose physical abilities are extended beyond normal human limitations by mechanical elements built into the body. In post modernist era, women's position can no longer be understood through any

unitive paradigm. Cyborg, 'a cybernetic organism, a hybrid of machine and organism, a creature of social reality as well as a creature of fiction (Haraway, 424) is an appropriate concept to understand women in the late 20th century.

The term cyborg was coined in 1960 when Australian NASA research scientist Manfred Clynes and American clinical psychologist Nathan S. Kline used it in an article *Cyborgs and Space*. They defined cyborg as a 'self-regulating man-machine system' (Clynes and Kline, 27). They used the term for an organism enhanced by technology for the sake of space exploration. The term cyborg is often used to denote a cybernetic organism that has enhanced normal capabilities due to technological advancements. The idea was to transform a human being or a living being with the aid of technology which enable them to perform such activities or to survive in adverse circumstances and unfavourable environment which cannot be expected from ordinary beings.

The term Cyborg was first introduced into feminist studies of technoscience by Donna Haraway. Haraway, born in 1944 in Denver, Colorado, is currently a distinguished Professor of the History of Consciousness at the University of California, United States. She is a prominent scholar in the field of science and technological studies and an eminent post-modern feminist. Donna Haraway's work *Simians, Cyborgs and Women: The Reinvention of Nature* (1991) has been regarded as the authoritative text which theorizes that the cyborg metaphor that subverts all repressive strategies and disrupts unitarian identity of a woman. One of the most influential essays in this book is *A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century*, in which Haraway introduced the concept of cyborg as a metaphor for the post-modern subject. The concept of cyborg was introduced into feminist discourse by Donna Haraway in this essay, in order to explore the feminist issues concerning gender, sexuality, identity representation and the body. Donna Haraway's works deal with the study and relationship between human, machine, animal and technology. Her writings have transformed the areas of feminist studies, cyber-culture, the history of science and technology and the relationship between feminism and technoscience. One of the most influential essays in this book is *A Cyborg Manifesto: Science,*

Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century, which has been regarded as an address to radical feminist movement of 1970's and 1980's. This radical feminist movement was concerned with the causes of gender oppression and patriarchal set up. *A Cyborg Manifesto* is one of the most thought-provoking and eminent works that has put forth critical opinion on conventional mindset and accustomed time-honoured beliefs on feminism. Haraway defines cyborg as a cybernetic organism, a hybrid of machine and organism, a creature of lived social reality as well as a creature of fiction. Cyborg is a hybrid which defies the distinction between human and machine and challenges fixed boundaries and binary dichotomies. The cyborg, in her sense, subverts all repressive, mechanisms. The demand for today's world; therefore, calls for such a Cyborgian concept and its consequent poetics to truly understand the woman's position.

Donna Haraway in her seminal work, *A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist–Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century* coined the term cyborg feminism (Haraway, 431) which refers to a specific branch of feminism in which women's use of the new technologies would be beneficial for them in their fight against patriarchy. She affirms that the concept of cyborg suggests the possibility of moving beyond the old limits of male and female into a new world of human, machine and animals. Haraway considers cyborg feminism as an association between women, machinery and new technology. She explains the cyborgian concept as a blend of machine and human. She further argues that while being a fictional creature, the cyborg is also a part of social reality, i.e. a lived experience. Haraway asserts that liberation of a woman depends on her transformation from a stereotypical passive image of womanhood to independent and self-reliant woman. According to Haraway, cyborg is a creature who disrupts the dualisms. The major dualisms include self/other, culture/nature, male/female, mind/body, reality/appearance, truth/illusion, civilization/primitive. The Self is regarded as the One who is autonomous, powerful, independent and who cannot be dominated. The Other is considered as subordinate, secondary, insubstantial and multiple. The cyborg blurs the boundaries between the binary oppositions of human-machine, human-animal etc. While emphasizing the urgent need of the border

crossings, Haraway talked about the breakdown of boundaries between human and animal, human and machine, physical and non-physical. She comments that cyborg can even be a monster because of the transgression of these three boundaries. This process of diminishing the boundaries is the key function of Haraway's cyborg. Haraway suggests that the cyborg is not dependent on any individual or separate being having boundaries for its identity. Rather, it is a liberatory figure as it tends to transgress or diminish the boundaries of various dualisms. Haraway sees in cyborg, the potential of creating a multivocal and equitable establishment. The concept of cyborg challenges and casts off the existing rigid boundaries which separate human from machine and human from an animal. The very distinction between man, woman, human, machine is diminished making use of innovative technologies.

These gender dichotomies result in rigid social inequalities. Deconstruction of the gender dichotomies can lead to the elimination of patriarchal power structure in society. There is an urgent need of creating a shift in the gender paradigm. The use of scientific technologies and innovations helps in creating a new paradigm for woman. Haraway suggests that the metaphor of cyborg could lend feminism a new political dimension. She emphasizes that cyborg, a cybernetic organism, deviates from the distinction between human and machine and questions fixed dichotomies and boundaries.

Haraway, in her essay, *A Cyborg Manifesto* brings together the insights of critical theory, post-modernism, feminism, post-colonialism and the concept of women of colour. She challenges the male humanist subject and calls for ending the binaries of oppressive metaphysics. She uses the idea of cyborg to challenge the dualisms prevalent in Western traditions. The cyborg metaphor deconstructs binaries of control and lack of self and other, mind and body, culture and nature, male and female, civilized and primitive, reality and appearance, whole and part, active and passive. The cyborg metaphor attempts to find a way out of these dualisms. Donna Haraway defines cyborg as a 'creature in post-gender world' (Haraway, 425) which is both a machine and an organism, a blend of fiction and social reality. The metaphor of cyborg provides woman an opportunity to resist

patriarchal paradigms by challenging fixed boundaries and binary dichotomies. Cyborg disrupts orderly power structures and fixed interests. It signifies a challenge to settled politics and phallocentric framework. The disruption of human-machine boundary threatens other boundaries such as human/nature, human/animal, man/woman. The feminists are aware of the binary oppositions between mind and body, animal and human, organism and machine, nature and culture, men and women, primitive and civilized etc. They are also alive to the actual situation of women which is a result of the integration and exploitation of these dichotomies.

The cyborgian writings tend to diminish the essential differences and demarcations between cybernetic and biological organism. Instead of depicting the fall, the cyborg writer gives a new direction to the feminist discourse in order to understand the woman's experience in post-industrial and post-modern society. Donna Haraway calls for deconstruction and renewal of society as regards the culture, economy, medicine, politics and not giving importance to capitalist patriarchal framework. Donna Haraway's cyborgian metaphor enables the women to realise their multiple potential and creative energies, in postmodern times. Haraway asserts that technological development creates new opportunities, which enable the woman to challenge patriarchal ideology. In today's post-modern and post-industrial society, Donna Haraway's cyborgian metaphor plays a very significant role in understanding woman's position. By adopting cyborgian poetics, contemporary woman hopes to find her way out of the cramped confines of patriarchal space. She attempts to transform the conventional and stereotypical image of womanhood from passive and self-sacrificing to an independent woman. The act of subversion reflects a new awareness of culture specific power relations.

The breakdown of the boundaries between human, animals and technology is depicted in dystopian feminist science fiction. The idea of extensive use of scientific technology and innovations finds a conspicuous place in the works of some of the writers like Gibson, Mixon and Margaret Atwood. Scientific technology has been extensively used through characters to augment the idea of feminism in general and the concept of

cyborgian feminism in particular.

Gibson in *Neuromancer* (1984) imagines the possibilities of technological enhanced human being through various characters in the novel. These characters possess the capability to challenge the dualisms: man-woman, human-machine, human-animal. The attempt is to move away from the notion of woman as a figure of exploitation and victimization and to look instead, for a more complimentary and challenging representation of woman who can negotiate all the repressive systemic strategies.

In Laura J. Mixon's *Glass Houses* (1992), the female protagonist Ruby Kubick is depicted as the blend of machine and organism, who has the potential of violating fixed boundaries and binary dichotomies. Haraway in *A Cyborg Manifesto*, emphasizes three types of border crossings: between human-machine, man-woman, human-animal. Similarly, the central character of Mixon's novel is presented as cyborg who challenge the genre boundaries and distinctions between man, woman, machine and animal.

Similarly, Margaret Atwood, in her novels, presents that both male and female characters 'transgress boundaries' (Haraway, 428) of gender, where both masculinity and femininity can be appropriated by the people of either sex. Margaret Atwood's feminist ideology is neither male-centred nor female-centred, rather her female characters attempt to blur the boundaries between various dichotomies like man-woman, human-machine, human-animal. Her novels witness her innate desire to disrupt the gender system and to create a new ideal world, where man and woman are treated equally and complementary to one another. Margaret Atwood imbued the woman characters of her novels like *Oryx and Crake* (2003), *The Year of Flood* (2009) and *MaddAddam* (2013) with cyborgian features, in order to resist oedipalization and transform their space into a truly liberative one. In Atwood's novels, woman characters are depicted as cyborgs, who can disrupt and transgress the boundaries between male, female, human, animal and machine, thereby, attempt to create a genderless world in which the two sexes share the world equally. Atwood, in her novels, examines the experiences of women coming from different echelons of society. She affirms that woman needs not to be a

victim; she can play a positive role in the development of society. Atwood highly resents the culturally constructed norms which negate woman's rights to be independent and self-reliant. She endeavours to show how woman is subjugated in this male – dominated society and how she is not allowed to live an independent life.

Haraway asserts that cyborg is an appropriate concept to understand complex ambivalence of woman's position in globalised and highly technological society. Haraway uses the metaphor of cyborg as a means of understanding woman's place in rapidly everchanging techno-scientific world.

There is a yearning for freedom in everything that lives on the earth. The way in which a plant grows towards the sun cannot be prevented by any power on the earth. Similarly, in human beings, this yearning bursts out in one way or the another. The same thing happens with the female characters of these works who revolt against the oppressive forces that marginalise women to disadvantageous positions. They challenge gender inequality and victimization of women. They crave to establish themselves as an individual. They refuse to succumb to socially accepted norms. They seek to create a new order with changed standards where women can be their true selves. They refuse to be the victims and attain the feminist consciousness regarding their own power and potential. Women characters of such works are consistent with Haraway's cyborg as they reject manipulative power structures and speak for a renewal of human relationship based on reason and equality. Haraway argues that a cyborg writer lends a new direction to feminist discourse by presenting the revolt of her female protagonists against gender bias. They are presented as cyborgs who tend to breakaway all the patriarchal ideologies and to assert their identity and individuality.

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Renee Singh, *Sacred Desire.* Ludhiana : Aesthetic Publications, 2015, pp. 127, Rs. 250

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Sacred Desire is a collection of poems enriched with Renee Singh's mystical experience of love. All the poems convey an urge for oneness with the Source. The underlying theme of most of the poems is not consummation of love but desire to be consumed. She expresses her love-lorn heart in the poems: *Together, Love's Ecstasy, Fulfilment, Fusion and Deep Within*. There is an irresistible desire to lose her being in the object of contemplation. The reader really wonders at the sense of alienation aroused from this union. She wants to unite herself with the Source but the realization of loneliness of soul makes her feel alone all the more. Most of the poems are bathed in the powerful feeling of togetherness. Mark these lines from the poem *Deep Within*:

To live with you
In this dimension
Is to celebrate
My existence
In a dance with
The God's
On this planet

The haunting images in most of the poems are those of earthly lovers waiting to be consumed in the fire of love and yet aware of their transience that characterizes it. The image of God appears not as a separator like it does in some of love poems where the lover feels sad at the thought of separation after death. The poetess celebrates the arrival of God and looks for permanent union in His presence. *Horizons* and *Divine Clothing* uncover her mythical

standpoint where she undervalues the union of bodies as these bodies are meant to perish one day. The *Divine Clothing* shows influence of *Bhagwad Gita* where the soul rises in the consciousness of looking at body like its garment and preparing itself for next birth. *Horizons* reaffirms the urge of oneness through the symbol of phoenix. Three main emotions: freedom, union and rebirth express themselves in diverse moods in all the poems of the volume. The last poem of the anthology is *Fearless*. It somehow declares her understanding of the soul. She compares soul with point of light, ready to be merged in the Supreme Light (God). The words in the following extract result from her experience of meditation:

A flight
Of the spirit
Soaring high
Beyond the horizon
Or the sky
Keenness
Awareness
Consciousness
All brightened
To their
Own ultimate illimitable
Level
Of freedom.

Living in an era of science and technology Renee Singh grapples with the dilemmas of human soul as it engages itself in dialectics of stresses and strains, hopes and despairs, longing and realization, necessity and wish which bedevil the urges of soul to merge with the elusive reality. Without being dogmatic, she yearns for what cannot be fathomed and seen but realized only through the power of self-negating love. From her pen much more will flow in the days to come. Amen.

Dr. N.K. Neb, *The Flooded Desert: A Novel*. New Delhi: Authorspress; 2017, pp. 231; Rs. 395

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The Flooded Desert is an enchanting, lucid read, written with aching panache and profound sensibility. As winds of change usher in a bolder and more tolerable world; and sees fetters being broken and wings spread for a flight into the vast, unexplored realms; the authorial sensibility of the writer flashes forth in painting the life of his female protagonist with painfully beautiful master strokes.

Devika is not just one woman. She is every woman who has taken monumental strides from the relatively conservative and patriarchal fold of an average middle class Punjabi family, back in the 1980s. The compulsions that doom her to a life of silent and lonely exile bespeak a tale of scores of others of the same ilk, where voices are often subdued under the seemingly content and happy facades.

Dr Neb's evocative narrative weaves a rich tale of the underlying spirit and zest of life, which sees Devika stealing some moments of ecstasy which turn her barren deserts into colourful spring fields. Tricked into marriage with the impotent Suraj, her yearning for love is of no particular concern to her in-laws. Patriarchy is solidly supported by matriarchal mothers-in-law in most Punjabi households! And her mother-in-law slyly approves of a growing fondness between Devika and her young brother-in-law, Dinesh! When Devika dangles between her loyalty to Suraj, and her feminine instinct in pursuit of that elusive love which was missing in her wedded life, which draws her to Dinesh; an attentive reader discerns the transition from patriarchy and oppression to the first-wave feminism. Delicately perched

between the ethics of right and wrong on the one hand, and driven by a desire to satiate the inner woman, she crosses the Rubicon. Devika is set to define her own life, to rewrite her story. The birth of her daughter, Anamika, moistens the dry patch of her life.

The writer, here, assumes a swift and racy tenor, educating the readers to a new phase of feminism through the life of Anamika. Education and liberalisation broadened the horizons of women back in the fag years of the last century. Anamika's life in the hostel and her shunning of the traditional wear are symbolic of veils and purdahs coming off. The author takes the readers through the turbulent times of 1984 (in Punjab) and its aftermath, which force Lala Bansilal to shift to the city. Devika too comes out of the shadows and reclaims her life. Her celebration of her womanhood marks the movement from first-wave feminism to second-wave feminism.

It is pleasantly appealing to see Devika taking pride in her body and embellishing it. Every birth has its pangs and in this case, the pangs are felt most by her in-laws who take Devika's new found confidence with a pinch of salt; but restrain wisely from objecting openly. As her circle of friends grows, so does her individual self bloom. Nimbus clouds of happiness hover, foreboding a fresh shower of desire in her life. A chance meeting with Devender rekindles her long-forgotten passion and the essential woman awakens, daring conventions and social mores. The quintessential woman has come a long way. The parched desert is inundated. She is at the altar of third-wave feminism. While some of her chick-lit postfeminist friends revel in living a life of reckless passion, with no strings attached; Devika makes peace with herself. Little joys that come her way, keep her contented.

Her own daughter, however, shuns a contended life in her illogical greed for more power and money. Amid such perfidious developments, the reader is made to understand that a delicate balance between social mores and the new-found liberty needs to be maintained. An imbalance tilts the scale and that's where the glut of liberty leads to the crashing down of social institutions.

As Anamika arrives to take along her mother to Canada,

Devika chooses not to be judgemental. With open arms, she embraces the brave new world.

Beneath the fabric of a plain narrative, lies concealed a powerful discourse on feminism crossing frontiers and marching from the periphery to claim the centre. Devika's metamorphosis and her regaining the pivotal footing in her life echoes what Shashi Deshpande writes in her postfeminist novel, *A Matter of Time*, "Where I am is the centre to me." Only when the parochial walls of gender are demolished, can one happily voice that the new era has arrived. Period.

The novel makes for an excellent read. The reader is engrossed as the plot unfolds and various phases of Devika's life are revealed. The character of Devika remains in the psyche of the reader, long after the book has been kept down.

Arvinder Kaur, *Dandelion Seeds.* Aesthetic Publications, Ludhiana, pp.129. Rs. 275/-

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whiff of fresh air
swift migration of dandelion
all calm

This is how one would describe Arvinder Kaur's *Dandelion Seeds*. This poetic pursuit is a kaleidoscopic mix of haiku, senryu and tanka, eclectic forms of Japanese poetry. The book is adorned by a stark blow up of a dandelion flower. The play of mystic light and the rawness of the tendrils are symbolic of the emotions that are to be unwrapped in the coming pages. This artistic set-up builds a wonderful ambience for poetry to rest and flourish. The book is a 129 page journey into the inner recesses of the author's mind, giving a just glimpse into the contours of rustic Punjab. The foreword has been penned by Angelee Deodhar, noted Haiku poet and artist in India. It is a befitting curtain raiser to the sea of emotions ready to be unleashed on the reader. Alan Summers in her prelude to the book has written, "Arvinder Kaur's poetry will make you laugh, and will make you cry, but she will never make you sad forever, as you read her gritty and honest work."

Haiku is a three lined poem that captures the present image in its canvas. What distinguishes Haiku from varied kinds of poetry is its ability to not lend any meaning to the image. It is open to umpteen interpretations and subjections. Following the syllabic structure of 5-7-5, Haiku is a looking glass, mirroring whatever the reader wants to see.

Arvinder Kaur is an avid poet, capturing mundane moments into words, catapulting them into sublime emotions. The book is the poet's second endeavour in the field of Haiku poetry. Her first book of 'Haiku' in Panjabi '*Nimolian*' appeared in 2013. She had earlier translated into Panjabi the epistolary exchanges between the renowned Punjabi poet Amrita and Imroz. *(In The Times of Love*

and Longing, 2009). As a teacher of English literature, she extensively employs the tools of language to her benefit.

Dandelion is a bilingual rumination about hope, love, rendezvous, longings, remembrances, celebrations, partings and in fact, a solitary musing on the drama of life. She has extensively used the fabric of English and Panjabi language to weave together a cornucopia of life. The book hosts more than 150 poems, each distinctively different from one another, each singing a new note, each applauding a forlorn thought. Her range of poetry moves from:

dandelions . . .
how I learnt
to let go

She uses the symbol of dandelion to emphasise the need for progression and movement in life.

bedtime stories
tracing the flowers
on mother's quilt

Weaving the fabric of childhood dreams, Kaur hints at the warmth and security one finds only in the embrace of a mother.

miscarriage
she gives the name
to a teddy

From eulogising the beauty of Nature, to invoking childhood memories, to analysing war zones, from celebrating the cultural nuances of Punjab, to commemorating her deep love for Punjab and to chafing unfathomable wounds of love, Arvinder Kaur explores the tapestry of human emotions. The book is not only an exploration of life, but also an exploration of languages. The poems, being written both in English and Panjabi language, lend a multicultural hue to her thoughts. As a reader from Punjab, some poems seem closer to heart, when read in Panjabi language. Though the poet has tried her best to translate the poems in English, yet some poems seem to have lost their basic flavour/essence in this exercise. It may be well because of the huge cultural difference that English and Panjabi languages adorn. Some musings can only be felt, when present in the same cultural embrace. However, the poet's sincere attempt needs to be applauded.

POETRY COLUMN

A Prayer on the Bridge

Dr. Lalit Mohan Sharma*

I

Surface sounds heard
Of newly-learnt words
On the lips of a grandchild
Touch and reach deep down
The origins of the language
Which lifted the child in me
Raised me above the very boy
Who suddenly discovered
The man in my own attire

I knew not then indeed
The one from the other
Thoughts rushed in raw and quick
Feelings scarce had the time
To dress in fresh new costumes

II

It is not a tale of how well
Language draped my speech
With the thrilling utterance
Of Yeats and Keats
Of Eliot Whitman
Of Hamlet Herzog
Or of Meursault
The thought and action
The rehearsed nativity
Of a consciousness in a whirl
Spinning beyond doubt
And unsure rumblings of what
It means to be here and now

III a

How shall the little girl
Lifted to lap on my arm
One day find utterance?
Will have to learn whatever
She is taught or will she learn
What her mind is hungry to earn
And buy not the incomprehensible

III b

Able to spurn what she most hates
Decipher that alone which is legible
Refuse that which her eye catches not
Not just Sita or Helen of Troy
Joan of Arc or Rani of Jhansi
Ophelia Shakuntala or Gargi
For her to choose shall be
A thousand options
Not like us to be haunted
By class room orientation
Nor by the familial habits
To fear what the world will say

The little girl's global legacy
Came to me in a tranquil mood
Long after her lips kissed mine
As we stood over the bridge
On waters of the two streams
One flowing into the back-waters

Two Halves

Two halves add up to one
Can two halves with time
Living together for long
One day become one

Hair turn white or vanish
Gums loosen grow holes
Eye muscles are no longer sharp
Like the ears too were once alert

Go up the stairs quick and lively
You are panting short of breath
Hold on just to light a smoke
One seems to be a quarter short

Desires lose the appetizing edge
Two halves hug as if by habit
Living together so very long
Sans hope to ever become one.

**Dr Lalit Mohan Sharma, former Principal of Government College, Dharmshala has published eight books including four anthologies of English poetry and a poetic English translation of Urdu Poetry, Three-Step Journey.*