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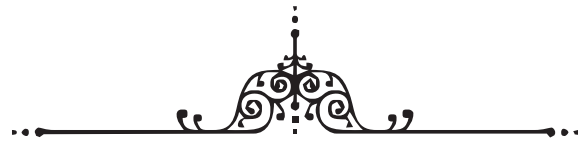
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EDITORIAL

“A journal is sustained by the citations it receives” said Dr. Kalyani Mathivanan, Vice –Chancellor of Madurai- Kamaraj University, while releasing the first issue of ACJELL in September 2012. The seed is sown. We wait in silence for it to sprout.

Out of the forty five articles received for publication, the reviewers have selected thirty four. Of these, twenty two are on Literature and twelve on Language. Those on Literature range from Film Studies, Indian Literature and American Literature to European Literature whereas those on Language include Play with the Language, Second Language Acquisition, Idioms in English and Teaching English through cricket commentary.

What is new in ACJELL-2? We have inched closer to the ideal that we set for ourselves in 2012- publishing articles from student researchers. We hope to have more number of articles from student researchers in the years to come. Besides, the forthcoming issues of ACJELL shall be 'special editions' on ELT, Indian Literature, New Literatures and Postcolonial Literature.

It is my fervent desire that ACJELL should become the most sought after research journal in India and abroad. I rest assured, reposing faith in Browning's line, “*the best is yet to be.*”

- Stanley Mohandoss Stephen

About the Department

The Department of English, the American College is as old as the college. It has been envisioned as a centre of academic excellence, professional expertise and research in English Studies. As English studies has gone global, the core English Curriculum at the undergraduate and postgraduate levels has crossed the boundaries of British Literature to include all Literatures in English. The pre-doctoral programme (M.Phil) offered by the Postgraduate and Research Department prepares students for active research in Indian Literature in English and English Language Teaching (ELT)

High standards are maintained by faculty input. Of the twenty members, eight hold doctorates and six are in the final phase of their doctoral research. Their areas of specialization range from Indian Literature in English, English Language Teaching, Literary Theory, Literature of the Indian Diaspora and New Literatures to Canadian Literature.

The department is enriched by its libraries. The library in the Undergraduate Department has about three thousand books and the Postgraduate library has around ten thousand books of high research value. Further, the students have access to more than twelve thousand books available in The Study Center for Indian Literature in English and Translation (SCILET). Apart from these, the Daniel Poor Memorial Library of the college also has a sizeable number of books that interest students of English

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Hats off, gentlemen!: *The Wire*

Francis Jarman

University of Hildesheim, Germany

Abstract

While other genres like the Western are dying or stagnating, the television crime series has finally come of age. The HBO series The Wire, set in the American East Coast city of Baltimore, has the depth, complexity and emotional power of a good novel. Tracing the interaction between drug pushers, drug users, and the forces of law and order, but widening gradually to include problems of everyday life, local politics, the schools and the media, it creates a multi-level portrait of a depressed city and the way that it functions. The Wire invites emotional involvement with its often troubled characters and, as these are followed to their fate, evokes in the viewer Aristotelian reactions of pity and fear: a truly remarkable achievement for a television series.

What are the signs that a genre in literature, film or television is dying? There will be a feeling of tiredness and irrelevance; the plots and situations will begin to seem hackneyed and predictable; and the consumer, no longer entertained, and unwilling to waste his or her time, will turn to newer, fresher things. Genres (such as the television soap opera) that deal overwhelmingly in clichés must be particularly on their guard to stay up-to-date and to find ways to continue to satisfy their fans without boring them. But there may come a tipping point after which the genre is effectively dead.

Something like this has happened to the traditional Western movie. Partly it is because Westerns have ceased to reflect how Americans imagine their country—the simplistic values of the mid-twentieth century Western and its celebration of frontier optimism are now completely out of step with America post-Vietnam, post-Watergate and post-9/11. Partly it is because the Western has run out of plot-lines. The raw, unsophisticated, underpopulated world of the Wild West offers only a limited number of plot scenarios, and most of these have been worked to exhaustion. In its long-drawn-out death throes, the Western genre has undergone a number of unconvincing makeovers: it has turned politically correct (with greedy settlers and nasty U.S. Cavalry endangering the Noble Savage redskins); it has incorporated exotic variations like the Spaghetti Western, the Science Fiction Western (*Westworld*, 1973) or the Samurai Western (and perhaps even the Gay Western: *Brokeback Mountain*?); and now, finally, it has limped off into the sunset to die, leaving many of its key themes to be recycled by television space series like *Star Trek* or *Battlestar Galactica*. The last artistically substantial Western movies, a small group of brooding, introspective films directed by Clint Eastwood (most notably *Pale Rider*, 1985, and *Unforgiven*, 1992), seem less like exemplars of the genre and more like a melancholic *hommage* to the giants of the past.

How are things faring then with that other great bastion of popular fictional entertainment, the television crime series? There should be no shortage of plot possibilities here—policemen or detectives can be shown dealing with or investigating any of the vast range of different criminal activities that occur in a complex, highly-developed society, and there is virtually no limit to human imaginativeness when it comes to breaking the law. In addition, the makers of crime series on television have been adept at adjusting to the mood of the times. To take Britain as an example, if the sentimental and uncritical *Dixon of Dock Green* exemplified the smug Fifties and early Sixties, *Z-Cars*, the series that supplanted it in popularity in the Sixties, reflected the skepticism of that era and included greater realism, for instance in its portrayal of policemen as sometimes flawed individuals, and a shift in focus to the provinces and away from London. *The Sweeney*, brutal and fast-moving, matched the mood of the harsh, confrontational Seventies. Many of the series were compromises between two different approaches: the episode-based “cop” or detective story, which is focused narrowly on the solving of a specific crime within the format of a 45-60 minute show, and the so-called “police procedural”, which while still dealing with at least one crime per episode also traces the everyday routines of police work and the ongoing relationships between the police officers over a number of episodes. *The Bill* (which ran on British television for a quarter of a century, 1984-2010) is an outstanding example of this latter format, even though the fake-documentary “fly on the wall” set-up inevitably gave way—in the course of no fewer than 2,400 episodes—to a more soap operatic style. These different approaches were also evident in the crime series produced in the United States, where there were slick “Bang! Bang! You're dead” shows like *Miami Vice* (in which the style was arguably more important than the content, indeed, sometimes more important than the coherence of the plot), but also complex, long-running police procedurals like *Hill Street Blues* and *NYPD Blue*.

Anyone intending to produce a show of high quality is confronted with the format problem. Police procedurals easily become soap operas, but if this is to be avoided, and the viewing public is to be drawn into subtle, slowly developing relationships between the main characters, viewers will need to commit to watching each successive episode. The single-episode approach is easier, but it is difficult to unfold a satisfyingly complex plot with multiple characters in only 45-60 minutes, especially if the programme is interrupted by mind-numbing advertising sequences that rob the show of its tension. More ambitious series, aimed no doubt at the better-educated, *i.e.* at people with an attention span not restricted to the four-minute pop video or the comedy sketch, have therefore chosen to use the movie-length 90-minute format.

There has been a recent boom in crime series in this format set in Sweden, and inspired by successful Swedish crime novelists like Henning Mankell, Håkan Nesser, and Maj Sjöwall and Per Wahlöö. These are characterized by novelistic plotting, extreme, sometimes grotesque, violence, and an obsession with fashionable concerns like international terrorism, corruption in government and big business, and paedophilia. But here, too, especially as the better novels are used up, a tendency towards the clichéd and formulaic is becoming apparent.

The more conventional German-language crime series *Tatort* (“Scene of the Crime”), produced by a network of German, Austrian and Swiss television channels, is still going strong after 42 years. Happily undisturbed by advertising breaks, it sometimes achieves a high level of excellence, yet many of the episodes are hamstrung by conventional plotting and stereotypical characterization. Ninety minutes is plainly not long enough! The British series *Prime Suspect* (between 1991 and 2006) used a standard format of 3 hours and 20 minutes, divided into two halves, and the best of these episodes might be considered to represent the finest achievement of British television in this genre to date.

For the *non plus ultra* of crime series, however, we must look to the United States. In the 1990s there had been an only moderately successful American police procedural called *Homicide: Life on the Street*. High on authenticity and local colour, and filmed with hand-held cameras on-location in Baltimore, the different series—there were seven altogether—tended to run several plot-lines in parallel and would even stretch one across a whole series (including the murder of a child that remains unsolved, a depressing but all too realistic outcome that most crime fiction would normally shy away from presenting). *Homicide*, based on a book by the former Baltimore crime reporter David Simon, was probably too dark and demanding to be assured of success with a mass television audience and on a mainstream channel. The project that followed it, *The Wire*, also set in Baltimore and derived from Simon's book and from the experiences of a former Baltimore police detective, Ed Burns, was even more ambitious, but it had the great advantage of being commissioned and broadcast not by a national television channel but by the cable network HBO (Home Box Office). Despite its initially very restricted audience, it was heaped with both popular and critical acclaim, not only in the United States but also internationally. In Britain, for example, Jon Wilde, writing on *The Guardian* newspaper's television and radio website, declared: “I believe *The Wire* to be the greatest ever television drama.” And an unnamed critic in *The Telegraph* went even further, describing it as “arguably the greatest television programme ever made.”

The Wire presents an intimate portrait of a gritty, unfashionable East Coast city, Baltimore, focusing on its drugs scene. Although—as might realistically be

expected—there are plenty of murders, murder in *The Wire* is not the central theme that it generally is in crime series (as if viewers are assumed to take no interest in anything less spectacular than killing). Five separate series (or “seasons”), each consisting of ten to thirteen 55-60-minute episodes, trace the destinies and interaction of an unusually large cast of characters. There are hardly any dyed-in-the-wool heroes or villains, and there is no absolute good/bad divide. Some of the policemen and -women and the lawyers are decent and well-meaning people, but others are shown to be incompetent, vicious or corrupt; among the criminals and drug-dealers, there are sadists and psychopaths, but also individuals with attractive personalities. Above all, the characters are shown (and can only be properly understood) *in their particular social and familial context*. None of them are two-dimensional figures with labels attached to them—“this is a villain”, “this is a good guy”—and the more that is discovered about them, the more interesting they become. While this is happening, and almost without noticing it, the viewer develops an appreciation of what is actually going on in Baltimore, and of how the city works. This is not based on abstract concepts or on standardized “problems”, but is a perception of how the intermeshed lives of the city's citizens have created a living urban system.

Each of the five series presents a different aspect of Baltimore in relation to the theme of narcotics and narcotics policing, all contributing to a better understanding of how everything is connected, and gradually broadening the focus of the story. Season 1 (2002) is about the war on the streets between the drug dealers and the police, and the ruinous effect of drugs on the lives of the poor. Season 2 (2003) is set in the docks, and reveals the supply chain of the drugs trade and how the drugs are distributed; it also investigates the desperate plight of the dockworkers and their families, who are trapped in a failing industry. Season 3 (2004) is about the machinations of local politics, and also about the murderous battle for control of the drugs trade between rival gangs. Season 4 (2006) continues the earlier themes but also takes us into a school, showing how the future addicts and dealers are shaped by their environment, and are often tragically let down by their parents and teachers. Season 5 (2008), set in part in the offices of *The Baltimore Sun* newspaper, draws many of the strands of the plot together. The final scenes show the fate of a number of major figures: some have given up, exhausted; others (including several of the least attractive characters) have achieved undeserved promotion or increased their wealth or power; some have been sent to prison; some have committed themselves to violence, or to drugs—or, alternatively, gone into quiet domestic retirement. Life in the city continues, though, and the drugs scene stays much as it ever was.

The Wire has no “main character”, although the project begins and ends with Jimmy McNulty, a quirky Irish-American detective with marriage and drinking problems. The

links and transitions between the different areas of the plot are elegantly managed. The main scene of the action moves at the beginning of Season 2 out to the docks because McNulty has so outraged his superiors in the course of the first series that he finds himself transferred—very much against his will—to the marine section, the harbour police. Similarly, the focus shifts to the school system in Season 4 because the failed policeman “Prez” has embarked on a new career as a mathematics teacher. As in real life, there is frequent interaction and cross-referencing between the characters, as well as coincidences, arbitrary encounters and minor subplots. This makes a refreshing change from the “operatic” structure of most television dramas, with their “well-made” plots, linear story development and limited cast of hero(es), heroine(s), villain(s) and supporting characters.

The naturalistic feel of *The Wire* is greatly helped by the fact that it has no soundtrack of background music. With just a couple of exceptions, the music is *diegetic*, meaning that it derives naturally from what is going on in the film, such as in scenes where a character enters a disco or switches on the radio. On the other hand, there are some remarkable moments of creative playfulness, like for instance the short scene in episode 4 of Season 1 in which McNulty and his partner Bunk visit the location of a murder to try to establish the trajectory of the bullet and the likely position of the shooter. In the 4½ minutes of this scene only the “F-word” (or variants thereof such as “Motherf*****” or “f*** me!”) is spoken—except for one single “Pow!” imitating the sound of the gun being fired—but the word is spoken roughly 35 times, and used to express surprise, irritation, frustration, pain (when McNulty accidentally cuts himself), satisfaction, disgust, and several other reactions to what is going on. Nor is this unnaturalistic, since the “F-word” can be and often is used in colloquial English in the function of almost any part of speech.

The success of *The Wire* has led to it being widely though not particularly successfully imitated in recent years. For example, in its first series (2007), the Danish *Forbrydelsen* (“The Killing”) stretched the story of a single murder investigation over no fewer than twenty 60-minute episodes, but the production suffered from the somewhat leaden plot, intrusive music, and the Scandinavian dourness of many of the characters. Unlike *The Wire*, it is over-reliant on one main character, a woman detective, played by the talented Danish actress Sofie Gråbøl. A second series (2009), this time with only ten episodes, was flawed by its unlikely, melodramatic and politically correct plot.

Far more entertaining is the German production *Im Angesicht des Verbrechens* (“Face to Face with Crime”, 2010), with ten 50-minute episodes tracing the interaction between Berlin police and the local Russian Mafia. The most ambitious television project of its kind ever attempted in Germany, it ran into major financial and logistic problems and almost failed to be completed. Although weakened (especially in the later episodes) by fairly

pedestrian plot devices and action sequences, made even more noticeable by the unconvincing story-line, it pays considerable attention to ethnographic detail in its portrayal of the city's Russian expatriate community and does succeed in creating “atmosphere”. The series was first aired on the unconventional Franco-German channel ARTE. When it was repeated on the German public television channel ARD it flopped, the poor viewing figures inducing ARD to show the last three episodes back-to-back, presumably so as to get the whole embarrassing business out of the way as soon as possible. This decision provoked some acid remarks in the German media about the level of public interest in quality programming, and the reluctance of German television channels to provide it.

If you look at German [public] television—financed by license fees—and at the way that it reacts, time and time again you'll see a lack of imagination.

Question: What (for example) do the managers at ARD do if a very good, a special, a remarkably uncompromising series fails to attract quite so many viewers? And if such a series seems to threaten the annual statistics on market share?

Answer: They change its scheduled time, or they make sure that it's over quicker than originally intended (Christopher Keil, my translation).

Im Angesicht des Verbrechens undoubtedly deserved better and was unfortunate not to be taken up by a cable network like HBO, which, as a subscription-only television provider, is relatively unaffected by pressure from commercial sponsors or “public opinion” (in the form of viewing figures).

With *The Wire*, which has the depth, complexity and emotional power of a good novel, the television crime series finally comes of age. As Robert Schumann is said to have declared when he encountered the work of the young Chopin—“Hats off, gentlemen, a genius!” What is perhaps most remarkable about the project is not simply its quality, the fact that it manages to create a complex but coherent fictional world that has the feel of a real one, but that with great skill it wins our interest in and our emotional involvement with the most unlikely, even degraded characters, such as stick-up men, gangsters, or junkies.

[The drug addict] Bubbles breaks your heart every time he appears on screen, always about to clean-up, clawing his way through Baltimore's meanest streets, precariously holding onto his last scrap of dignity. I weep just thinking of him wheeling around his portable supermarket—a trolley piled with cheap toilet rolls and knock-off white T-shirts. More than any other character, Bubbles encapsulates the humanity at the heart of the show (Wilde).

We tremble as we watch characters like Bubbles going about their dangerous lives, and if they fall, their fate, although they are hardly tragic heroes, nevertheless evokes in us Aristotelian reactions of pity and fear.

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The Road and the Closet: Myths and Queer America

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Abstract:

The early nineties saw a flurry of films in Hollywood that greatly redefined the aesthetics of queer cinema and queer representation on screen. The movement was acclaimed for the way it gave agency to queer subjectivity, recognising queerness as characterised by a multiplicity of conflicting voices and visions. In short, “(they were) doing something new, renegotiating subjectivities, annexing whole genres, revising histories in their image.” (Rich, 15)

*However, despite that fact that owing to the emerging prominence of New Queer Cinema, popular culture was no longer under contract to render queer configurations safe (through, for example, humour, homophobia or narrative closure), Ang Lee's ostensibly Queer film, *Brokeback Mountain* (2005) draws attention because of its fundamental anti-queer ideology. It is both homophobic and maintains closure by killing off the male vamp (after identifying him as an agent generating castration anxiety?) and heralding a drive back to heterosexuality.*

**Brokeback Mountain* was perceived as the latest in a series of challenges to the cowboy codes of an exclusively heterosexual frontier. This paper is an attempt to evaluate the validity of this assumption. The paper proposes a study of Ang Lee's film and seeks to find out if the film revises the codes of the Western genre and whether or not it offers a vision of an alternative frontier. The paper will also attempt a thematic and formal comparison of *Brokeback Mountain* to Gus Van Sant's film *My Own Private Idaho* (1993) in an attempt to evaluate the films' queer posturing and pose questions concerning the treatment of prominent American myths and the possibility of a queer frontier.*

The sense of hypermasculinity coded into the “hardbody” Hollywood films of the 80s is well documented by film scholars, most prominently by Susan Jeffords (1994). However, quick on its heels, the early 90s saw a spate of films in Hollywood that greatly redefined the aesthetics of queer cinema and queer representation on screen, perhaps standing in direct contrast to this vision of masculine performance. The effort, identified as New Queer Cinema, was acclaimed for the way it gave agency to queer subjectivity, recognising queerness as characterised by a multiplicity of conflicting voices and visions. In short, “(they were) doing something new, renegotiating subjectivities, annexing whole genres, revising histories in their image” (Rich 2004,p 15). “Queer” represented resistance to all

normative codes of gender and sexual expression, including the norm that men are heteronormative and *must* be coded accordingly.

Michele Aaron (2004) points out that a common running theme in these films was the motif of “defiance,” primarily to insular conceptions of gender performance and sexuality. Despite the rules of acceptable subjects approved by western popular culture, these films gave voice to all the sexually liminal/marginalized sub-groups and not just the gay and lesbian community. “Queer” thus functions as an umbrella term for uniting various forms of non-straight sexual identity. Along with eschewing positive imagery and representation, the films of the movement were interrogative of the “sanctity of the past” (including, automatically, heteronormative cultural myths and constructions such as that of a hetero-patriarchal Western frontier in the USA). They consciously defied convention in terms of “form, content and genre” (Aaron, p 5).

However, despite the emerging prominence of New Queer Cinema, and the fact that popular culture was no longer under contract to render queer configurations safe (through, for example, humour, homophobia or narrative closure), Ang Lee's ostensibly Queer film, *Brokeback Mountain* (2005) draws attention because of its fundamentally anti-queer ideology. Lee is the acclaimed director of films like *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* (2000) and the recent *Life of Pi* (2012) *Brokeback*, which won him an Academy Award for Best Director, can be perhaps be perceived as deploying a subtle homophobia in its narrative design.

Upon release, *Brokeback* was perceived as the latest in a series of challenges to the cowboy codes of an exclusively heterosexual frontier. This paper is an attempt to evaluate the validity of this assumption. The paper proposes a study of Ang Lee's film and seeks to find out if the film revises the codes of the Western genre and whether or not it offers a vision of an alternative frontier. The paper will also attempt a thematic and formal comparison of *Brokeback Mountain* to Gus Van Sant's 1991 New Queer film, *My Own Private Idaho*.

Resistance was always offered to the sort of trumped up hypermasculine, hetero-patriarchal representation of masculinity coded in the genre of the Westerns. Scholarship since the late 80s point out how gay rights activists have always challenged the cultural myths and stereotypes enshrined in the form of John Wayne's Westerns (Pumphrey, 93). In comparison to earlier films like John Schlesinger's *Midnight Cowboy* and Andy Warhol's *Lonesome Cowboys* (both released in 1969), *Brokeback Mountain* represents a regression in interrogative stance. Both *Midnight Cowboy* and *Lonesome Cowboys* attempted to

reconfigure the silver-screen to accommodate the idea of the “gay cowboy” by doing away with the myth of the macho cowboy and re-writing the codes of the cowboy culture. An important scene from *Midnight Cowboy* has the character of Joe Buck leaving Texas and passing by an abandoned movie theatre still advertising the last film screened there – *The Alamo*. The film is particularly relevant as it not only starred John Wayne, the quintessential hero of the Westerns, but was also “directed and produced by him as his pet project” (Le Coney, 155). The scene's relevance lies in its toppling of the iconography of the Westerns. The picture of an abandoned movie theatre playing a John Wayne film offers potent resistance to the easy assimilation of the codes of a heteronormative genre. Similarly, *Lonesome Cowboys* ends with the pairing of Louis and Tom, gay cowboys who ride into the sunset towards a frontier space with “lots of beautiful men.” When Louis promises - “it's great, you can get anything you want out here”, he reappropriates America's cowboy myths. Both the films offered a renewed vision of the West.

Ang Lee had pronounced his intentions behind *Brokeback* by proclaiming his film to be a “post-western”, explaining that it marked a break with the codes of the westerns. (Huston, *San Francisco Bay Guardian*) This propensity is true and visibly evident in the film. There is a pervading sense that the cowboy signifiers are all out of place and that the film doesn't just regurgitate the *West*. The lead characters in the film- Jack Twist and Ennis Del Mar, while cowboy-coded in appearance, are presented as “deuces with scrawny asses” without regular employment very early in the film. There is no attempt to re-create the quintessential John Wayne posture, and the viewer gets the feeling that this film is not a classic Western. The landscape is not Western either. The harsh, unforgiving landscape of the original Westerns are replaced by the lush green, fairytale hills of Wyoming, garnished by a more domesticated pair of sheep boys (They are not on a ranch, but run into each other while seeking temporary employment herding sheep on the titular Brokeback Mountain).

The film has an important sequence in which Jack Twist, drifting between jobs, is shown desperately trying his hand at a rodeo competition. The film interestingly presents the rodeo as a tired site of physical trauma and insipid showmanship. Jack's parody of bull-broncing mocks the contrived bravado of rodeo cowboys. Later on in the film, we observe Ennis' comment that rodeos aren't “real” cowboys and that his father always thought they were “fuck ups”. There are subtle suggestions in the film that the times are changing. True to this thread, Ennis' own ranch doesn't signify frontier independence but marks the loneliness of its owners. “Can we move to town? I'm tired of these lonesome old ranches” his wife tells

him. In the context of the purported theme of the film, (which is the queering of perhaps, America's most prominent myth- The Cowboy) a line like- “to expect big, handsome Marlboro men is to be behind the times” appears to be radical, but do these instances alone help qualify *Brokeback as Queer*?

As Todd Haynes, the avant-garde director of queer themed films like *Poison* (1991), *Velvet Goldmine* (1998) and *Far From Heaven* (2002) explains:

“People define gay cinema solely by content: if there are gay characters in it, it is a gay film. It fits into the sensibility, we got it, it's gay... Heterosexuality to me is a structure as much as it is content. It is an imposed structure that goes along with the patriarchal, dominant structures that constraints and defines society” (Wyatt, 46)

The article contends that the “queer” posturing of the film helps only to elevate the film into a high tragedy. The act of eliminating the queer cowboy (who was perhaps generating a castration anxiety in the heteronormative spectator) is a classic resolution in Mulvey's terms – the killing off one of the sexual transgressors to make it “palatable”. Examples of deploying this tragic narrative are visible in classic Westerns like *The Outlaw*(1943)and *Red River*(1948) which kills off the queer cowboy, controls latent gayness within discourses of straight sexuality or banishes the queer transgressor into Mexico. Mexico is perhaps an ideal trope for mainstream Hollywood cinema as it conveniently condenses American xenophobia and homophobia. Predictably enough, in *Brokeback Jack Twist does* go to Mexico to vent out his sexual frustration.

Homophobia is also evident in the film's narrative in the form of Ennis' new son-in-law. He is not a physical presence in the film but exists through the narrative of his girlfriend; Ennis' daughter.

He is reported to be an oil man and comes across as every bit the “man” that Ennis was not. He is capable of gifting expensive sports cars to his fiancé and has reappropriated the Western landscape by channeling the resources of the frontier. He is the new cowboy and he has, perhaps most importantly demonstrated his *manliness* by being heterosexual. He is the symbol of the new American identity and he has ousted the Ranger and the Cowboy.

The film also underscores a strategy of gender-stereotyping as it goes on to establish the nature of the relationship between Ennis and Jack. There are repeated scenes of Ennis engaged with the housework and cooking while living on the titular *Brokeback Mountain* while Jack goes out into the wild to shoot over the sheep. This stereotypical association is reminiscent of the ex-marine in *American Beauty*(1999) who would rather collect Nazi

dinner plates rather than “butch grenades or machine guns” (Bronski, p. 56).

Gender stereotypes in the film are also established through narrative instances when a character's hetero-patriarchal posturing is represented as a failure. A fine example of this propensity is evident in Ennis' heroic, chivalrous act of physically subduing and silencing the hooligans who upset his family picnic at an Independence Day celebratory night. The act, (complete with his heroic, alpha-male stance) can be read as an attempt to disprove his effeminate gayness demonstrated in the scenes discussed earlier (his wife is aware of his queerness). However this act ironically foregrounds the codes of hegemonic masculinity that he's trying to break away from. This is followed up naturally by the failure of this masculine posturing: his inability to financially support his children. In contrast, Jack's performance of hegemonic, aggressive masculinity at his house on Thanksgiving night as he threatens his father-in-law, elicits a reaction from his wife that is quite the opposite of what Ennis's wife, Alma registers at the night of the Independence Day celebrations; she is delighted and happy at this assertion of his hypermasculinity. His wife Lureen Newsome is clearly postured in a butch-female fashion, another instance of the transgression of gender roles. She wears all the cowboy signifiers and is perceptibly the star of the Rodeo, a space that Jack tries desperately to conquer. The subject of gender stereotyping is rendered complete with the profiles of Alma and Newsome; docile femininity that knows of Ennis' gayness and butch femininity that doesn't know of Jack's gayness, respectively.

The props of the Westerns (including the “Marlboro Man” codes; complete with the cowboy hat and the classic symbol of male virility and masculine performativity- the horse) have not been appropriated to deconstruct the myth of the Western. As Michele Aaron observes, “comedies and cross-dressing films derive their effect from the slapstick, *sexually suggestive* scenarios resulting from the central character's *mistaken identity*. Fuelled by heterosexual imperatives, the narratives progress towards the climactic disclosure of the protagonists' true identity (The New Queer Spectator, 189). Jack's inability to attain the cowboy-codes of performance; coupled with Ennis' testament that Rodeos aren't even *real* cowboys and can't even pull a rodeo act, all direct the action towards this climactic disclosure.

The “cowboys” in *Brokeback Mountain* blend cowboy and frontiersman archetypes because such figures embody the performance, and by implication, passing off of maleness. Lee's film (which also contains “white trash” tropes; discussed below) shows how such heightened constructions of masculinity inevitably engender failed performances of

heterosexuality because of barely contained queer investments in those very signifiers of masculinity. Ennis' performance at the parade ground and his failed performance as a father figure who is expected to provide for his family bear testimony to this propensity. This ultimately registers his failure to pass by as a man who had invested in cowboy signifiers.

The Closet

Despite the seemingly prominent stance of the titular mountain, *Brokeback* does not really (literally or figuratively) offer a safe haven for Jack and Ennis. They are discovered in their queerness by their employer, Joe Aguirre who uses his power binoculars to literally become a voyeur to queerness. The idea that *Brokeback* seems to suggest is on par with Le Coney and Trodd—"Hollywood's imaginative space remains hidden in a celluloid closet" (163). However, going back to the examples of *Midnight Cowboy* and *Lonesome Cowboys*, the attempt to discredit an exclusively heterosexual American frontier by proposing an exclusively homosexual space needs to be acknowledged; offering naturally, the opportunity for queer cowboys to peek out of the proverbial closet.

This hope, however is absent for Ennis. The final scene has Ennis tragically staring into his closet. Juxtaposed by the window (the window of opportunity available to his daughter; being heterosexual?) is a picture of *Brokeback* which remains on the inside of Ennis' closet door. There is perhaps no space beyond the closet for Jack and Ennis.

In *Epistemology of the Closet*, Sedgwick Kosofsky argues that the Closet is the defining structure for gay oppression in the century, as it seeks to uphold the binary constructions of western patriarchal and heterocentrist discourse (71). The metaphor of the closet can also be read into the establishing scene in which Jack is seen checking out Ennis out of the corner of his eye, in the mirror of his truck. The sequence is repeated again later on in the film. Between these two scenes, a naked Ennis is captured, blurred and out of focus, juxtaposed with a close up of Jack. Does this signify the marginalized and sidelined status of Queer desire? Do we read an instance of the proverbial closet? Have "the homoerotic subtexts of earlier Westerns (really) moved from 'subtext' to 'text'" as Ang Lee maintains? (Huston, *San Francisco Bay Guardian*) Perhaps in representation, but not in visibility. *Brokeback* places its protagonists firmly within a narrative space inhabited by unhappiness, murder, freakishness and invisibility. When Ennis and Jack come down from *Brokeback*, their lives are consumed by anger, misery and death. The final scene leaves Ennis literally staring into the closet while his daughter drives off into heterosexual bliss.

In contrast, Gus Van Sant's New Queer film *My Own Private Idaho* (1991) deals with

themes of queerness in a distinctly different mode. Both the films present the queer content in a very public forum. *My Own Private Idaho* was released in 1991, the watershed year for LGBT cinema (produced in the same year as Todd Haynes's *Poison* and Derek Jarman's *Edward II*). It is the nomadic tale of a narcoleptic wanderer set in the backdrop of America's Northwest. One of the key features of the film is that it defies convention in terms of form, content and genre, true to the character of New Queer Cinema. The film itself is loosely based on Shakespeare's *Henry IV* and *Henry V*.

Brokeback Mountain is similar to *My Own Private Idaho* in terms of scenes interspersed with picturesque shots of the landscape. While shots of a picturesque and quasi-romantic Wyoming function mostly as an aesthetic device in *Brokeback*, the shots (captured via time-lapse photography) form an integral narrative device in *My Own Private Idaho*. Idaho in the film represents a very different sort of space from *Brokeback Mountain*. It is a *private* and imagined Idaho: the Idaho of the American northwest is represented less in real terms and more as a symbol of hope and family. Idaho is the stuff of dreams and childhood for Mike Waters, a young, narcoleptic hustler living on the streets; triggering narcoleptic dreamscapes of vivid, romanticized imagery.

Both the films have protagonists who can be identified as *white trash*. Wray and Newitz posit that "White trash is, for whites, the most visible and clearly marked form of whiteness. White trash dirties whiteness, making it strange, unstable and decentered primarily because of the relational proximity of white trash to privileged whiteness in racial terms." (171). Mike Waters, played by River Phoenix, is both white trash and queer while Scott Favor (Keanu Reeves), his closest friend, plays a hustler as an expression of adolescent rebellion; a temporary measure to upset his socially prominent father. It is something to be abandoned in favor of a life of unwavering heterosexuality (along with abandoning the Falstaff like Bob Pigeon, his mentor on the streets) when he inherits his father's estate. In *Brokeback Mountain*, Jack Twist, similarly inherits the Newsome fortune when he marries Lureen Newsome. Mike, on the contrary, is a gay hustler who is in love with Scott. His fantasy of reclaiming an elusive and absent home infantilises him rendering him liminal when he oscillates between childhood and the adult world of hustling. He's always on the road and on the run; a metaphor for the constantly thwarted sense of freedom attending the expansive space that surrounds and engulfs him. The vastness of the open space and the roads that connect Mike to Idaho in *My Own* is an antidote to the interior, restrictive and demonized space of the closet in *Brokeback Mountain*. Roads and his association with them sustain the myth that he can exist outside of culture.

My Own refuses the resolved, (homophobic?) narrative closure favored by much of mainstream cinema including *Brokeback*. The figure of a street hustler resists imaginative closure because of “his drifting affinity to the road and the street, reinforcing queerness as a perpetual state of movement, longing and searching” (Wray and Newitz, 175). Moving around the streets of Portland, Seattle, Idaho and Rome, Mike exists in the margins of the society, outside conventional employment and beyond normative sexuality. If the defining motif in watermarking queerness in *Brokeback* was the closet, it is the Road in *My Own Private Idaho*. His journey – from Oregon to Idaho to Italy and back to Portland, has Mike stranded on the highway in Idaho thrice – in the beginning, in the middle of his bike ride with Scott and at the end of the film's narrative. The road features in the film as something that is comforting and limitless. Mike compares the road to a vast circle spanning the world but always coming back to where it starts, establishing a loop, perhaps making it hard to get out of. Cunningham (2007) states that “the open road is often presented in road movies as a space for marginal identities because it appeals to the myth that no one can exist outside of culture” (175). The film begins and ends with Mike on the road, narcoleptic. It thus becomes the dominant metaphor for his drifting nature. The sense of movement it suggests reflects Mike's own transitory identity and rootlessness. Waters is child-like in his aspirations, fixated on memories of his childhood. Money or the pursuit of success doesn't seem to be driving him. His quest, it seems, is for closure/forgiveness. And closure is something that neither Mike nor the spectators are offered.

“Although the road has always functioned in movies as an alternative space where isolation from the mainstream permits various transformative experiences, the majority of road movies made before 1960s more successfully imagined an ultimate reintegration of road travelers into the dominant culture”, observes Cohan and Hark (5). However, *My Own Private Idaho* resists any such propensity for narrative closure. At the film's climax, Mike is still on the streets. He is abandoned by Scott and though he has travelled across America and halfway across Europe, he has come back to where he was, like the salmon of his dreams. The viewer doesn't even know what happens to Mike in the end. He has a narcoleptic fit, dreams of home, and is carried away by someone in his pickup truck. And yet, it is not tragically cathartic or definitive in the manner of *Brokeback*. As Robert Lang observes, “The queer road movies of the 1990s, more often than not, don't have conventionally happy endings. But something has certainly changed, for they cannot be called unhappy endings either.” (333)

Even the name –*Mike Waters*, seem to suggest the flowing nature of the protagonist's experience and consciousness from which the film disjointedly emerges. Hustlers in the film are outsiders and marginalised. They are a separate, dystopian community of the American homeless. They are socio-economically and sexually, the marginalized. Mike's liminality is coded within his narcoleptic seizures; between waking and sleeping. There are random edits in the film that bring in clips of disparate images. Sometimes surreal, they signify Mike's childhood memories, explaining his fixation and narcolepsy. These include an isolated old farm house (from his memory), an object shooting horizontally across a blood-red sunset, a giant cartoon-cowboy statue, leaping salmon, a skewed tight close-up of Mike dreaming in his narcoleptic sleep, a tranquil lake and flying, crashing barns.

His marginal identity is established thorough his sexuality and profession. His quest, like the salmon of his dreams is the search for a home that never was. The recurrent image of the crashing barn (along with the swimming salmon) is one of the more visceral metaphors for the dislocation and homelessness that Mike experiences. In the final scene he comes full circle to the structural centre of the film after his growth, his understanding of his past and his transgressional experience across social, economic and international barriers.

My Own Private Idaho also appropriates tropes of the Westerns to establish perhaps a queer frontier or at least upset the erstwhile hetero-patriarchal frontier myth of America (though it makes no claim to be a “post-western” or to “mark a break with the codes of the Westerns”). Mike and his hustler friend, Scott Favor live on the street, under the patronage of the small-time crime boss, Pigeon Bob. The gang members of Bob are reminiscent of the outlaws of the Westerns. A scene has the police raiding Bob's hangout followed by his gang running for cover, screaming – “the sheriff and his posse are here!” Also, while campfires under the stars, set against a western landscape is a classic device in most westerns, (identifiable in most John Wayne films) it is used as the backdrop to the scene in which Mike declares his love to Scott. A motorcycle replaces the quintessential horse of the westerns and the protagonists ride off into an urban landscape and not the mythified, hostile Western landscape. The most important and subversive reference to the westerns is perhaps the fantasy scene of the erotic cowboy in “Male Call” magazine. Humour here is not employed to mock homosexuality but rather to undermine the association of a default, aggressive heterosexuality with the myth of the Westerns. Mike and Scott (alongwith some others) are seen on the covers of gay pornographic magazines with slogans like “homo on the range” and “ready to ride.”

In fact, the typical strategies of abjecting the queer in much of mainstream cinema, including homophobic representations and using humour to undermine the queer are subverted in the film to foreground the queer. The film self reflexively demonstrates how the theoretical and formal challenges posed by the works of genuine New Queer Cinema remain, like the movement itself, relatively marginalized.

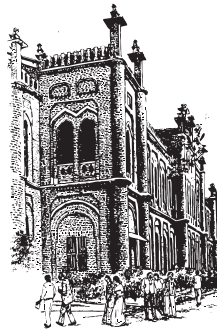
In conclusion, it can safely be assumed that *Brokeback* is not quite as subversive as we would like it to be. A film like *Brokeback Mountain* (made under a big studio label by a prominent director, thus necessitating the demands of the market) may have a purported objective of being a cinematic attempt to explore the dynamics of queer identity, but it really doesn't mainstream the concerns of New Queer Cinema. The film downplays queer masculinity while appearing to elevate it into a mould of a tragic love story. The film doesn't reinvent any prominent myths or address the possibility of establishing a Queer frontier, perhaps the most powerful of the American myths, but instead appears to satiate a very homophobic audience with a very Aristotelian cathartic experience.

The failure, significantly, does not arise from an inability to make itself understood to a mass audience (as may be the case with *My Own Private Idaho*) but from its inability to resist a textual closure, thereby sustaining sexual stereotypes and heteronormativity. What is queer about *Brokeback* has been contained and therefore, is perhaps not queer at all. Queerness is not voiced in the film, it is indulged. The queer Cowboys of the open roads have been safely locked up in a closet, far from the Western frontier.

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Faces without names:
The Male Self and the Female Other in the Poems of
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Abstract

This paper focuses on man-woman relationship in Jayanta Mahapatra's poems from a feminist point of view. In Mahapatra's poems, women typically function as the Other in relation to the male self. The male persona has the authoritative, subjective and interpretive position who invariably assumes the role of commentator, observer, and an interpreter of external reality to his own self and to a primarily male audience. The female, on the other hand, is more prominently distanced as being the other; sometimes 'You' with whom the male self seeks to establish a relationship, but mostly, women become simply 'she' or 'they' the most impersonal third person – an incidental existence in the male experience of reality. The male gaze, that distorts the female self to serve the needs of the male culture defining women for its own purposes, acts as the chief tool to come to terms with the distanced female others.

White clad widowed women
Past the centres of their lives
Are waiting...
Their austere eyes
Stare like those caught in a net...
Ruined, leprous shells leaning against one another
A mass of crouched faces without names.

(Dawn at Puri: Jayanta Mahapatra)

“What peculiarly signalizes the situation of woman”, writes Simone de Beauvoir in *The Second Sex* (1949), “is that she — a free and autonomous being like all human creatures — nevertheless finds herself living in a world where men compel her to assume the status of the Other. They propose to stabilize her as object and doom her to immanence since her transcendence is to be overshadowed and forever transcended by another ego ... which is essential and sovereign. The drama of woman lies in this conflict between the fundamental aspirations of every subject (ego) — who always regards the self as essential —and the compulsion of a situation in which she is inessential.” (Beauvoir, xxix) In Jayanta

Mahapatra's poems, as this paper would try to show, women typically function as the Other in relation to the male self. It is primarily the male persona in Mahapatra's poems who is allowed the authoritative, subjective and interpretive position – the first person appellation I. The subjective 'I' of the male persona then invariably assumes the role of commentator, observer, an interpreter of external reality to his own self and in many cases, a narrator to a male audience who is then addressed as “You” explaining the significance of the 'objects' in male vision, as in *Of Armour*:

and you look beyond her
Where you've closed the door.
Or, for instance, in the poem

The Whorehouse in a Calcutta Street,

You fall back against her in the dumb light,
Trying to learn something more about women—
While she does what she thinks proper to please you

The female, on the other hand, is more prominently distanced as being the other, sometimes 'You' with whom the male self seeks to establish a relationship, but mostly, women become simply 'she' or 'they' the most impersonal third person – an incidental existence in the male experience of reality,

undeterred
By the movement of your own world
I close my eyes
To find myself alone. Youth Times p11, Feb1,1980)

The male gaze acts as the chief tool to come to terms with the distanced female others. This usage of the male point of view distorts the female self to serve the needs of the male culture by seeing women only as it chooses to see her – in a series of fixed, stereotypical images, defining women for its own purposes, determining what role women should play in the male world, categorizing what women 'really are'— not according to the interests of the women—“but rather with regard to their [men's] own projects, their fears, their needs.” (Beauvoir, 128) Mahapatra writes:

She is where you have followed her
And where her floating panting space
Covers up your declivitous time
You could if you would not

Press your own skilled ghost
 Against her tumbled heart
 If she only let you be
 Yourself naked and gaping. (Of Armour)

“The woman in Mahapatra's poetry is usually identified with the 'discarded things'. She is often portrayed as a sexually oppressed by the so called patriarchal system and poverty.” opines Dinesh Panwar as he quotes Madhusadan Prasad in support, “Jayanta Mahapatra's poetic world is doubtless scattered singularly with various images of wives, beloveds, whores, seductresses, village women, city women and adolescent girls, having deeply significant metaphoric evocations and spotlighting his tragic vision of life to which he is essentially committed. Demonstrating his vital poetic strategy and dimensioning [sic] his deep humanism as well as his overriding thematic obsessions, Mahapatra's images of women indubitably form a tonal chord central to the mood of his poems”. (Panwar, 23-27) Significantly, Panwar points out the way “Mahapatra illustrates an instance of a shopkeeper staring in a lecherous way at woman who goes to shop to purchase... rice”:

Two big-arsed
 Srikakulam women
 Nude hunger in eyes

Fans himself in the lethargy of his dream. (Panwar, 23-27)

Definitively excluded from male reality, objectified by the male gaze, women are regarded as a sexual commodity, a reproducer and erotic object – never as an equal but always as the other through whom he seeks himself. Completely subjected to man's will, a victim of the appropriating male gaze women become a myth as it were in the male vision—treated as a 'thing', or property, to be owned and exploited, circumscribed in the confining limits of their own bodies. “She is an idol, a servant, the source of life, a power of darkness; she is the elemental silence of truth, she is artifice, gossip and falsehood; she is healing presence and sorceress. She is man's prey, his downfall, she is everything he is not and that he longs for.” (Beauvoir, 143) The female image in the male vision thus incarnates no stable concept. She is at once Eve and Virgin Mary – at once evil and good – “through her is made unceasingly the passage from hope to frustration, from hate to love, from good to evil, from evil to good.” (Beauvoir, 144) Women are not only the scapegoats for sins of humanity but also are the focus of men's own repression.

In Mahapatra's poems, women function as the medium in the process of man's self discovery and realization. The female other is necessary in a male world to affirm the

She opened her wormy legs wide

I felt the hunger there

The other one, the fish slithering, turning inside (Hunger)

Interestingly, the female self in Mahapatra's poems is repeatedly portrayed as 'whores' thus equating the woman with mere physicality and animal existence, as well as labeling them as purchasable, consumable and expendable bodies – a consumer exploitable item to be sold or exchanged at will in the male market:

I heard him say: my daughter, she's just turned fifteen...

Feel her; here, there I'll be back soon, your bus leaves at nine...

Long and lean: her years were cold as rubber. (Hunger)

This image of the father viewing his daughter as a sexual commodity of exchange recurs again in *This Stranger, My Daughter*.

My precious golden daughter

Looks out through the glass...

Drums beating under the earth

Tremble her taut skin

There is a sun we know of

There are

The secret spasms to reason.

Juices from my daughter's body

Are filling the noisy hives.

According to Kanwar Dinesh Singh, women, in Mahapatra's poems as in the poetry of other male Indian English writers, appear “essentially as a body desirable to quench [man's] own carnal passions. ...Man-Woman relationship, totally devoid of love, and only resting on physical need and encounter, figures in several poems of Jayanta Mahapatra. Mahapatra seems to be obsessed with whores whose images are too frequent in many of his poems. These images of whores portray the sensual, sex-ridden male cross-section of the Indian society (as the poet envisions it). ...Female prostitution and male starvation for sex figure in many poems of Mahapatra.” (Singh, 23-24) For instance, the image of the whore recurs in like *Man of His Nights*, *Morning Signs*, *The Bride*, *After The Rain*, *Summer's End*, *Something Spreading Itself*, *Slum*, *The Vase*. In *The Twenty-fifth Anniversary of a Republic*:

1975, the narrator states: “In my dreams when I fondle Kamala's brazen breasts my hands encounter the blind flowers at a desecrated tomb.” (Singh, 23-24) The use of 'brazen breasts' tends to equate all women with the 'shamelessness' associated with prostitutes, the 'teasing whores' of Mahapatra's poetry:

The still-slender, teasing whore
 Who shuffles down the crowded road and finds out
 That the middle-aged man surreptitiously following her
 Is only listening to the slowing sounds
 Of his own heart; (The Vase)

Mahapatra's male persona visits and pays the whore for “enlightenment and refreshment; a play and foreplay before the final play” (Panwar, 23-27):

You fall back against her in the dumb light,
 Trying to learn something more about women—
 While she does what she thinks proper to please you,
 The sweet, the little things, the imagined;
 Until the statute of the man within
 You've believed in throughout the years
 Comes back to you, a disobeying toy—
 And the walls you wanted to pull down
 Mirror only of things mortal, and passing by;
 Like a girl holding on to your wide wilderness;
 As though it were real, as though the renewing voice
 Tore the membrane of your half-woken mind
 When, like a door, her words close behind:

(The Whorehouse in a Calcutta Street)

In *Absence*, the male client exploits the flesh of the prostitute, using her body, her presence, so as to enact a kind of ablution with a vengeance as it were:

When the windows shut down on your thighs

My hands quiver with the glances of my thousand eyes
 As your long eyes touch my paid-out pain
 And I revenge the presence from your presence.

The identity of the women, in Mahapatra's poems, is so much entrenched in the body that the poet denies any intellectual / independent existence for his women. "What is wrong with my country?" he asks rhetorically in *The Twenty-fifth Anniversary of a Republic: 1975*, reiterating the patriarchal fear of the economically independent, self-sufficient and erudite single women. Mina's Ph.D degree may have brought the jingle of money in her 'purse' but at the cost of her divorce and ultimate loneliness in life, as the poet may be saying; her restlessness—her aspiration for education and economic independence, her ideas of self worth—have made her fall from grace in the male world as it were. In her daring to deviate from the image of the silent, submissive 'eternal feminine' perpetrated by a phallocratic society through its veneration of the Sati-Savitri models, Mina has forgotten the 'true' worth/place of herself as a woman in patriarchy, a 'pretty neighbour' whose value 'reposes' only in her body and as a result Mina and India both face dire consequences, ostensibly for the 'corruption' of the 'traditional values' of the Indian society:

The jungles have become gentle, the woman restless.
 And history reposes between the college girl's breasts:
 The exploits of warrior-queens, the pride pieced together
 From a god's tainted armours ...
 Mina, my pretty neighbour, flashes round and
 Round the gilded stage
 Hiding jungles in her purse, holding on to her divorce,
 And a lonely Ph.D.

Significantly by the use of a pun on the word 'purse', which in the Victorian times euphemistically referred to the female genitals, that 'hides' dangerous 'jungles', the poet might be hinting at the untamed sexuality that the patriarchal world fears that the self-sufficient single woman might possess; thereby cautioning other female aspirants to beware the fate of the woman and consequently the nation that houses such aspiring, nonconforming women.

The feelings, reactions and critical understandings of the male self toward the external

system is made possible by separating off a 'different' self – the female 'other'. In order for the pain/ guilt /sin /weaknesses and all the other negative signs as experienced by the male self, in his experience of individuation, to be accepted and transformed into positive unity, the male self needs to distance this in a more concretized form from his own self. The formless, indeterminable, inexpressible fears within the male self are focused, objectified and projected as the female other – the allure of the dark, threatening, unknowable and desirable female self that seems beyond the grasp of the male ego.

Is anything beyond me that I cannot catch up?

Tell me your names, dark daughters

Hold me to your spaces (Relationship)

In Mahapatra's poems, the female image brings to surface what lies buried in the speaker's mind – it objectifies and externalizes reality. The female image thus is frequently evoked as a presence, just beyond the poem's horizons—a presence allied to the Durga or the Kali, once in *Life Signs* called ironically, that unreachable Girl, or even, an ogress like Putana. Like the ogress Putana, sent by Kansa to assassinate the child Krishna, who, metamorphosing herself into a beautiful motherly avatar, smeared poison on her breasts and offered to suckle the incarnated child but who reached 'martyrdom' and 'moksha' as Krishna sucked her to death, women too can find salvation only within patriarchy and its precepts, by catering to the male world:

And now the ogress

Transformed into a lovely woman

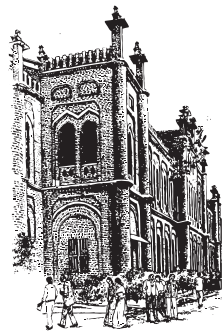
Her poisoned nipples

The moksha-centre of her own martyrdom.

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Medievalism in Victorian Prose and Poetry

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Abstract:

This article discusses the influence and elements of the Middle Ages and their spiritual, political, cultural and courtly love ideals in English literature during the reign of Queen Victoria in the nineteenth century with a historicist critical perspective in mind. Starting with a literary background of the Middle Ages through the Renaissance and then briefly touching upon Edmund Burke, pre-Romantics and the Romantics, the article mainly deals with the selected works of Tennyson, Arnold, Carlyle, Ruskin, William Morris (and also Yeats) as it also makes passing references to the pre-Raphaelites such as Rossetti and Swinburne.

Originally referred to as a period of ignorance and darkness (so the Dark Ages) between the end of classical culture and the modern revival of that ancient learning at the beginning of the 16th century known as the Renaissance, the Middle Ages were once considered backward, full of barbaric cruelty and superstition. They were stereotyped as a period of dark castles, dungeons, feuding rival lords, and religious inwardness and passivity. Some might say life was then like “solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short”—to borrow the phrase used by the seventeenth-century rationalist philosopher Thomas Hobbes, a royalist, secular and materialist, to describe a loose and undisciplined society in a natural state lacking a strong central government (Hobbes 1651). Yet, leaving the Romantics alone, to many Victorian poets and writers such as Tennyson, Carlyle, Ruskin, Arnold, Stuart Mill, Morris, Swinburne, Rossetti and, later, Yeats, medieval culture was very colorful and exciting with a morally and spiritually harmonious system of life compared with what they saw as the chaos and drabness of the modern world. Although they knew that their pursuit of medievalist ideals and values or the hope of the revival of the such was at best an illusion, they were so fascinated by them that they were nostalgically inclined to dreaming and idealizing the culture of those times—a culture of chivalric romance and courtly/knightly ideals as it was a culture of faith (so the Age of Faith), order and discipline.

Victorian poets and writers longed to return to the medieval era, which they thought was an era of freedom and simplicity, in an attempt either to meet, challenge and confront or evade, forget, transcend, gloss or glide over the confusing and meaningless social, intellectual, and political tumult of their own times. They wishfully wanted to adapt and transplant medieval virtues in their own society considered either chaotic or dull and

monotonous. In the end what they produced were historicist works of intertextual influences and “discursive formations”—works that acted upon and were acted by other works. In other words, such texts constructed themselves, as Michel Foucault said about any text whatsoever, “only on the basis of a complex field of discourse” with their “frontiers” never being clear-cut and “caught up in a system of references” (Foucault 1972). According to the linear Marxist theory of class and money at the base with everything else being superstructure and the more diffuse and complex Foucauldian theory of “the circulating movements of power in many spheres of society outside the strictly political extending to the power of professions or disciplines, the complex powers of gender, the power of language” (Johnston 2005), no imaginative flight or aesthetic experience can be pure and absolute in itself and can rise above the actual human situation on the ground (whatever the art for art's sake concept may mean). It always contained a class and culture bias, a political and historicizing import, progressive or regressive. It is from such points of view that the magical elements of a creative expression can be easily demystified and explained in terms of its broad socio-politico-historical-cultural context.

To start with, let's take Matthew Arnold. To him, as in his thinly medievalist “Dover Beach (1867), for example, Middle Ages were an age of spiritual ideals such as those of “joy,” “love,” “light,” “certitude” and “peace,” now completely lost. Those ideals are conspicuous by their absence in “the world, which seems/To lie before us like a land of dreams,/So various, so beautiful, so new,” recalling Hamlet's philosophical reflections about the emptiness of the otherwise wonderful life, the earth, and the universe. Arnold metaphorically presents the lost spiritual plenitudes and re/assurances through the idea of the medieval “Sea of Faith,” full and wide, which once “Lay like the folds of a bright girdle furl'd.” The mournful strain about the medieval past is in direct contrast with the political turbulence of modern Europe suggested in the poem:

And we are here as on a darkling plain
Swept with confused alarms of struggle and flight,
Where ignorant armies clash by night

The more the sea of faith recedes, the more are revealed “the vast edges drear / And naked shingles of the world,” leaving the poet (or the persona of the monologue) with the only choice practically possible—a pessimistically arrived self-assertion through an amoral and apolitical gesture, albeit under the banner/cover of an amatory ideology. The intellectually neutral stance is made towards his Victorian listeners/readers, in which he, as a frustrated idealist, affirms the integrity of his own self and the knowledge of his own mind

only pushing aside everything else including the false hopes about the recurrence of the vital redemptive role of the medieval church.

However, the girdle image used in “Dover Beach” to idealize the religious and spiritual harmony that the Victorians believed existed during the Medieval times may have been borrowed from the immortal *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, perhaps the finest of medieval English romances, describing the simple silken girdle of key importance the temptress-lady offers Sir Gawain, who, of course, is going through a series of layered trials to test his faith, courtesy, and obligations as a knight. In other words, one of the major attractions of the Middle Ages lay primarily in the fascinating legends about the birth and reign of King Arthur of England of the first half of the sixth century (not to mention the Frankish King Charlemagne of the eighth century). The religious belief and the chivalric culture of the times of the legendary Arthur remained alive in different literary and semi-historical portrayals in different vernacular languages of England, Ireland, France and Germany. Starting with the old *History of the Kings of Britain* of both Welsh and Latin origins, which was done into Latin prose by Geoffrey of Monmouth about 1138, which in turn made its way into French verse by Wace about 1155, Arthurian materials continued to be treated by Thomas of England, Chretien de Troyes, and Marie of France, all in French dialects and all in the second half of the twelfth century. It was towards the end of that century that Wace was rendered into Anglo-Saxon alliterative verse by Layamon in his *Brut* (about 1190). Gottfried von Strassbourg's German *Tristan and Isolde* belongs to early thirteenth century, to be followed by the mid-to-late fourteenth-century fictitious yet heroic/chivalric travels of Sir John Mandeville (first written in French) and the anonymous *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*. Sir Thomas Malory, himself a knight, did his version, *Morte d'Arthur* (or *Morte Darthur*, meaning “Death of Arthur”), perhaps the most well-known and artistically selected and compressed, in Middle English in the fifteenth century. Malory used the French versions, especially Wace, for his sources but made significant changes not only in the selection of materials but also in tone and purpose. As the Oxford editors point out, while the French translations/adaptations were not only heavily tinged with supernatural elements but also spiritual and religious in focus driven by an underlying urge to measure the knights' chivalric ideals against the otherworldly, divine perfections, the bent of Malory's appropriation tends towards being realistic, secular, and human—hence the shortcomings and imperfections of Arthur's knights, in addition to being morally instructive, become more attractive and interesting (*Oxford Anthology of*

English Literature/OAEL, 1973). Malory's world presents the aims and goals of the noble Arthurian culture and its practices as fraught, naturally, with worldly dilemmas and weaknesses. The fact that the pursuits of Arthur's Round Table ultimately fail does not diminish their value and beauty; rather they become more useful as examples to learn from. The actions and adventures of Arthur and his knights were motivated from their down-to-earth aspirations and were intended for human heroes, who cultivated them for their own sake. An end in themselves, both the knightly undertakings and failings were viewed by Malory as worldly-oriented, far from being doctrinal, encouraging the improvement of social and moral standards in the here-and-now, which deeply enhanced their human interest. Perhaps, with that in mind, he judiciously selected his materials and reduced the mysterious and fairy-tale elements of his sources, thereby giving his narrative a greater reality in terms of its moral, political, and practical value. Referring to both William Caxton, who heavily edited prior to printing the book, and Malory's real-life intentions, the Oxford editors say:

It may also be true that Caxton saw the chivalry...as more of a moral force, inciting men to practice its virtue and expect honor for them, than Malory, for whom the example of Arthur and his knights was something more political and practical, an example of a firmly ordered, well-ruled commonwealth under a strong king (*OAEL*, 1973).

No wonder the Middle Ages as a whole was an age in which many writers found an ideal refuge from modern ills and complexities. The French chronicler Jean Froissart described Prince Edward of Woodstock, also known as the Black Prince (1330-1376), son of King Edward III, as “the flower of chivalry” for his military leadership against France. Prince Edward's younger brother John of Gaunt described England, in an outburst of chivalric patriotism, as “this other Eden, demi-Paradise” in Shakespeare's *Richard II* (Richard II, son of Prince Edward, was killed in 1399). Chaucer mourned the death of John of Gaunt's first wife, the young duchess of Lancaster, who died in 1368, in his *The Book of the Duchess*, an elegy in the common medieval dream vision form. Himself a fourteenth-century poet, Chaucer modeled his works on the thirteenth-century dream allegory *Romance of the Rose* and other similar works by the fourteenth-century poets such as Giovanni Boccaccio, Guillaume de Machaut, and Froissart, all of whom, in their lyrics and narratives, used the modes of allegorical dream visions and aristocratic love affairs in the manner of courtly love tradition, even though some of them such as the *Romance of the Rose* contained elements satirical of women. Chaucer in work after work (*Troilus and Criseyde*,

Legend of Good Women, *The Knight's Tale*, *The Tale of Sir Thopas*), Cervantes in *Don Quixote*, Shakespeare and other Elizabethans in their sonnets and plays, Spenser in *The Faerie Queene*, Donne in his songs and sonnets—all would exploit medieval love and romance traditions, sometimes celebrating them, sometimes reacting to them, sometimes satirizing/parodying them, as it suited their purpose and audience.

Edmund Burke, father of modern conservatism, turned to the medieval past in the face of his contemporary revolutionary changes and came up with eloquent idealization of chivalric virtues. Exposing the limits of reason, he opposed the leveling radicalism of the French Revolution in 1789 and stood for the primacy of intuition and time-honored traditions and institutions, which embodied, he thought, the wisdom of the ages and organic social growth and stability. Denouncing the mob violence at the bed chamber of Queen Antoinette at the time of the revolution and lamenting the loss of the gallantry, courage, elevation, and splendor that were once there during the Middle Ages, he says:

the age of chivalry is gone.-- That of sophisters, economists, and calculators has succeeded; and the glory of Europe is extinguished forever. Never, never more, shall we behold that generous loyalty to rank and sex, that proud submission, that dignified obedience, that subordination of the heart, which kept alive...the spirit of an exalted freedom (Burke 1790).

Despite the fact that Burke's reflections prompted volumes of counter-argument (as many as a hundred) in favor of revolutionary changes, his anti-revolutionary persuasive rhetoric won the support of the majority of the British public, who turned against revolutionary movements and ideals.

Generally speaking, all aspects of the medieval period—religious, political, historical, cultural, and poetical—are woven together, directly or indirectly, in any creative treatment of the time during both the Romantic and the Victorian eras. These aspects find expression in form and style, genres, settings, language, vocabulary, content and ideology. By the late eighteenth century, as the works of the pre-Romantics demonstrate, the negative attitude about the Middle Ages was completely gone, to be replaced by a dynamic medievalist revival (Kucich 2005). Like Thomas Percy's three-volume *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* (1765) and Richard Hurd's refreshing encounter with the medieval culture in *Letters on Chivalry and Romance* (1762), Thomas Chatterton and James Macpherson made dubious imitations of the medieval manuscripts they discovered. Building on the psychological tensions latent in adventurous knightly romances, James Thomson's *The*

Castle of Indolence (1734) centers on the division in the mind of the poet, explored further by James Beattie in *The Minstrel* (1771-4). Beattie's protagonist Edwin plays the role of a medieval poet-pilgrim, who seeks to resolve, like a religious quest, "a modern aesthetic division between the poet's attraction to imaginative ideals and his commitment to social reality and intellectual truth" (Kucich 2005:469). Thomas Warton devoted two of his three-volume *History of English Poetry* (1774-81) to the colorful and variegated material of the Middle Ages, contrasted with the enlightenment rationalism and materialism as represented in the works of his contemporary Dryden, Pope, Swift and Defoe. The supreme achievement of the Middle Ages was thought to have been their chivalric ideals, which consisted of a series of high morals intended for and practiced by a selected few in what grew as a strongly hierarchical but disciplined and stimulating society.

The two main factors which went to form the chivalric ideal were the relationship between the knight and the lord and that of the knight and the lady. The medieval knight was idealized as gentle, generous, courteous, heroic, and adventurous, distinguishing himself in his fidelity to God, his king, his lady-love, and his great service to the ladies in distress or the other victims of tyrants and monsters. In the relationship of knight and lady, commonly known as courtly love, the knight is seen as adulating and deifying his mistress and being inspired by his love to great deeds with both of them promising to keep their relationship confidential and remaining faithful to each other despite odds and obstacles. Although the courtly love was essentially illicit and sensual and ignored marriage, a sort of platonic idealism appeared to qualify it in course of time, at least in its literary presentation. However, it had its roots in the spirit of challenge to the constant spiritual preoccupation of the time while it was also influenced by the new way of looking at Virgin Mary, which gave a new dignity and independence to women, one of the reasons why the ideal of courtly or chivalric love is so much liked by the feminists in modern times. Both relationships --- knight and lord, and knight and lady -- had actually originated in the medieval feudal structure and became like a religious devotion for the aristocratic class. Rank or social distinctions were important for the cultivation of chivalry, which was practiced with a sense of both Christian and human considerations. However, the institution of chivalry was essentially secular complementing rather than challenging the traditional religious idealisms. All its experiences--be it love, religion, fighting, suffering, or sacrifice--were idealistic in character. The way of chivalry was a way of life, at least for the chosen few, who were inspired by their personal motivation and their ambition for public heroism.

Both the Romantics and the Victorians took a great interest in the Middle Ages. They sought to reproduce the life and culture of the time and liked to look at them quite liberally. However, they also tended to modify the characteristics of the age to suit their own views. In their spirit of revolt against the narrowness and restrictions of the formal art and culture of the eighteenth century, the Romantics looked to the past for the elements of naturalness, spontaneity, mystery, fantasy, magic, love and adventure feeling nostalgic about the Middle Ages they considered to be something at once ancient, ideal, exotic, and liberating. To them the Medieval world suggested a world of make-believe, folk-tales and fairy tales, allowing their fancy and imagination to soar high. Except Milton and Samuel Butler (if these seventeenth-century writers can be named here), Charlotte Lennox (1730-1804), John Hookham Frere (1769-1846), Jane Austen, Byron, and later Mark Twain (1835-1910), who were not really fond of the heroic knights of medieval romance and in fact wrote satirically about them, most of the major Romantic writers (Scott, Blake, Wordsworth, Southey, Coleridge, Shelley, Keats, Hunt, Hazlitt, and even Byron, to some extent), from conservative to liberal, adapted medieval romance motifs (travel, faraway settings, paradoxes of enchantment yet its dangers) and traditions such as dream visions, allegorical quest, and chivalric love and loyalty in the form of ballad, epic, love lyrics, and other sentimental, historical, and Gothic narratives either to affirm or subvert the political and cultural developments of the age. Speaking about the eighteenth-century transmission of romance to Romantic writers through numerous ways, Kucich writes:

Modern theorists of medieval romance have tracked its abiding cultural influence to specific structural levels on which its most complex systems of meaning operate: the mythopoetic, the psychological, and the socio-political... The rapid progress of romance in the second half of the eighteenth century involved a myriad number of interrelated types of literary productions, all of which significantly influenced the course of Romanticism (Kucich 2005: 465, 467).

As the Romantics had their medievalism characterized by the Romantic qualities of freedom, wildness, excess, and extravagance, so the Victorians had theirs transformed by the respective characteristics of their age. The British empire, under Queen Victoria, saw its horizons expanding as her reign was also one of economic prosperity and scientific development. At the same time it was marked by a rigid code of puritanical morality and respectability. There was an infinite variety, a "multitudinousness" in the activities of every field during the age, which, none the less, had experienced an uneasy sense of uncertainty as

if something was lost as it faced religious doubt, economic disparity, and social and political conservatism. The result was the inevitable Victorian dilemma: a sense of satisfaction at the material progress in the fields of human endeavor and at the same time a sense of frustration and unhappiness at the horrors of the by-products of industrialism, wealth and war, both home and abroad. Responding to the bewildering issues of the day Victorian writers in general devoted themselves to dealing with the ideas of redemption, salvation, and regeneration. They attacked the new materialism in the name of the new utilitarian philosophy and called for the people to reform themselves in light of the kind and compassionate Christian teachings. Most of them found a model social structure to recommend in the Middle Ages, which provided them with the longed-for excitement and inspiration to carry on with their moral duties and responsibilities. Although, as Mark Girouard demonstrates, the spirit and elements of medievalism permeated all departments of life during the Victorian Age—literature, architecture, painting, music, and political and religious discourses and ideologies (Girouard 1981), this article, starting with some historical and literary background, as given above, deals with some selected literary materials of the age, both in prose and poetry.

Tennyson, England's poet laureate from 1850 to 1892, was regarded as the spokesman of the Victorian age and its essential concerns and preoccupations. Pro-establishment in position, he was considered the most Victorian of all the poets of his time. His poetry is a lyric treatment of the contemporary political and religious controversies from a traditionalist and conservative point of view. In line with Victorian expansionism, Tennyson's *Ulysses* stands for the need to strive and search, not to yield. Similarly, his men and women, in consonance with the dictates of Victorian morality, ultimately reject the claims of their illicit passions for a safe and lasting Christian marriage. Confronting the Victorian dilemma of science and religion, Tennyson makes the optimistic Christian belief triumph over doubt, intuition, and speculative and scientific knowledge. The speakers in "Maud" and "Locksley Hall" suffer from bitterness, disappointment and disillusion and hold the materialistic class differences responsible for their frustrated love-affairs. They finally commit themselves either to the noble cause of patriotism, as in "Maud," or to the progressive future based upon the ideals of labor, trade and commerce, and cooperation between the nations, as in "Locksley Hall."

Such an awareness of time—past, present, and future—was central to most of the Victorian poets and writers, who wanted to escape from the ills of contemporary civilization

or provide moral instruction to society with historical perspectives. In doing so, they turned to medieval history for their examples with a view to inspiring reform in their own times. Tennyson recreates the medieval past (and also the myth of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden) in "The Lady of Shalott" (1832, revised 1842), a romantic ballad with medieval atmosphere. The mysterious lady, the magic web she weaves, the strange curse on her, the sights she sees in the magic mirror, and the landscape around—everything pertains to the spirit of medieval romance. Tennyson intends us to contrast the island of Shalott representing the world of dreams and visions (but also of isolation and loneliness) with the active life outside (which appears to be tempting but proves to be destructive). The lady of Shalott dies as she falls in love with and pursues Lancelot, one of King Arthur's best knights, after she sees the illusion of him pass by in her mirror and leaves the confines of her castle-tower to follow him to the last. The poem is thus concerned with both the inadequacy of isolated existence and the dangers that exist for a lonely, self-absorbed spirit, unable to face the complexities of reality.

Tennyson re-works the matter of Arthurian mythology, the main subject of medieval romance, first in "Morte D'Arthur"/ "The Passing of Arthur" (written about 1834 and published in 1842) and then in the epic *Idylls of the King* (first series, 1859; second series, 1869; several editions of the first in between; most of the idylls assembled together in 1888). This work re-creates, through a blend of allegory, adventure, love, loyalty, and courtesy, the mystic and enchanting atmosphere of Arthur's Camelot, the seat of the high culture of chivalry. Arthur is made an embodiment of human perfection, possessing all the highest qualities to which all great Englishmen under Victoria would aspire. He is a great warrior and a constructive and idealistic statesman, adhering to true religion and morality even in trying times. He retains all his personal dignity and majesty even in the midst of adversities and impending doom. His knights are those who fulfill all the high requirements of manliness to meet the ideals of knighthood, as specified by Arthur himself in the idyll "Guinevere":

I made them lay their hands in mine and swear
 To reverence the King, as if he were
 Their conscience, and their conscience as their King,
 To break the heathen and uphold the Christ,
 To ride abroad redressing human wrongs,
 To speak no slander, no, nor listen to it,

To honor his own word as if his God's,
 To lead sweet lives in purest chastity,
 To love one maiden only, cleave to her,
 And worship her by years of noble deeds,
 Until they won her.

This was all in line with the materialist and imperialist Victorian morality and the Victorian idea of control of fleshly desires requiring a rigorous cultivation of moral and religious virtues. In the same idyll, Arthur continues to say that the “maiden passion for a maid” is a “subtle master,”

Not only to keep down the base in man,
 But teach high thought, and amiable words
 And courtliness, and the desire of fame,
 And love of truth, and all that makes a man.

Together with “Enid,” “Vivien,” and “Elaine,” “Guinevere” belonged to the popular first series. In the dedication of its 1862 edition, Tennyson described Victoria's beloved Prince Albert as one like Arthur's ideal knight: neutral, selfless, “tenderly,” “modest, kindly, all-accomplish'd, wise,” with a “sublime repression of himself,”

Wearing the white flower of a blameless life,
 Before a thousand peering littlenesses.

Stressing Tennyson's deployment of the idealizations of Arthur and Albert as something that fitted well his “perfectibilian system of beliefs,” Antony Harrison writes:

Rehearsing the oaths his knights sore, Tennyson through Arthurventriloquizes a system of values and a code of conduct so prevalent in Victorian England that varied forms of medievalist discourse automatically elicited them ... Arthur reinscribes [these values and behaviors] in a litany of infinitive constructions that point towards the ideal of a perfected (albeitamorphous) sociality....Throughout *Idylls of the King*, Tennyson adopts medievalist discourse in the service of Tory social, political and religious values (Harrison 2002:248-49).

But the hard fact is that Arthur's Round Table failed to live up to its ideals. His kingdom with its ideal system of order was threatened not only by external political rivalries but also internal treachery and illicit sexual love. In the first place, it is the adulterous relationship between Queen Guinevere and Lancelot that corrupted the entire social and moral order of Arthur's court and accounted for its downfall. In the idylls Tennyson is concerned with

personal relationships as part of the social structure and not as the merely private sphere of humans so that immoral acts on the part of individuals are sure to bring the destruction of a society where struggle towards achieving the ideal is of the highest importance. The sinful affairs between the knights and ladies, under oath to remain faithful to the ideals of chivalry, constitute, therefore, the central conflict ensuring moral decay in his narrative. The poet is not so much celebrating the endeavor of Arthur to create a perfect state as he is lamenting the slow and sure deterioration of a noble moral code. The mournful strain running through the idylls makes them sound like a dirge, as opposed to a hymn, to the end of an ideal regime and a great culture.

Idylls of the King reflects the Victorian ideal of marriage. The husband should be strong, kind, courteous, and protective; the wife innocent, modest, virtuous, submissive and faithful. Fidelity in marriage remains one of the cornerstones of Western (and the World's) civilization and morality. While Arthur is portrayed as embodying the Victorian ideal of a husband, Guinevere is shown as falling short as a wife. Elaine, however, is Tennyson's personification of the finest virtues of womanhood and womanly beauty and grace. Enid is another portrait of an admirable woman, noteworthy for her patience and humility as well as her unselfish love for Geraint. Lynette is a delightful young maiden, at first showing some pride of status, perhaps because of her youthful lack of experience, but then gradually learning tolerance and humility and eventually marrying Gareth. Contrasted with these model/ideal figures are Ettarre, cruel and wicked, causing the fall of the idealistic Pelleas, and Vivien, deceitful and unscrupulous, who imprisons Merlin forever in the hollow oak.

Tennyson's anti-feminist "Guinevere," where she is dominated by the conventional virtues of political establishment and patriarchal manliness and where she is seen in a nunnery as a punishment following her adultery, is challenged by William Morris's "The Defence of Guenevere," published in 1858. Morris, as a radical socialist, counters Tennysonian/Victorian conservative ideologies of authority and respectability and presents Guenevere, through the dramatic monologue form, as "a physically, emotionally and intellectually seductive icon" (Harrison 2002: 250). About to be burned at the stake in front of the knights (and indirectly Victorian male audience), she confidently defends her physical charm by flaunting her arms, fingers, hair, and breast. Naturally irresistible sexual desires are to be cooled and relieved in passionate consummation, which is like swimming, she says, in the waves of the sea on a summer day. Chastity or infidelity are not a serious issue to Morris's Guenevere, who, in a blow to Victorian morality, hardly thinks about

either. Unlike Tennyson's Arthur, who is endowed with all the qualities that make him perfect, Morris's Arthur is less than fulfilling as a husband, who "bought" Guenevere with "his great name and his little love," as opposed to the lively and animating Lancelot, who presumably comes to her rescue at the end. Citing examples of moral violations by Arthur's knights, Guenevere, somewhat like Tennyson's Vivien, courageously speaks out against the hypocrisies behind the outwardly heroic chivalric behavior as she not only rejects the authority of kingship but also questions divine justice. Unlike Tennyson's popular, patriotic and nationalist idylls, Morris's poem, one of his earliest (the first poem in his first volume), which only later came to be known as one of his best, was not, however, well-received by the mid-Victorian poetry-reading public, who were still immersed in the traditional conservative culture their poet laureate was so devotedly committed to promoting.

The countering, destabilizing, or the "ideologically oppositional" view, to borrow Harrison's phrase, of Morris's "Defence" is also shared by Arnold's elegiac *Tristram and Iseult* (1852) as it is by the medievalist works of Swinburne and Rossetti, all of which affronts the ideological discourses of both the courtly love traditions and the medieval religious thought as they undercut the expectations of the Christian and conservative Victorian readers/audience. They do so by shockingly privileging the erotic and sensuous (even if that is between the illicit lovers), skewing the subversive, overturning the traditional gender roles or parodying the systems of conventional respectability and moral values held in high esteem by the Victorians. Far from being imbued with a sense of Christian and typically Victorian looking forward with hope and faith and affirmation, the secular, pessimistic, and atheistically-bent Arnold's poetry is about the lost ideals of the past suffused with a spirit of sad lament. The two lovers, Tristram and Iseult, are no longer the lively and strong lovers of the old Arthurian legends; nothing of the kind of youthful, exciting, rejuvenating passions is left to them. They are tired, weary, and "fatigued," feeling tortured and victimized and finding themselves in a pathetic, near-death condition, their "spring-time" emotions turned into "winter, which endureth still." Chivalric devotion to the lover characterized by a noble selflessness is no longer possible for them, for whom love is a "fool passion," a "diseased unrest," which "gulls men potently." Without this "plague," they are "full of languor and distress" and when they possess it, they "straightway are burnt up with fume and care." As Harrison puts it so nicely,

Love, variously idealized in medievalist discourse, is here denounced and repudiated altogether, presumably in favor of emotional detachment from experience, a philosophical

approach to life that Arnold promotes everywhere. His narrator is vitriolic in attacking amatory ideals because they exemplify “tyrannous single thoughts” that ruin human lives....This poem implicitly adopts a stance of secular nihilism, and that stance is patently ideological. Its deep pessimism requires a repudiation not only of the materialist, utilitarian, perfectibilian, amatory and Christian values embraced by many middle- and upper class Victorians of the period (including Tennyson), but also of the spiritual illusions proffered by the Romantics, especially Wordsworth, as alternatives to those values. This poem in fact propounds a transvalued Byronic ideology of defiant martyrdom, a self-assertive “ideology against ideology” that is also central to Arnold's other major compositions...(Harrison 2002, 255).

Tennyson's treatment of the age of chivalry as represented by Arthur's rise and fall is dominated by a sense of moral degeneration, a lack of moral cultivation on the part of the knights and ladies, who are not above human weaknesses and limitations. In contrast, John Stuart Mill celebrates their moral excellence born of a reciprocal chivalric bond in his *The Subjection of Women* (1869). In the last (and fourth) chapter of the work Mill looks back to the age of chivalry to trace the history of the progress of civilization along the way of women's moral influence on men. He argues that the spirit of chivalry was the most welcome outcome of the two kinds of moral influence exercised by women over men—one, their “softening influence” on men's excesses of violence and, two, their providing “a powerful stimulus” to men's desires of being admired by them for their (men's) acts of manly attributes and military virtues. “The peculiarity” of this two-fold influence, Mill contends, is to aim at combining the highest standard of the warlike qualities with the cultivation of a totally different class of virtues—those of gentleness, generosity, and self-abnegation, towards the non-military and defenseless classes generally, and a special submission and worship directed towards women, who were distinguished from the other defense-less classes by the high rewards which they had it in their power voluntarily to bestow on those who endeavored to earn their favor, instead of extorting their subjection. ..if women are to remain in their subordinate situation, it were greatly to be lamented that the *chivalrous* standard should have passed away, for it is the only one at all capable of mitigating the demoralizing influences of that position. But the changes in the general state of the species rendered inevitable the substitution of a totally different ideal of morality for the *chivalrous* one. *Chivalry* was the attempt to infuse moral elements into a state of society in which everything depended for good or evil on individual prowess, under the softening influences of individual delicacy and generosity (my emphases).

Mill, of course, goes on distinguishing between the old institution of chivalry and the modern collective society, pointing out the weaknesses and inadequacies of the former. The chivalrous ideal, which flourished in a military and fighting society, only encouraged and exclusively depended on the “virtues of generosity” and “beauties and graces” of the individual character of the selected few leaving “without legal check all forms of wrong which reigned unpunished throughout society” with the result that the security of the rest of the society remained unprotected by law. On the other hand, modern societies operate by the combined efforts of many whose occupations are mainly business and industrial and whose moral life must depend on “justice and prudence” with “penal sanctions” in place as a deterrent or controlling measure.

Both Tennyson and Mill share the concern about the role of women during the chivalric times, but whereas the focus of Tennyson's narrative is either their moral failure concerning their obedience and submissiveness or their not always recognizing those "who endeavored to earn their favor," thus directly contributing to the fall of Arthur, Mill's argument is precisely the opposite: the height of their moral success, making the chivalrous ideal "the acme of the influence of women's sentiments on the moral cultivation of mankind." Being concerned with the rigid Victorian code of morality and constant striving for moral perfection, Tennyson thinks of the causes of Arthur's rise and fall continuous with his own age of doubt, temptation and indulgence. Mill, on the other hand, contrasts the achievements of the age of chivalry with those of his own age and calls for his age to draw inspiration and encouragement from the past and evolve upwards to the extent of effecting complete equality between the sexes, which, he argues, would turn out to be better, more rational, and more justified.

Mill considers the chivalrous ideal as a non-negotiable historical fact, not to be revised according to one's own tastes and attitudes. So it follows that Tennyson's tendency to “victorianize” and thereby domesticate women is none of Mill's business, who eloquently advocates their freedom and emancipation. Unlike Tennyson who finds the reasons for the failure of the high ideal of chivalry within those who are supposed to uphold it, Mill locates them in its being much ahead of time and being right only for the chosen few of the society. "Though the practice of chivalry," he observes,

fell even more sadly short of its theoretic standard than practice generally falls below theory, it remains one of the most precious monuments of the moral history of our race; as a remarkable instance of a concerted and organized attempt by a most disorganized and

distracted society, to raise up and carry into practice a moral ideal greatly in advance of its social condition and institutions; so much so as to have been completely frustrated in the main object, yet never entirely inefficacious (ibid).

Given the natural human tendency toward evil, which is let loose in absence of any "legal check" or "penal sanctions," the noble code of the few, Mill thought, could not sustain itself for long and was sure to disappear, but, fortunately, it has already left "a most sensible, and for the most part a highly valuable impress on the ideas and feelings of all subsequent times." Mill thus develops his secular and utilitarian argument in opposition to Tennyson's religious and spiritual approach to the culture of Arthurian legends.

As a secular and utilitarian social thinker who believed in the freedom of expression, free market economy, rationalism, and liberalism, there was no reason for Mill to be fond of medievalism. In fact, he resisted a return to the past. But he praised the chivalrous spirit, the flower of medieval culture, which, he thought, gave a noble direction to the aspirations of the young and kept alive in their mind "an exalted standard of worth." Rejecting medieval naturalism and feudalism, he accepted the ideal of chivalry, which was the bridge between the two and which, as Alice Chandler puts it, "made the spontaneous generosity of the natural man the guiding principle of man in society and which compensated for human frailty by having the strong protect the weak" (Chandler 1971: 195).

It is Carlyle who wholeheartedly espoused almost all the notions associated with the Middle Ages – an identification with nature, simple modes of feeling and expression, heroic codes of action, spiritual strength, patriarchal kindness and, above all, a hierarchical society bound together by ties of loyalty, generosity, and veneration, in other words, a "harmonious and stable social structure which reconciled freedom and order by giving each man an allotted place in society and an allotted leader to follow" (Chandler, 195). Critical of contemporary utilitarianism, materialism, and political and economic liberalism, Carlyle attacks the nineteenth-century society in all its aspects – social, moral, religious, and economic. Instead, he seeks faith and order, loyalty and leadership, religion and paternalism, which he finds in medieval feudal society, "a society at once conservative and dynamic – founded on religion and yet directed toward social progress, allowing for change but rejecting revolution" (Chandler, 131).

With his vivid description of a medieval monastery and its ruler Abbot Adam Samson, Carlyle makes the past come alive in (Book II of) his *Past and Present*. After telling the story of Edmund and praising him as a just ruler with his subjects as his loyal followers,

Carlyle examines the organizational and economic structure of St. Edmund's Abbey under the rule of Abbot Samson. He gives a vivid sketch of Samson's rise to prominence by virtue of his spiritual strength and his assumption of office as the head of the abbey in 1182. The St. Edmund's state of affairs had been in a lamentable condition under the administration of Abbot Hugo from 1157 to 1180. According to Jocelin, he was old, blind, idle, and susceptible to flattery. It was at this time that Abbot Samson took over and restored law and order to the abbey. A man of honesty, courage, and wisdom, Samson commanded the respect of the other monks and made the system of the convent work. The relationship between him and his associates was one of mutual respect, obedience and authority. The key to the stability was that each part of society, under Samson, needed the services of the other, and all classes – the ruling class, the military, the aristocracy, the peasantry, and the working class – prospered under his personalized rule through a just policy of give-and-take.

Along with order and leadership came faith in each other and the religious belief Carlyle and his hero Samson thought necessary in a just society. Without faith and religion, the very process and function of government must collapse. “Carlyle sees the Middle Ages,” Chandler observes, “as a period of belief--belief as distinguished from mere religious observance. Abbot Samson's faith is evidenced not in his creed or his rituals, but in the thousand daily acts that show his belief in a meaningful universe. 'Practical-devotional,' Carlyle calls it” (Chandler, 144). “The clear-beaming eyesight of Abbot Samson,” writes

Carlyle, steadfast, severe, all-penetrating ... penetrates gradually to all nooks, and of the chaos makes a cosmos or ordered world!” It seems as if Samson, after taking charge of the unruly monastery, is playing God's role in bringing light out of total void and darkness, which is “The Everlasting No.”

In this way Carlyle goes on to contrast his idealized medieval hierarchical society with the nineteenth-century English society whose self-seeking individuals are alienated from each other by their selfish motives. His intention is to urge a reconstruction of contemporary England on the model of the past. Not long after the publication of *Past and Present* in 1843, William Henry Smith, in a review of the book, attacked Carlyle for viewing the present from the past. Smith says, “Abbot Samson and his monks form a very limited, almost a domestic picture, which supplies but a few points of contrast or similitude with our 'own poor country,' which at all events is very rich in point of view ... On one point only can any palpable contrast be exhibited, namely, between the religious spirit of his times and our own” (Smith 1971: 215).

Carlyle, however, did not mean his conception of the Middle Ages to be taken so narrowly. Abbot Samson's just society provided the Victorian philosopher with an opportunity to censure modern government for its neglect of duty and to condemn the masses who, in their ignorance, lowly desires, and lack of spiritual strength, were not likely to choose real worthy persons as their leaders. Modern critics have tended to view Carlyle's position as more forward-looking than those of his times. As has been noted by Jeffrey Spear,

The antithesis between that self-renewing world of organic, hierarchical relationship with a place for everyone, and most everyone in his place, and the empty frenzy of modern 'phenomena' produces some of Carlyle's most powerful social commentary. As the 'mythus' of St. Edmund, the soldier and landlord, inspired the very different social order of Abbot Samson and his monks, so Carlyle implies, might the 'mythus' of Samson now retold provide a model for new forms of the eternal connections, new sets of formal relations between those who command (particularly captains of industry) and those who follow (Spear 1984: 106-7).

Following Spear, John D. Rosenberg makes his observations about Carlyle's medievalist notions in a sympathetic vein trying to stress their need and importance in the present circumstances that have to be changed and reformed. Rosenberg says,

Carlyle intended *Past and Present* as an urgent call to action...He advocates strong, paternalistic government, along the lines of his hero, Abbot Samson. He attacks laissez-faire and utilitarianism. He calls for government regulation of mines, factories, and public health, including minimum housing standards and control of populations. He proposes a guaranteed permanent wage, part-ownership of industry by the workers, a ministry of education, and free public schools (Rosenberg 1985: 132).

The historical ideal of the 12th century informs Carlyle's thinking and guides his perception of the present. He is quite aware of the impossibility of going back to the time far removed from his own and of re-installing it in all its original colors, although he can deeply look into it and describe well those obscure people and events that he has not seen. As he himself admits, "the Gospel of Richard Arkwright once promulgated, no monk of the old sort is any longer possible in this world." He accepts the nineteenth-century English achievements in science and industry; however, what he is concerned about is their means and ends in relation to all classes of people in society. "Carlyle's most original contribution to the development of English medievalism," comments Chandler,

is in adapting the idea of the paternal leadership of society to an industrial age. He

makes the manufacturers and businessmen take on responsibilities previously reserved for the landed aristocracy. All the previous medievalists, most of them born a generation before Carlyle, had had an emotional belief in England as an agricultural country; their medievalism was essentially a mode of advocating a return to the land. Carlyle alone fully appreciated the inevitability of industrialism. Unlike his predecessors, he did not think it possible to diminish the importance of commerce and industry and make a neo-feudal agriculture serve as the basis of a national economy (Chandler, 147-48).

Indeed, Carlyle's call for collective ownership, increased partnership of labor with capital and above all a system of meaningful work—work as a means of understanding the differences between the classes—is progressive, future-oriented, and radical in nature. He emphasizes the importance of labor as a natural expression of man's artistic impulses, and as a means of humanizing his (man's) surroundings and discovering his true leader. Labor alone provides him with a way of resolving his religious doubt and skepticism and overcoming his sense of alienation. It is only labor that gives him a sense of “familial and social connectedness” as opposed to social exclusivity and fragmentation. Carlyle's call for preservation of human dignity in industry through every class doing its duties and responsibilities is not without an awareness of the impossibility of reviving St. Edmund's Abbey, which only provided a model by which to build the future. *Past and Present* ends with an optimistic view of the world transformed into a kind of Eden: “Some 'Chivalry of Labor,' some noble Humanity and practical Divineness of Labor, will yet be realized on this Earth.”

In spite of the progressive nature of Carlyle's views and ideas, he has been viewed as a “conservative” and “reactionary,” who was drawn to the past and idealized it. Philip Rosenberg strongly argues that there is no reason to believe that there is something inherently reactionary in turning to the past for one's social model. He defends Carlyle's medievalism saying:

the use of the past as a model is quite common among revolutionary thinkers; indeed, an orientation to the past is part of the basic equipment of political realists of all stamps, irrespective of whether they are radical or reactionary. Utopian thinkers design ideal societies which they locate either in the future, in an out of the way corner of the world, or, as in Plato's case, in the mind itself. Lacking genuine historical models, they must construct models of their own. As the instincts of the utopians have drawn them toward the future, the instincts of the realists have drawn them toward the past, for nothing could be more natural

than that men engaged in making history should turn to history in search of heuristic models. Indeed, it is only when one can recognize the lineaments of one's own aims embodied in some piece of actual history that one can know that one is working toward something authentically possible (Rosenberg 1974: 148).

No matter how far one could go in seeing Carlyle's doctrinal ideas sympathetically, there is no denying that there are some reactionary elements in his character. His authoritarian resistance to democracy and his ideas of "heroes and hero-worship," according to which he called history "the biography of great men," account for his conservative bent of mind. His conception of a paternalistic and patriarchal social order, and his enthusiasm for a hierarchical social structure, based on submission and authority, testify to the same. Marxists praised him for his radical diagnosis of social ills, but disliked the reactionary import of his moral and political philosophy. So they regarded him as their "worthy foe." Both sides of his thought, progressive and reactionary, are perhaps illustrated in Eloise Behnken's brief comment that for Carlyle,

The best society is a hierarchical one based on a just despotism instead of atomistic individualism. Carlyle wants a truly collective society where competition and profits cannot go unchecked, and where each class plays a limited but indispensable role (Behnken 1978:109).

If Carlyle returns to the ethics of the Middle Ages in his *Past and Present*, Ruskin returns to the world of medieval art and architecture in his *The Nature of Gothic* (1853). Both men bring the remote past to life and help us experience it in a refreshing manner. Gothic was a multinational architectural feature of vertical columns and ribbed vaults that grew in many countries such as France, Germany, Italy, England, and the 8th century Arab (Umayyad and Abbasid) lands where the pointed arch, as opposed to the earlier classical semicircular Roman arch, first originated (Verde 2012: 34). The pointed, tapering or angular arch, both aesthetic and structural, later became one of the distinguishing features of Western Europe's great medieval Gothic cathedrals, castles, and palaces allowing more light and greater heights with soaring interiors and supporting up to three times as much weight as a Roman arch would. Like the term Middle Ages, "Gothic" also was once a term of offence used to refer to what was rude and barbaric until the nineteenth century when the Romantics as well as the Victorians became interested in it. Eighteenth-century neo-classicists used the term as being synonymous with "barbaric" to indicate anything that offended their tastes and that failed to achieve the classic graces of unity, simplicity, and dig-

nity. The term was actually coined by the Italians at the time of the Renaissance who wanted to look down upon anything that was not Roman, specially an architectural style associated with the French and German descendants of the Goths who attempted to undermine the glory that was Rome. To the Romantics and the Victorians, “Gothic” suggested whatever was medieval, natural, primitive, free, wild, and authentic. To them it represented variety, richness, flexibility, mystery, and aspiration.

Ruskin, who hated the Renaissance for its sensual and materialistic love of life and perfection, celebrated the preceding Gothic as the best and most universal form precisely because of its imperfection—an ideal shared by his contemporary Robert Browning, who found the ancient Greek aesthetic unrealistic and distasteful to his notion of the glory of the imperfect. As the leading art critic of the nineteenth century, Ruskin paid tribute to Browning for capturing the negative side of the Renaissance in the poem “The Bishop Orders His Tomb at St. Praxed's Church,” about which he wrote in *Modern Painters*:

I know no other piece of modern English prose or poetry in which there is so much told, as in these lines, of the Renaissance spirit,—its worldliness, inconsistency, pride, hypocrisy, ignorance of itself, love of art, of luxury, of good Latin (Grosskurth 1976: 16).

Anyway, Ruskin viewed the Gothic as the only rational form of architecture and identified its six moral elements as, in order of importance: Savageness, Changefulness, Naturalism, Grottesqueness, Rigidity, and Redundancy. In other words, Gothic contained a number of characteristics at the same time: it was “rude,” “wild,” “stern,” “savage,” “rigid,” “rugged,” “fierce” and “wayward,” yet it was full of life and vitality, magnificence and majesty, honor and dignity. Gothic style, Ruskin maintained, was of course faulty and imperfect, and this is why it was all the more human. It combined thought with labor, resistance with movement, measure with excess, caution with indulgence, the ludicrous with the sublime.

In his consideration of the Gothic style in architecture Ruskin also included the people who designed it and the land they lived in. As Clive Wilmer describes, the “complex, allegorical, and organic character” of the Gothic, and, in Ruskin's own words, the “grey, shadowy, many-pinnacled image” of the Gothic spirit were the outward expression of the various mental characters of those people who were behind it. Their fancifulness and thoughtfulness, and their love of variety and richness, the essential nature of which was largely determined by their rough northern climate, came together in the Gothic. Allowing the workers to give whatever they could of their creativity, no matter how

small it was, the Gothic manifested both their freedom of thought and their pleasure of work. Ruskin looked upon the later Renaissance love for perfection and precision as signs of slavery and degradation. Renaissance architectural style and its preference for predetermined plan and finished workmanship were, he thought, a reflection of contemporary (Victorian) social and economic organization, which was based upon division of labor in mass production. As such it ultimately resulted in division of men and then the process of specializing in different parts of the whole actually turned them into mere tools and machines, alienated from each other. In contrast, there was virtue in the Gothic lack of perfection precisely because it allowed freedom to workers and reflected the humanity of art.

Ruskin's views on art and architecture were thus directly related to society, morality, politics, and religion. He believed in the relevance of art and life and in the inseparability of art from society as a whole. He thought that contemporary art was not only devoid of imaginative self-expression but also divorced from collective humanity. Gothic style suggested a philosophy of undivided workmanship, total endeavor, and collective effort and achievement by blending freedom of individual expression with social and communal life and in it everything was subordinated to human interest.

Ruskin's social criticism has a lot in common with that of Carlyle. Both share the same premises of moral regeneration, social affection between classes and individuals, and hierarchical social structure, with the bond of reverence and obedience, loyalty and authority, as its fundamental binding force. Both are strongly inclined to viewing the Middle Ages as an instructive model for the conditions which might encourage a reformed society. In such a society the worker would be free to enjoy his work and at the same time an orderly subordination of each and every one to every superior other would be realized. Both Carlyle and Ruskin call for cooperation and restraints as opposed to competition, dissolution, and disorganization. However, as far as Carlyle's strong emphasis on both the spiritual and heroic nature of man is concerned, Ruskin seems to distance himself from such position and as such defies easy classification.

The main thrust of Ruskin's convictions is towards socialism, "Ruskinian" brand of socialism, taken over by his follower, William Morris. Both of them were also linked by their support of the medievalizing Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood movement in the arts during the middle decades of the century when the poets and artists led by the Rossetti brothers, Swinburne, William Hunt, and John Millais rejected the elegant yet conventional classical

style of Raphael and Michelangelo and the grand style of Sir Joshua Reynolds of the eighteenth century. In contrast, thinking that art was essentially spiritual, they returned to the concept of abundant detail, intense colors, and complex compositions of the (fourteenth-century) Quattrocento artists of the late Middle Ages and early Renaissance led by, among others, Leonardo da Vinci, Donatello, Fra Lippi, and Bellini. Both Ruskin and Morris, in their own way, remained faithful to nature as well as romance.

Morris's vision of a new golden age, as expressed in his socialist/communist utopia, *News From Nowhere* (1890), is drawn as much on his Marxist views about the future as the works of Ruskin together with his nostalgia for the medieval past and its quest archetypes. Morris's socialist narrator William Guest falls asleep and wakes up after hundreds of years in an ideal pastoral society born out of revolutionary movement, which reminds us not only of medieval allegorical dream visions but also Washington Irving's story of Rip Van Winkle or the biblical/Quranic legend of seven sleepers. Guest wakes up to find himself in the heavenly England of 2102 completely transformed and liberated under socialism following a revolutionary upheaval in 1952. Written in response to the earlier socialist utopia, Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backward*, which Morris reviewed and against which he raised some objections, *News from Nowhere* gives us a picture of work not as a necessary evil that Marxist thinkers often assumed it to be (suggesting, as a solution, reduction in the amount of work by means of fresh innovation and multiplication of machinery), but as a creative joy that reduces not the amount of labor itself but the pain involved in it turning the irksome burden of labor into a pleasure. That is, people do what they like out of their own interests in various useful arts and crafts, just as Morris himself did, who was self-taught in thirteen different skills. That is why the novel is sub-titled "An Epoch of Rest," although it is full of scenes of labor—joyful labor, of course, "work-pleasure," as Morris calls it, glorifying labor as an end in itself: "The reward for labor is life." He believed that the mechanical division of labor in the capitalist industrial system was dehumanizing turning workers into mere components of machine and that there should not be any quantifiable division in life, art and labor combined so that they would live a happy life in a humane anarchist type of socialist structure.

Morris's radical political beliefs are found to be in practice in his socialist fantasy, which takes Guest on a boat trip up the Thames, past Oxford, all the way to a harvest dinner party suggesting a medieval environmentally friendly setting. It is a reflection of "material surroundings...pleasant, generous, and beautiful," as he had called for, six years before the

novel, in his lecture “How We Live and How We Might Live” (1884), thus anticipating the concerns of today's growing environmental movements. Morris thought the Middle Ages were characterized by a fellowship of human beings, who he thought lived a life harmonious with nature. The “Nowherians,” bound together by an equal and egalitarian spirit, live a simple organic, pastoral, agrarian life free from state control (as opposed to urban/industrial/machine/state-sponsored life as favored by Bellamy) with a medieval quality about it, but without the disadvantages of the old hierarchical society. Leading such a communal life, away from the dull Victorian society, they find joy in labor, happiness in aesthetic creation, and pleasure in fishing, tenting, camping, and boating. They observe and participate in the processes of the natural world. Furniture, clothing, architecture, and the other details of daily life are made up of elements derived from the life of the Middle Ages. The houses seem “alive and sympathetic with the life of the dwellers in them.” Not only Morris's concepts of fellowship and communality, but also his very choice of dream vision genre are drawn from the past, without, however, the supernatural element of the medieval dream literature. Even though the novel is a didactic exposition of socialist ideals, its narrative frame allows for a tension between past and present, and present and future just as it does between dream and vision, and hope and despair.

Since *News From Nowhere* is a utopian romance, there is no place for hierarchical structure, its world being free from private property, executive authority, statecraft, and centralized administration; it is free from governmental bureaucracy, legal systems, large scale commerce and industry, division of art and labor, contractual marriage and formal schooling of children, who learn through nature. Morris's imagined world, idyllic as it is, rests entirely on peace and cooperation, common sense and reasonableness, and gender equality with great respect to women, who are of course considered more suitable for domestic work for their own pleasure and benefit. While Morris's utopia adopts certain medieval qualities, it also does away with many others sought by Carlyle and Ruskin and recognizes the necessity of revolutionary class war they were afraid of. To Morris, peaceful evolution simply cannot and will not work. However, Carlyle, Ruskin, and Morris form an axis in the sense that they all insist upon the importance of joy in labor and relevance of art to life, criticizing political and economic inequality. Carlyle does so from the standpoint of a reactionary conservative; Ruskin as a near socialist, and Morris as a socialist, whose “rejection of state socialism” and whose “ambition to transform the relationship between humankind and the natural world,” commented his publisher, “give *News from Nowhere* a

particular resonance for modern readers.” All these writers including Tennyson, Arnold and Mill shared a sense of the virtues of the medieval past and were fascinated with certain aspects of it in varying degrees. They were drawn to the distant time to find a way to address contemporary wrongs and deficits and urge personal as well as institutional reforms. They had, however, their own individual approaches in doing so, from deep conservatism to rational utilitarianism to liberal progressivism.

Not just then but in modern times too, medieval culture together with its Arthurian myths and legends and their themes of quest and chivalric ideals have been constantly adapted in literature, art, and film. The Norton editors assert that “Malory's Arthurian world is a fiction... like the slave-owning plantation society of Margaret Mitchell's *Gone with the Wind* [1936], whose southern gentlemen cultivate chivalrous manners and respect for gentlewomen.” They argue that “Nostalgia for an ideal past that never truly existed is typical of much historical romance,” in which there was actually no distinction between history and romance in the past (*The Norton Anthology of English Literature*, 2006). The Middle Ages continued to be looked back and relived by W. B. Yeats, arguably the greatest poet (and the greatest love poet too) of the twentieth century. Yeats, who believed in the gradually disappearing aristocratic Anglo-Irish tradition and heritage, strove to love Maud Gonne in what he called "the old high way of love" (“Adam's Curse”) that needed "much laboring" and "high courtesy," meaning ancient chivalric love, which, he lamented, had been going out of fashion and now seemed "an idle trade enough." Yet he discovered his own meaning in it--a meaning which functioned toward the symbolic unity and cohesiveness of all his work (Khan 2002).

To call Yeats “the last courtly lover,” claims Gloria Kline, is also to call him a mythopoeist, who, "coming at the close of an era re-creates the ideals of its decaying social structures so that the hero's quest becomes a critique of the existing social norms and points to a futuristic order which is envisaged as integrating the valuable residues of the past and present” (Kline 1983). In Yeats's poetry, Maud Gonne is the goddess under whose feet he would like to spread the embroidered "cloths of heaven" (in the poem of that title): But I, being poor, have only my dreams;

I have spread my dreams under your feet;

Tread softly because you tread on my dreams.

Evidently Yeats's early verse offering his love to Maud Gonne is supplicatory and idealizing. His worship of her is clearly in courtly love tradition where the lady, because of her superior

station in life, remains unattainable and receives such adulation as if she were a goddess. As "the last romantic," who "was perhaps also the last courtly lover," he views her as intensely desirable but hopelessly out of reach (Bradford 1962). In keeping with courtly love, "characterized by religious worship of the female and male self-abasement," his "early poetry consistently deploys the traditional romance structure of elevation and abasement: the mistress is above and the lover is at her feet" (Cullingford 1997).

To conclude, in addition to other modern poets and writers such as E. A. Robinson (1869-1935), Laurence Binyon (1869-1943), John Masefield (1878-1967), John Arden (1930-2012), Peter Vansittart (1920-2008), and Marion Zimmer Bradley (1930-1999), whose *The Mists of Avalon* is a popular feminist retelling of the Arthurian legends, modern social and political scientists continue to idealize the medieval past. Today's thinkers and researchers are found to have been influenced by the social, political, and economic aspects of the Middle Ages. Parag Khanna, who was named a "young global leader" by the World Economic Forum and one of the "75 Most Influential People of the 21st Century" by *Esquire* magazine, believes that during the Middle Ages states/polities/communities lived together peacefully without dominating each other. He is calling for a medieval-style multipolarity where both the developed and developing economies, both in the East and the West, would exist side by side without being confrontational. Currently a senior research fellow in the American Strategy Program at the New America Foundation in New York, Khanna is propagating the ideas of "neo-medievalism" and the interconnected multipolar future through his book *How to Run the World: Charting a Course to the Next Renaissance* (2011/Random House).

Finally, as it has been said at the beginning, Victorian medievalist texts, like the texts of any other period, can indeed be read in a number of ways, one being examining their structural, thematic and symbolic multiplicities and intertextualities and historicizing them with reference to a culturally heterogenous representation away from mere spiritual introversion and introspection, thereby expanding the disciplinary boundaries into the interdisciplinary. By definition any historicist study has a progressive and forward-looking import with an objective and dispassionate support for the social and humanitarian. Historicism may not be very keen in distinguishing a good work from a bad one, as Johnston claims, but it "values [texts] for their historical influence or socio-political impact." And that is what a text is, without exception a Victorian one, which does speak to that effect and leaves behind a trail of historicist thought.

Historicism is a move beyond, in the words of Aidan Day, “the self-referential, self-mystifying, self-transcendentalizing” ideology, which, by contrast, contains elements of reactionary politics, political conservatism, and the tendency of anti-social and anti-humanitarian thought (Day 1996). It is a representation of a range of cultural forms which include both the literary and non-literary, politically radical as well as conservative. Putting aside the traditional emotional identification with and absorption into the state of self-communing, and read, instead, with historicist thought in mind, Victorian texts as discussed above are seen to be navigating through a host of political and cultural reflections, creating a ramification of their meaning and achieving an augmented status of their social significance. The allusions they overtly make to diverse materials surely invite a historicizing analysis with a blend of poetry and politics, and dream and reality and correlates poetical longing with political fulfillment, religious impulse with magical enchantment, and the local with the exotic turning them into a fertile ground for a historically attentive cultural studies critic.

Notes:

Hobbes' *Leviathan or the Matter, Form, and Power of a Commonwealth, Ecclesiastical and Civil* (1651), written from exile in France at the end of the civil war in England. Hobbes, who published a translation of Thucydides' *History of the Peloponnesian War* (5th century BC) with the intention of showing the evils of democracy, believed in a firm government with absolute authority lying in the hands of the sovereign monarch. He described the loose democratic natural state of mankind as a "war of every man against every man". In *Leviathan* he outlines the problems of such a war: "Whatsoever therefore is consequent to a time of war, where every man is enemy to every man; the same is consequent to the time, wherein men live without other security, than what their own strength, and their own invention shall furnish them withal. In such condition, there is no place for industry; because the fruit thereof is uncertain; and consequently no culture of the earth; no navigation, nor use of the commodities that may be imported by sea; no commodious building; no instruments of moving, and removing such things as require much force; no knowledge of the face of the earth; no account of time; no arts; no letters; no society; and which is worst of all, continual fear, and danger of violent death; And the life of man, solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short."

After having just seen the ghost of Hamlet's father, Marcellus says, “There's something rotten in the state of Denmark” (Act I Scene iv). Later Hamlet reflects that Denmark is a prison/dungeon and goes on to say: “I have of late—but/ wherefore I know not--lost all my mirth, forgone all/ custom of exercises; and indeed it goes so heavily/ with my disposition that this goodly frame, the/ earth, seems to me a sterile promontory, this most/ excellent canopy, the air, look you, this brave/ o'erhanging firmament, this majestical roof fretted/ with golden fire, why, it appears no other thing to/ me than a foul and pestilent congregation of vapors./ What a piece of work is a man! how noble in reason!/ how infinite in faculty! in form and moving how/ express and admirable! in action how like an angel!/ in apprehension how like a

god! the beauty of the/ world! the paragon of animals! And yet, to me,/ what is this quintessence of dust?
man delights not/ me: no, nor woman neither, though by your smiling/ you seem to say so. (Act II Scene ii).

Based on the myth of Brutus as the founder of Britain, Monmouth's history is the first to tell us about King Lear. Over one-fifth of the work is devoted to the birth and reign of King Arthur. Wace made the first mention of Arthur's Round Table.

Thomas of England in his story of Tristran/Tristram and Ysolt/Isolde/Iseult, Chretien de Troyes in his narratives of Lancelot, Guinevere, Perceval, Enid, and the Holy Grail, and then Marie in her lays of *Lanval* and *Chevrefoil*.

http://www.history.ac.uk/richardII/black_prince.html

Apart from the works mentioned below, Kucich also includes Warton's *Observations of the Fairy Queen* (1754), Clara Reeve's two-volume *The Progress of Romance* (1785), and the works by Joseph Addison, Edward Young, and the Gothic and sentimental romance writers (Walpole, Beckford, Radcliffe, Nicholson, M. Harley). (Like Chaucer's *The House of Fame*, which in a dream vision takes the poet on a journey in the talons of a gigantic eagle to the celestial palace of the goddess Fame, a journey that at many points seems to parody a number of similar other journeys such as Dante's journey in the *Divine Comedy*, journey to the underworld in Homer's *Odyssey* and Virgil's *Aenied*, and also perhaps Prophet Mohammad's journey to the heavens), Thomas Denton's *The House of Superstition* (1762) and William Jones's *The Palace of Fortune* (1769) feature a dream-vision motif in which a human protagonist finds himself magically transported to a celestial fairy world where he observes the constant internal struggle of mind between the bodily pleasures and the demands of duty. Such narrative frames and themes have been adapted from Spenser's *The Faerie Queene* and would be employed by Shelley in *Queen Mab* (1813).

Swinburne's Arthurian epic poems, *Tristram of Lyonesse* (1882) and *The Tale of Balen* (1896) and his translations of the fifteenth-century anti-social French realist poet Francois Villon including "In the Orchard," "Dolores" and "The Leper"; Rossetti's unconventionally aestheticizing and sensual "The Blessed Damozel" (originally composed in 1847 but published in 1870). Here it is to be noted that their German contemporary Richard Wagner also was attracted to the same medieval romantic legend of Tristan and Isolde in the early 1850s. Wagner's classical-style three-act opera *Tristan and Isolde* is based on his fellow German Gottfried's *Tristan and Isolde* of the early thirteenth century mentioned above. Inspired by his love for Mathilde and influenced by the philosophy of Arthur Schopenhauer, Wagner said in 1854: "Never in my life having enjoyed the true happiness of love I shall erect a memorial to this loveliest of all dreams in which, from the first to the last, love shall, for once, find utter repletion. I have devised in my mind a *Tristan und Isolde*, the simplest, yet most full-blooded musical conception imaginable, and with the 'black flag' that waves at the end I shall cover myself over—to die." See Robert Gutman, *Wagner-The Man, His Mind and His Music* (San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1990), p. 163. Later Wagner was again attracted to the Arthurian knight Parsifal to make an opera of the same name loosely based on Wolfram von Eschenbach's 13th century epic *Parzival* about the knight's quest for the holy grail and on Chrétien de Troyes' *Perceval, the Story of the Grail*. English novelist Peter Vansittart's novels *Lancelot* (1978) and *Parsifal* (1989) are worth-mentioning here.

For reference, see Works Cited below.

Citing a host of sources Verde elaborately documents the Eastern origin of the Gothic. He mentions how the famous English architect Sir Christopher Wren, the designer of St. Paul's Cathedral in London, widely acknowledged the descent of the Gothic style from the Eastern/Saracen/Arab and Moorish sources. Among the other sources, Verde also mentions Glen Lowry's *Islam and the Medieval West* (1983), W. R. Lethaby's *Medieval Art* (1904), and K. A. C. Creswell's *Early Muslim Architecture* and *Muslim Architecture of Egypt*, all claiming to the same effect.

Starting with Boethius's 6th century *Consolation of Philosophy* and Old English *The Dream of the Rood*, such dream visions include the 13th century anonymous *Romance of the Rose*, Gower's *Confessio Amantis*, Langland's *Piers the Plowman*, anonymous *Pearl*, Chaucer's *Parliament of Fowls*, *The Legend of Good Women*, *The House of Fame*, *The Book of the Duchess*, Robert Henryson's *The Testament of Cressid*, Gavin Douglas's *Palace of Honor*, and Rachel Speght's "The Dreame" (early 17th century/Jacobean period), among others. In this connection, one may like to add Coleridge's *Kubla Khan*, Keats's *La Belle Dame Sans Merci*, and Browning's *Childe Roland to the Dark Tower Came*.

This setting in the future is like Aldous Huxley's frightening 1932 dystopia (negative utopia) *Brave New World* set in the England of 2540 and George Orwell's 1949 dystopia set in the Oceania of 1984.

For a discussion of differences between Bellamy and Morris, see Carole Silver, *The Romance of William Morris* (Athens, Ohio: Ohio UP, 1982).

For a discussion of love and marriage and gender-specific issues in Morris, see Ruth Levitas, "Who Holds the Hose? Domestic Labor in the Work of Bellamy, Gillman, and Morris." *Ebsco Host : Academic Search Premier* 6 (1996), 15 March 2008. <<http://corvette.salemstate.edu:2561/ehost/detail?vid=4&hid=3&sid=a7ff7a45-7fc8-4ef0-9c41-0ca33040fd09%40sessionmgr9>>. Also Jan Marsh, "Concerning Love: News From Nowhere and Gender." *William Morris & News from Nowhere: A Vision for Our Time*. Eds. Stephen Coleman and Paddy O'Sullivan. (Bideford, Devon: Green Books, 1990): 107-125.

Originally an Indian, Khanna was educated in the UK and the USA, trained in political science/economy/philosophy. See the Khanna interview with Tom Verde, *Saudi Aramco World*, May/June 2011, pp. 40-43 (available online).

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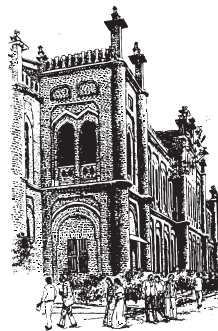
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Deviant Stylistic Devices: An Analysis of Grammatical and Graphological Deviation in the Select Poems of e.e.cummings

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Abstract

e.e.cummings' language does not belong to 'most people' and 'non-individuals.' His language belongs to him only as he is concerned with freedom and uniqueness of expression. He discards, in a systematic way, all the conventions of the language when they obstruct direct communication with his readers. He aspires to communicate, his experiences of the world to his readers in a simple language: to achieve this objective he forms his own set of additional linguistic rules which provides him more expressive but strange language. This strangeness and uniqueness of his language help him to secure a place among the galaxy of the poets who are known for their strange experiments in language. This paper attempts to undertake the task of a stylistic analysis of a sample of ten poems by cummings with special references to grammatical and morphological deviations, it studies cummings's deviant stylistic devices and techniques used in his poetry.

e..e.cummings's poetry represents an irresistible challenge for linguists who are interested in describing and analyzing the aesthetic use of language. He is one of the poets who are often sensitive to the productive properties of morphemes, in other words, he utilizes creativity by producing new words for saturating their aims (Falk, 1978: 35). Through his deviant style cummings tries to create an astonishing reality that surpasses all limitations. His reality is too intense and powerful that a regular form is unable to capture its bewildering power. Realizing this fully well, cummings decides to go beyond the constraints of the linguistic forms with all the conventions and insipid attitudes going with them. He carves out a fresh language for all his poetic requirements. though deviant from all conventional viewpoints, it is usually creative, novel, fresh, original and functional.

There is no separate grammar of cummings language. Grounding himself firmly in the English language, he has only taken great liberties with customary grammar in order to create something new and surprising to express himself. He believes that his reader's resources of comprehension are fully developed but are never fully exploited by normal reading. He refuses to obey the strait-jacketed rules of grammar. According to cummings the portrayal of the confused and chaotic world in simple, grammatically well organized sentences is unattainable. It demands structures equally confused and abrupt. To carry out

the description of the chaotic world Cummings ignores the conventional restrictions of selection and violates the principles of expectancy in language. He manipulates the language to go along with the particular form of his experiences. He reverses the conventional SVO order of English, deletes the 'be' verb, dislocates the articles, violates collocational conventions, introduces conversation involving more than two characters and neglects various other rules of grammar to grant his poetry a deviant style.

Inversion of common construction

Cummings uses unconventional syntactic devices to create an unexpected grammatical deviation. The distortion of conventional English word-order, even beyond the usual degree of poetic license, occupies a prominent place in Cummings' style. Inversion of common construction is a very common phenomenon in his poetry.

He ignores the rule that the two adjectives of the same class be linked by 'and'. Therefore this violation of the normal order of adjectives results in the long chain of adjectives without any connection.

and i see the brutal faces of

people contented hideous hopeless cruel happy (t.h.r.p.s. 14-15)

Here the adjective order can be re-arranged correctly as 'people contented hideous hopeless cruel (and) happy' Similarly in '

if i have made, my lady, intricate

imperfect various things chiefly... (i.i.h.m.l. 1-2) .

various should precede the other adjectives it should be joined by 'and', "various intricate (and) imperfect things" is the correct expression. Similarly in

...when the world is mud-

luscious the little

lame balloonman (i.J-s.w.t.w. 2-4)

the queer

old balloonman whistles (i.J-s.w.t.w. 11-12)

love the every only god (love is the every only God 1)

the sweet small clumsy feet of April came (If i have made, my lady 14)

The above instances are the examples of the violation of the constraints of connecting two adjectives by 'and'. Sometimes adjectives are placed between the articles against the rules of grammar. As the title of the poem 'a pretty a day' indicates, here 'pretty' which is an

adjective is placed between the articles.

Verbal Shift is quite common in Cummings' poetry. The position of verbs is not definite sometimes they are initial in position and sometimes medial. This results in giving the final position to the subject. For example in the following instance the main verb is placed before the subject and the 'be' verb.

or molehills are from mountains made (a.f.b. 3)

as hatracks into peachtrees grow (a.f.b. 8)

Similarly in

from each last shore and home (i.e.o.g. 8)

In the given example the main verb is placed after the object. Cummings is also fond of ignoring the Subject verb agreement.

and genius please the talentgang (a.f.b. 6)

The subject does not agree with the verb. The verb is in the plural form while the subject is singular. It should be written as 'and genius pleases the talentgang' *one* also come across the reversal of modifiers in Cummings' poetry.

(...and everybody never breathed

quite so many kinds or yes) (s.s.y. 15-16)

According to the rules of grammar it can either be 'quite many kinds of yes' or 'so many kinds of yes'. Therefore the deviant collocation of 'so' and 'quite' exists together. It is difficult to analyze the deviation in the use of adverbials, as some adverbial devices have become quite common in poetry. The poets have utilized different options of adverbial placement for variation in rhythm and emphasis. But in the poetry of Cummings this deviation command attention of the reader. The adverbials are deviant in their serial order, relative adverbial, or relative to the verbal or the entire sentence.

the snow carefully everywhere descending (s . i . n . t . g. b. 12)

one queerying wave will whitely yearn

from each last shore and home come young (i.e.o.g.7-8)

it needlessly

added (nobody loses all the time 13-4)

how, always (from

these hurrying crudities of blood and flesh) Love

coins His most gradual gesture (it is so long since my heart9-12)

In the given instances all the adverbials precede the verb instead Therefore violating the rules of grammar which results in deviation. Similarly in

always joyful selves are singing (s . s . y . 24)

you open always petal by petal myself as Spring opens

touching skilfully mysteriously her first rose (s . i . n . t . g . b . 7 -8)

The adverb 'always' and the object 'myself' are placed in a wrong position. The adverb is placed after the verb and the object is doubly deviated. Firstly the object is a reflexive pronoun instead of being a personal pronoun. Secondly it is separated from the main verb by 'always petal by petal'.

Ecllipsis is one of the prominent features of cummings' poetry. In

sweet spring is your

time is my time is our

time for spring time is lovetime

and viva sweet love"(s.s,y. 1-4)

there is a deletion of subject and verb. It should be written as sweet spring is your time (sweet spring) is my time (sweet spring) is our time.

Similarly in

(all the merry little birds are

flying in the floating in the

very spirits singing in

are winging in the blossoming) (s.s.y. 5-8)

the adverb of place is incomplete. The correct expression should be 'all the merry little birds are flying in the (sky) floating in the air...!'

(secretly adoring shyly

tiny winging darting floating

merry in the blossoming

always joyful selves are singing) (s.s.y. 20-24)

The qualifying noun and verb are missing here, therefore the expression becomes vague. The deletion of preposition and prepositional objects are also common in cummings' poetry.

man, may his mighty briefness dig

for love beginning means returns (I . e . o . g . 4-5)

The correct expression requires the addition of the preposition and prepositional object.It

should be written as 'man may his mighty briefness dig (for love) for love beginning means return. . The whole subject and main verb are missing in

since your mind has walked into

my kiss as a stranger

into the street and colors of a town (i.l.s.m.h. 5-7)

There is frequent deletion of 'and' in 'anyone lived in a pretty how town'. In

(with up so floating many bells down)

spring summer autumn winter (a.l.p.h.t. 2-3)

sun moon stars rain (a.l.p.h.t. 8)

(and only the snow can begin to explain .

how children are apt to forget to remember :

with up so floating many bells down) (a.l.p.h.t. 22-24)

'and' is dropped and the poet wants to say 'spring summer autumn (and) winter. Thus by deleting 'and' the poet creates deviation.

Uncommon Repetition

Through deletion cummings tries to 'effect the economy of expression but he also creates an unusual haunting quality in his poetry through deviant repetition of certain words. In the poem 'anyone lived in a pretty how town' the poet uses 'by' fourteen times. Similarly in the poem 'in Just-spring when the world 'and' has been used ten times.

long enough and just so long (a.f.b. 4)

has been is repeated thrice in the poem 'as freedom is a breakfastfood'. It occurs first after three lines, after four lines and finally after five lines. The poet indulges in repeating certain words or sentences to stress his expression as he wants his readers to pay more attention to the words or sentences frequently repeated. In the poem , "sweet spring is your", the poet repeats 'time' five times.

"sweet spring is your

time is my time is our

time for springtime is lovetime and viva sweet love" (s.s.y. 1-4)

The repetition, therefore, helps the reader to comprehend the poet's message.

Violation of Collocational Convention

cummings ignores certain selectional restriction within the same class of items, which results in accidental grammatical errors. This feature-incompatibility in free discourse is

quite common and it does not hamper comprehension of the sequence. It involves the selection of a singular verb where a plural verb is acceptable and vice-versa. It also includes the use of the past form of a verb in place of a non-past. There are instances where cummings uses plural verbs with singular subjects.

and genius please the talentgang (a.f.b. 6)

This deviation also involves a wrongly placed pronoun

you open always petal by petal myself (s.i.n.t.g.b. 7)

Here 'myself' is wrongly placed, the correct pronoun required is 'me'.

A very unique and significant deviant device of cummings is the conversion of intransitive verbs into transitive ones. Verbs like 'went' and 'dream' though they are intransitive verbs are used as transitive verbs.

and more by more they dream their sleep (a.l.p.h.t. 30)

reaped their sowing and went their came (a.l.p.h.t. 35)

Similarly, the use of personal pronouns in cummings poetry is also deviant. In

not a tree can count his leaves

each herself by opening (s.s.y. 17-18)

the poet uses masculine and feminine gender together for the same In

children guessed (but only a few

and down they forget as up they grew

autumn winter spring summer)

that noone loved him more by more (a.l.p.h.t. 9-12)

cummings uses the third person singular 'him' instead of third person plural 'them'.

Similarly in the following instance he personifies love and regards it as a human-being by using masculine singular third person 'his' instead of the third person neuter 'it'

how always (from

these hurrying crudities

of blood and flesh) Love

coins His most gradual gesture (i.l.s.m.h. 9-12)

The expressions

or hopes dance best on bald men's hair (a.f.b. 9)

man may his mighty briefness dig (l.e.o.g. 4)

are the best examples of the violation of norms of selectional restriction. The poet refers to bald men but in the same expression he also refers to 'bald men's hair'. In the second instance he 'modifies 'briefness' by using 'mighty'. The modifier 'mighty' is not suitable for 'briefness' as they do not go with each other.

Sandwiching of Elements

cummings often inserts co-ordinate or sub-ordinate elements in between a relatively conventional word or phrase. Fragments of these appended elements, usually indicated by parenthesis are indirectly related to the poem. They are scattered throughout the whole poem and if put together form a separate unit, which is indirectly related to the poem

rendering death and forever with each breathing

(i do not know what is about you that closes

and opens; only something in me understands

the voice of your eyes is deeper than all roses)

nobody, not even the rain, has such small hands (s.i.n.t.g.b. 16-20)

Similarly in the poem 'sweet spring in your" the stanza without the parentheses is followed by the stanza within the parenthesis throughout the whole poem. Another instance of sandwiching of elements is

that i have perhaps forgotten how, always (from

these hurrying crudities of blood and flesh) Love

coins His most gradual gesture (i.l.s.m.h. 9-12)

The subject 'Love' is separated from the "rest of the sentence by a parenthesis. .

Total Scrambling of Structure

cummings often presents completely chaotic structures. The chaotic structures indicate towards the confusion, and the emotional state of characters in the poem. There is no grammatical order in the following instance, but the utterance highlights the emotional state of a lover.

or if you wish be to close me, i and

my life will shut very beautifully suddenly(s.i.n.t.g.b. 9-10)

Similarly in the poem 'nobody loses all the time' the chaotic grammatical structure describes the confused state of mind of the poet, when he is unable to find out the reason of the failure of his 'Uncle Sol'

*luxuries that is or to
 wit farming and be
 it needlessly
 added (n.l.t. 10-13)*

To show the emotional exuberance and excitement of the lovers on the arrival of spring the poet uses completely scrambled structure.

*secretly adoring shyly
 tiny winging darting floating
 merry in the blossoming
 always joyful selves are singing (s.s.y. 21-24)*

The total scrambling of structure therefore is the deviant device employed by cummings to highlight the strong desires, confusion and emotional state of the characters in his poems.

Graphological Deviation

cummings's unusual style and the way he presents his poems on the page irks his critics. He presents his poems on the page with stretching out vertically and horizontally capital letters jumping where they do not belong, punctuation marks intruding, irregularly, and gaps appearing within and between the lines, all these peculiarities make his poetry outstanding and novel. Barring a few instances, these orthographic devices on a careful and close study appear to expand the possible dimensions of statement and meaning in a poem. Through these graphic techniques the poet achieves an expressiveness that demands the participation of the eye. Therefore these devices are quite sensible and creative, visually commanding the responses of a reader.

Some critics, who are unable to understand the expressive deviant devices of cummings, instead of admitting their ignorance criticize his typographical innovations. Critics like R.P. Blackmur claim that, "The typographical peculiarities of his verse have caught and irritated public attention" (*Blackmur, 1962:52*). On the other hand Blackmur *also* considers that these peculiarities "will have a *possible* critical importance to the textual scholarship of the future" (*Blackmur, 1962:56*). If the text is carefully analyzed these devices establish cummings as a poet deserving *all* praise for his multidimensional creativity. Appreciating cummings's poetry William Carlos Williams exclaims "To me, of course, e.e. cummings

means my language” (*W. C. Williams, 1972: 100*).

Devices producing Graphological Deviation

The outstanding graphic techniques in Cummings poetry comprise (i) the violation of conventional rules of the distribution of capital and lower-case letters and the use of the lower class 'i' for the first person singular personal pronoun (ii) tmesis or the separation of parts of words by intervening words (iii) Letter-dispersion resulting in words being taken apart syllablewise or even phonemewise (iv) omission of letters (v) spoonerism (vi) fusion of parts of words or of whole words (vii) permutation, where words are broken apart and re-distributed in the chunks of other sentences (viii) capitalization. These techniques can be grouped together under the term 'Irregular arrangement of the component of words and sentences'. The other devices of graphological innovations are: (ix) use and omission of punctuation marks (x) visual stanza or pictograph (xi) verbal camouflaging and (xii) unconventional lineation.

I. Violation of the conventions of distribution of capital and lower-case letters

The poet violates the arbitrary convention of beginning every line of poetry with a capital letter. Similarly, he revolts against the norm of beginning every sentence or every proper noun with a capital, letter. He thus abolishes these "academic norms" (Gorham B Munson, 1923:10) by using his own power of discretion. He propounds a very unusual graphological anomaly by violating the convention of writing a capital 'I' for the first person singular pronoun. His abolition of the convention of beginning a line with a capital letter, unless he has some other significant reason for following this convention, is another peculiarity of his. The convention of writing capital 'I' for the first person singular pronoun, while all the other pronouns are written with lower-case letters, is a discrimination among the different grammatical persons. To challenge this partial convention Cummings ignores this practice and uses the lower-case letter 'i'.

i see in the street where strong men

are digging bread

and i see the brutal faces of (the hours rise up putting of stars 12-14)

In some poems like 'nobody loses all the time' Cummings uses lower-case letter i for first person, singular pronoun but he begins a proper noun with a capital letter.

the sweet small clumsy feet of April came (i.i.h.m.l. 14)

i had an uncle named

Sol who was a born failure and (n.l.t. 2-3)

i remember we all cried like the Missouri (n.l.t. 33)

But in other poems like 'in Just-spring when the world' the poet uses lower-case letter to begin a proper noun. cummings violates the conventional norms of beginning a proper noun with a capital letter for the sake of creativity and strangeness.

and bettyandisbel come dancing (1.J-s.w.t.w. 14)

and eddieandbill come (i.J-s.w.t.w. 6)

Thus throughout the bulk of cummings' poetry the small letter 'i' has become the characteristic feature of his style. But the question arises that why does the poet use the lower-case letter for the first person singular pronoun when he exalts the individual and discards 'most people'. A simple answer to this question seems to be the fact that cummings treats both the first person singular and the second person with equal amount of significance. He does not consider the people acting as a group, as human beings. If 'you' is not written with a capital Y then there is no sense in writing a capital 'I'. In the introduction to *Collected Poems* he says "you and I are not snobs" (*E.E. Cummings, 1938:9*) cummings is of the opinion that it will be sheer snobbery to begin 'you' with a small letter and write 'I' in the capital shape. Therefore he tries to rationalize the general graphological rules of English by rejecting the conventional norms related to the use of pronoun 'I' and the capitalization of the first letter in every line of poetry.

II. Irregular arrangement of the components of words and sentences

cummings applies various deviant devices to make his work extraordinary and outstanding. His unparalleled way of inserting punctuation marks where they are not needed, - the irregular way of arranging phonemes and morphemes over the page and the capitalization of words or even parts of words, where we would normally not expect them, are the remarkable feature of his style. Thus cummings uses these devices to emphasize his viewpoint and to increase its effect.

III. Fusion

Fusion is the deviant device used by cummings to suggest simultaneity of activities or 'inseparableness' of certain items because of some semantic or emphatic reasons. This deviation involves fusion either of whole words with each other or of parts of words.

Fusion in the following examples denotes the inseparableness of expression

lame balloonman (i.J-s.w.t.w. 4)

and bettyandisbel come dancing (i.J-s.w.t.w. 14)

and eddieandbill come (i.J-s.w.t.w. 6)

and genius please the talentgang (a.f.b. 6)

Similarly in 'as freedom is a breakfastfood' a fusion of breakfast and food create new deviation. It is doubly deviated, firstly the poet uses breakfast- and food together creating semantic deviation. Secondly by fusing breakfast with food he points out 'inseparableness' of breakfast and food.

IV. Capitalization

cummings breaks the age-old graphological conventions of beginning every line of poetry or every *proper* noun with a capital letter. He also violates the norm of using the capital 'I' for the first person singular number of the personal *pronoun*. Friedman observes rightly "cummings wipes the slate clean as it were, for the appearance of capitals just where he wants them, and they do appear, their effect is maximised" (Friedman, 1967:113)

cummings employs capital letter in order to delay or to produce emphasis and pause. The main function of the capital letter used by cummings is to put stress on a word indicating special meaning or importance attached to it. Thus capitalization is just like underlining certain parts of a writing, to increase the intensity of expression. Emphasis is the purpose capitalization in the following lines.

the

goat-footed

balloonman whistles (i.J-s.w.t.w. 19-21)

how, always (from

these hurrying crudities

of blood and flesh) Love

coins His most gradual gesture (i.l.s.m.h. 9-12)

Women and men (both little and small) (a. 1..p . h. t. 5)

cummings uses capital 'M' for 'Man' to point out that the one who is goat-footed and sells balloon is a man. In the second instance he capitalizes 'l' of 'Love' to attract the reader's attention. By personifying and capitalizing love he wants to show its importance in life. The last example shows cummings deferential esteem for women. He places 'Women' before 'men' and capitalizes the 'W' of 'Women' to show his respect for them.

you open always petal by petal myself as Spring opens

(touching skilfully, mysteriously) her first rose (s.i.n.t.g.b. 7-8)

cummings compares his beloved with the 'Spring' and to make the comparison more

pronounced he capitalizes 'Spring'. The chief aim of this deviant device is to emphasize and stress the words, thereby helping the readers to pay more attention to the words or sentence significant from the point of view of the poet.

cummings strange use of capitalization, carrying significant motives, doesn't mean all instances of exotic capitalization are meaningful and justified.

*Sing Me Cann He Was A Diver on Xmas Eve like
Hell Itself* (n.l.t. 6)

There is no justification for the use of capitalization in the given instance. But such instances are very few to deny the poet, due appreciation for his remarkable creativity in capitalization.

V. Use and Omission of Punctuation marks

Deviant punctuation used in cummings's poetry is the most eye-catching feature. His punctuation symbols -- commas, semicolons, colons, periods, question marks, marks of exclamation, parenthesis, inverted commas and dashes are often very significantly employed and quite conveniently ignored when they are unable to serve any specific purpose. A poem may end without any punctuation mark or with a mere comma and give thereby a continuing and tentative effect.

people contended hideous hopeless cruel happy (t.h.r.p.s. 15)
the sweet small clumsy feet of April came (i . i . h . m . I. 14)

He omits the comma in the given lines in order to hasten the expression, as he does not want his readers to pause.

The use of parenthesis is quite common in his poetry. 'Parenthetical brackets' often help to keep two sentences or expression running. In the poem "sweet spring is your", the stanzas without and with parenthesis are alternatively arranged. Parenthesis help to keep two sentences running one inside and one outside the brackets. As

*in rendering death and forever with each breathing
(i do not know what it is about you that closes
and opens; only something in me understands
the voice of your eyes is deeper than all roses)
nobody, not even the rain, has such small hand* (s.i.n.t.g.b. 16-20)

the two sentences are running parallel each giving different expression but one is directly, and the one inside the parenthesis is indirectly connected to the poem.

Spacing is another peculiarity of cummings's art. It performs the function of punctuation mark. cummings breaks up a single word, phrase or clause by inserting spaces, he does it with an intention to slow down the reading as well as to reinforce the meaning

...the little

lame balloonman

whistles for and wee (i.J-s.W.T.W. 3-5)

on earth a candle is

extinguished the city (t . h . r ' . p : s . 4-5)

and it

is dusk *on earth* (t.h.r.p.s. 23-24)

Hence spacing is the deviant device through which cummings indicates where pauses and emphasizes should come in the reading. Therefore acting like a stage director he directs and manipulates the general effects of spacing which includes surprise, climax, simultaneity and immediacy. As in the "whistles far and wee" he uses spacing to show the distance. In "extinguished the city" by spacing he indicates the darkness which follows when the candle is extinguished. Again the spacing after 'dusk' indicates towards the darkness.

VI. Visual Stanza or Pictograph

The kind of typographical design was in fashion during the Elizabethan age. In this type of deviation the lines are arranged in reference, not to rhyme and meter, but to a shape reflecting the poet's thought. The visual appearance of cummings's poems is peculiar and strange due to his interest in contemporary art and not due to the influence from other writers. In the poem 'in Just-spring when the world' the poet describes a 'lame' and 'goat-footed' 'balloonman'. To make his expression more impressive while describing the man he arranges the words in such a manner that through the words he is able to draw the picture of the leg of the disable man

it's

spring

and

the

goat-footed

balloon Man *whistles* (i.J-s.w.t.w. 16-21)

VII. Unconventional lineation

Unconventional lineation in Cummings' poetry involves irregularity in the arrangement of lines, that is the lines in the stanza are not arranged according to their length. He can conveniently write a line consisting of a single letter, a single syllable, a single word, a phrase or a long chain of words. The length of a line depends upon the importance of it in the eye of the poet or on the object described

it's

spring

and

the

goat-footed (i.J-s.w.t.w. 16-20)

the hours rise up putting off stars and it is

dawn

into the street of the sky light walks scattering

poems (t.h.r.p.s. 1-3)

The lines can also be broken midway *or* may have systematically fractured words to end and begin them.

in Just-

spring when the world is mud—

luscious the little

lame balloonman (i.J-s.w.t.w. 1-4)

(and down went

my Uncle

Sol

and started a worm farm) (n.l.t. 36-39)

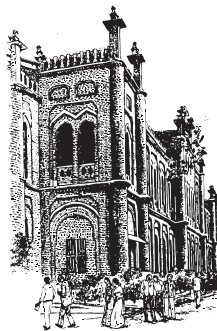
In pictogram the lines are arranged in an order, required by the 'form the poet has in his mind. As in the poem. "in Just-spring when the world" the lines are arranged to form the leg of a 'goat-footed' man.

Cummings is a deviant poet not only for the sake of deviation but to communicate some extra-textual significance to a discerning eye. His deviant adds a new life to the dull and stale conventional poetry. Through the deviant techniques the poet successfully grants a

haunting quality and a strange charm to his poems, it's his deviant style which excites his readers curiosity and motivates them to explore he rich linguistic deviations.

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Vladimir Nabokov's *Lolita*: Correlating art with life in 1950's America?

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Abstract

Vladimir Nabokov's notorious novel Lolita has, despite its seemingly noxious subject, largely evaded censorship and condemnation by discouraging the reader from taking its story at face value. Nabokov achieves this by stylistic and narratological means, playfully distancing the reader from the actual horror of Humbert Humbert's actions.

*Vladimir Nabokov's Lolita (1955) is undoubtedly one of the most debated novels of postwar America, venturing as it did to tread upon subject matter generally regarded as taboo. Nabokov himself was an Eastern European immigrant. Born into an affluent family in Czarist Russia, he came to the United States in 1940 and gained U.S. citizenship five years later. From 1948 to 1959, he taught literature at Cornell University in upstate New York; in 1960 he moved permanently to Switzerland. Nabokov is best known for his novels, which include the autobiographical *Pnin* (1957), about an ineffectual Russian émigré professor; and *Lolita* (U.S. edition, 1958). Nabokov's pastiche novel, *Pale Fire* (1962), another successful venture, focuses on a long poem by an imaginary dead poet and the commentaries on it by a critic whose writings overwhelm the poem and take on unexpected lives of their own (VanSpanckeren, 105)*

Lolita can be placed without difficulty within an “essentially realist American fictional tradition” (*ibid.*), and has been largely perceived and treated as high art—despite initial accusations of vulgarity. Its title became an enduring feature of American everyday language, “Lolita” having somewhat inaccurately evolved in meaning to signify a young, manipulative, sexually attractive girl who sets out to allure older men. The text confronted the literary and ethical sensibilities of 1950's American culture, as evidenced by the problems that the author had while attempting to secure a publisher for his manuscript. It is worth mentioning that Nabokov already had a well-established status in both literary and academic circles when he set out to publish *Lolita*. Even so, as Nabokov's biographer Brian Boyd remarks, the novel was immediately turned down by American publishers as being “sheer pornography”. It took a French press whose owner was struggling “to make some quick money by publishing in English, in Paris, every book rejected by Anglo-American censorship that came his way” to get *Lolita* into print in 1955, a full two years after the manuscript had been completed. Not until 1958 did its surging underground following motivate an American publisher to print the novel in the United States (see 262, 264, 266 f., 356 f.).

The resistance that *Lolita* encountered from potential publishers was confirmed by its mixed reception in the public sphere, where it was subjected to execration, praise and censorship. Nabokov's novel generated, in addition, an international stir. France, the apparently less prudish country in which *Lolita* had first been published in 1955, only one year later saw fit to ban the novel. In Britain, John Gordon, the editor of a major newspaper, the *Sunday Express*, described *Lolita* as “the filthiest book I have ever read” and “sheer unrestrained pornography” (295), and British customs officials were instructed to seize all copies entering the country. *Lolita's* increasing recognition and acceptance in the United States persuaded the U.S. government not to press charges when it was finally issued there. It had gained enough approval and support among academics and literary critics to avoid prosecution, and the book was a massive bestseller. Reviewers were provoked to interrogate the morality of both text and author, for many wanted to or rather ventured to lessen the impact of the novel's more disturbing features by claiming that the book was of aesthetic or educational significance.

Even *The Catholic World*, for instance, initially declared that the novel was “a romp” and conceded that it might hold “a certain clinical authority” as a “study of an unnatural infatuation”, before reverting to expectations: “But the aura of evil, the implications of a decadence universally accepted and shared—this is a romp which does not amuse” (72). Elizabeth Janeway of *Time*, meanwhile, heaped high praise on *Lolita*, though not without concluding: “As for its pornographic content, I can think of few volumes more likely to quench the flames of lust than this exact and immediate description of its consequences” (25).

According to Ruth Pirsig Wood, “Nabokov gives us signals, so we see incest in *Lolita* as artful metaphor” (118). Despite *Lolita's* morally unattractive topic—the pedophilic relationship between a middle-aged man and a twelve-year old girl—the novel repeatedly reminds the reader that “this is only a game” (*Lolita*, 20). Thus concerned with stressing the fictive nature of a text already understood to be fiction, the narrative seemingly endeavors to restrict the possibilities of interpretation by playfully warning against any reading that takes it at face value. One “reader” who errs in this respect is John Ray, Jr., Ph.D., the fictional psychologist into whose hands Humbert Humbert's confession falls. In his overly didactic, self-aggrandizing “Foreword” to Humbert's story, Ray announces that “*Lolita* should make all of us—parents, social workers, educators—apply ourselves with still greater vigilance and vision to the task of bringing up a better generation in a safer world” (6). Humbert is close-to-40 European, an unsuccessful *littérateur* and dilettante critic, in possession of a small though adequate private income but faced with an enormous and

agonizing private problem: he is aroused to erotic desire only by girls on the brink of puberty, 9-to-14- year-old “nymphets”. Shakespeare's “Juliet”, Dante's Beatrice and Petrarch's Laura all fell within this age range, but to poor panting Humbert Humbert, the twentieth century denies the only female things he really desires (Janeway, 25).

Linda Kauffman has explained that the parodic Foreword “pokes fun at readers who so simply correlate art with life”, acting as “an injunction against the kind of reading that foregrounds issues like child abuse” (58). Astutely, she points out that the author's “Afterword” to the novel, despite the fact that “critics take Nabokov at his word”, is “as thoroughly cunning an impersonation as John Ray's Foreword. The 'end', in other words, is as much a part of the fiction as the beginning” (*ibid.*). Most readers would rather identify with Nabokov himself, whose “Afterword” to the novel further dictates the terms of interpretation: “I am neither a reader nor a writer of didactic fiction, and, despite John Ray's assertion, *Lolita* has no moral in tow. For me a work of fiction exists only in so far as it affords me what I shall bluntly call aesthetic bliss...” (*Lolita*, 314).

With such an explanatory framework, readers who approach *Lolita* as anything other than the apotheosis of the Russian author's “love affair with the ... 'English language’” (316) are made to feel that they are taking its mysterious characters and intricate plot too literally. Consequently, in Trevor McNeely's estimation Nabokov has succeeded in crafting the ultimate literary game, displaying the “inherently repellant actively in such a way that the public will not only read and enjoy a book about it, but also [so] that the scholarly community again will work it into a *cause célèbre* like [James Joyce's] *Ulysses*...” (185). Paying careful attention to the artifice of his narrative via parody, self-referentiality, and witty wordplay, Nabokov has Humbert cunningly lure readers into his point of view while distancing his reader from the real horror of his actions, for example, from the very first page, when he satirically pronounces, “You can always count on a murderer for a fancy prose style” (*Lolita*, 9). Humbert's dark sense of humor and disarming candor make it difficult to pigeonhole him as a mere “sex fiend”. A pioneering evaluation in this regard is Lionel Trilling's essay “The Last Lover” (1958), in which the critic contends that “it is likely that any reader of *Lolita* will discover that he comes to see the situation as less and less abstract and moral and horrible, and more and more as human and 'understandable’”. Only in letting “the immediate influence of the book diminish a little with time” and freeing “ourselves from the rationalizing effect of H.H.'s obsessive passion”, do we realize how “we have been seduced into conniving in the violation...” (331 f.). Trilling, furthermore, suggests that Nabokov “chose his outrageous subject matter [because] he wanted to write a

story about love”; for “in recent fiction no lover has thought of his beloved with so much tenderness” and “no woman has been so charmingly evoked, in such grace and delicacy, as *Lolita*” (*ibid.*, 333 f., 341).

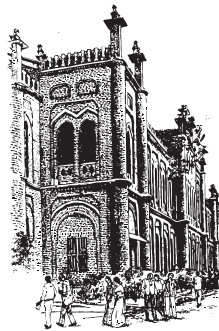
In 1955—the same year that *Lolita* emerged into print—sociologist Nelson Foot published a fittingly titled article, “Family Living as Play”. According to Foot, “the family home may be most aptly described as a theater”, with each member performing for the others: “the husband may be an audience to the wife, or the wife to the husband, or the older children to both” (quoted in Lynn Spigel, 164). This can be observed in the novel’s dialog. From the moment that he joins the Haze family as a paying guest, Humbert is assigned the twin roles of actor (a pedophile playing the role of a “normal” human being) and audience (an outsider with a front row seat to the daily mother-daughter dramas normally ensconced behind closed doors). His “promotion from lodger to lover”, despite his distaste for his new bride’s “pitifully ardent, naïvely lascivious caresses”, merely requires some adjustments in his performance, such as conjuring thoughts of his stepdaughter while fulfilling his “nightly duty” in the bedroom (*Lolita*, 75 f.).

Charlotte—*Lolita*’s widowed mother, though her maternal persona hardly echoes the iconic postwar maternal archetype)—in turn, leaps into the role of the newlywed homemaker as culled from such publications as “Your Home Is You” (78). “Into the fifty days of our cohabitation”, notes the narrator, as if to underscore the parodic quality of the relationship, “Charlotte crammed the activities of as many years.... With the zest of a banal young bride, she started to ‘glorify the home’” (77). On the stage that is the Haze-turned-Humbert home, Charlotte appears to fancy herself as the set designer, with bold plans to bathe the dingy abode in “ecru and ocher and putty-buff-and-snuff” (*ibid.*). And when it comes to attending to the needs of her spouse, she who was capable of such a “harsh, cold, contemptuous attitude toward an adorable, downy-armed child of twelve” becomes “a touching, helpless creature” content to stare at Humbert “with intolerable tenderness as I consumed my ham and eggs” (76 f.). So masterful is Humbert’s husbandly performance that it threatens to deny the fulfillment of his dream to substitute his proxy *Lolita* with the actual article.

Nabokov has proved to be an important writer for “his stylistic subtlety, deft satire, and ingenious innovations in form”, as are all displayed obviously in *Lolita*, through the abovementioned dialog. His tone, as is clear through his novel’s characters, is “partly satirical and partly nostalgic” (*Outline of American Literature*, 105). All these artistic characteristics have been of great influence on writers like John Barth and Thomas Pynchon.

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Postcolonialism – An overview

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Abstract

The term 'Postcolonialism' has a phenomenal association with imperialism and it emerged as a distinct form in the 1990s. Nevertheless, imperialism gained momentum only with the expansion of the British Empire paving way for the spread of capitalism that was to impact world economy. Due to the unassailable presence of the British in the colonized countries, they began to establish their law, educational system and religion and ultimately made the indigenous people feel inferior to them. The dominance of the Whites is also evident in the literacy sphere. This has been observed and critiqued by post colonial theorists. As a matter of fact postcolonialism is a critical theoretical approach in literary and cultural studies and extends to politics indicating vehement opposition to the unjust and unequal forms of political and cultural authority. This paper attempts a study of the perspectives of the renowned postcolonial thinkers and their postcolonial ideologies and thereby providing critical insights into postcolonialism and the way in which it has to be approached.

'Postcolonialism' is an idea that has a phenomenal association with imperialism. The word imperialism is derived from the Latin, *imperium* that has meanings such as empire, realm, power, dominion, authority and command. It is commonly understood as dominion over a foreign state and transmission to the natives the political ideals, cultural values and language of the colonizer. Imperialism as a phenomenon is not recent. Rather, it has been there since the origin of civilizations. Nevertheless, imperialism has gained currency only with the expansion of the British Empire.

Britain ventured into extending its empire by the end of seventeenth century. Since then, it started ruling countries all over the world till the mid- twentieth century. In the name of administration the colonies were governed by the British laws and customs. Eventually, colonization propelled the spread of capitalism that was to impact world economy.

Besides, the colonial rule was a means of educating the native people on White Superiority. By establishing their law, educational system and religion the British made the indigenous feel inferior to their rulers. Their culture: standards and ideas of culture were proclaimed superior to the culture of the indigenous.

A trend of considering the hegemonic Western culture as paradigmatic came to be adopted by the colonized, called the 'other'. The dominance of Whites is not restrained to

the socio-cultural, political, legal, administrative, religious and economic fields but is also evident in the literacy sphere. Literary works of the Whites and the non-Whites consciously and unconsciously project the White supremacy. This has been observed and critiqued by post colonial theorists.

Early stages of anti – imperialism stressed the need to cling on to indigenous literary traditions. But, postcolonial discourses encompass issues of gender, race, ethnicity and class. Habib elaborates:

[P]ostcolonial discourse potentially embraces, and is intimately linked with a broad range of dialogues within the colonizing powers, addressing various forms of “internal colonisation” as treated by minority studies of various kinds such as African – American, Native American, Latin American and women's studies. All of these have challenged the main streams of Western philosophy, literature and ideology. (739)

Then, what is postcolonialism? What is the task undertaken by the postcolonialists? These are some of the questions that arise when one comes across the term postcolonialism. The first question is whether the term postcolonial bears a hyphen as in 'post - colonial' and whether it has to be analyzed literally or chronologically. If chronologically, the years after 1947—the year of Indian independence following the formation of Pakistan— may be taken into consideration. Or, the term may be associated with all sorts of resistance against colonialism.

With regard to the hyphenated term, critical studies expose the fact that it may refer to the chronological follow- up of the colonial empire. However, the term *sans* a hyphen may stand for liberty and reaction to colonialism. Nonetheless, certain critics are apprehensive if the very term postcolonial has a close association with colonialism. Despite debates on the nomenclature of the critical discourse there has also been a consensus that it underlines an extensive geographical and cultural diversity concerned with the influences and movements of postcolonialism. As has been encapsulated by Boehmer: “Postcolonialism therefore refers to those theories, texts, political strategies , and modes of activism the engage in such questioning, that aim to challenge structural inequalities and bring about social justice” (341 - 2).

Before that an analysis of the prefix “post” in the term becomes essential. Some critics are of the opinion that the “post” of postcolonial is used to refer to the period after the official colonial rule. Whereas some others feel that it is used to refer to the critique of colonialism. Whatever it may be firstly it is a historical marker and signifies changes in

intellectual approaches. It also deals with political, cultural and textual ramifications of the colonial confrontation between the West and non – West that began in the sixteenth century and runs steadily until now. However, there are two different traditions of postcolonial thinking as given below that club together the prime features of postcolonialism – the anti-colonial politics and global uphill battle for rights:

the theoretical post – structuralist, and
the practical political

Now, what is postcolonial theory? It studies the impact of colonialism on literature and literary studies. The Postcolonial theories came into existence in the 1960s with a focus on the study of the discourses in literature. Establishing its political traditions, postcolonialism can be placed on par with feminism as both share the key objectives. The British feminists were fully conscious of their outlook of non – white women as the 'other women'.

Consequently, feminism and postcolonialism were at the crossroads of self – awareness in 1960s that they were institutionalized and canonized later. Both groups staked their claim over their space in all walks of life. Based on Robert Young's views (11), the objectives of postcolonial criticism are:

to reexamine the history of colonialism from the purview of the colonized.
to gauge the impact of colonialism on the colonized in the spheres of economics, politics and culture
to probe into the decolonization process and
to partake in political liberation

It is to be noted that Bohmer also talks of the non – violent Mahatma Gandhi and his civil disobedience movement against the colonizers (1920s – 30s) of India. His feminine activity of spinning, a revolt against the imperialistic economy, his clarion call to the society to shed all gender inequalities, and to the women to participate in the freedom struggle and above all his skilful politicization of the use of domestic and bare commodity such as salt are manifestations of a different revolutionary thinking. The discourses that champion Eurocentric world view are critically assessed, examined and new discourses are created by the postcolonialists to counter the existing ones.

As a matter of fact postcolonialism is a critical theoretical approach in literary and cultural studies and also extends to politics indicating tremendous opposition to unjust and

unequal forms of both political and cultural authority. The postcolonialists defy universalism once claimed by colonial critics. Some of the renowned postcolonial theorists are Gayathri Spivak, Bill Ashcroft, Edward Said, Frantz Fanon and Homi K. Bhabha.

Postcolonial criticism is one of the varied critical approaches that focuses on a specific issue, the issues of cultural differences in literary texts. Broadly speaking, postcolonialism focuses on experiences of segregation, condemnation and above all resistance under systems of colonial control. Young opines that postcolonialism is mostly concerned with “diaspora, transnational migration and internationalism”(2) Nonetheless, too many key theoretical concepts and interpretations among postcolonial thinkers demonstrate the mixedness or 'creoleness' of postcolonialism, exposing a lack of consensus. There is obviously a divergence and also contradictions in the postcolonial readings on the significance of the concept of nation.

According to postcolonial nationalist thinkers such as Tom Nairn, 'nationalism' is by itself a contradictory or Janus-faced political conception. It is Janus – faced because of its tendency to look both to the past and to the future. National theorists such as Nairn, Benedict Anderson, Partha Chatterjee highlight that nation is dialectic between the traditional and the modern. They also project the pull between the establishment of claims to ancient cultural traditions and the passion for democratic structures that may pave way for social equality. In the beginning of the twentieth century, certain colonized societies, natives opted for modern political structures, taking the aid of technology. At the same time, popular nationalist intellectuals like Tagore and the Kenyan anti – colonial leader, Jomo Kenyatta proved to be advocates of nationalism. Eventually, a dual – sided nationalism seems to have evolved.

However, there are thinkers who consider nation as an upshot of modern conditions. This idea of Partha Chatterjee, the Indian theorist, is shared by Benedict Anderson in his work, *Imagined communities* (1983). Conversely, the notion that national identity is made of cultural experiences is prevalent in any society. With this in mind, it has to be comprehended that a postcolonial nation is a new colony/postcolony that is politically independent but economically dependent. This has been rightly presented by independent Ghana's leader Kwame Nkrumah as neo – colonialism that is, economic colonialism. Even Indian writer – activist Arundhati Roy vouches for it:

Independence came (and went,) elections come and go, but there has been no shuffling of the deck. On the contrary, the old order has been contrary, the old order has been consecrated, the rift fortified. We, the Rulers won't pause to look up from

our groaning table(63).

She too projects the economic colonialism as she rues that people have been 'blessed' with a wooden loaf.

It emerged as a distinct form only in the 1990s. Postcolonialism has acquired its present status only through books like Gayatri Spivak's *In Other Worlds* (1987), Bill Ashcroft's *The Empire Writes Back* (1989), Homi Bhabha's *Nation and Narration* (1990) and above all Edward Said's *Culture and Imperialism* (1993).

According to the postcolonial critics “whenever a universal signification is claimed for a work, then, white, Eurocentric norms and practices are being promoted...” (Barry 186) It is apparent that the colonizers are placed on a pedestal whereas the colonized the “other” are assigned marginalized roles.

Besides all these, Bohmer identifies three major historical and cultural genealogies of the postcolonial theory. To begin with, the radical and reformist nationalists and Marxist revolutionaries' shaping of the anti – colonial and non – western national liberation struggles is a demonstration of postcolonial ideologies. Frantz Fanon upheld this tradition. Having born in Martinique in the French Antilles in 1925, Fanon actively took part in the Free French Forces in Dominica in 1943 before being posted to Morocco. It was in the war that his anti racist sensibilities were sharpened. He could not put up with the treatment of the black Free French soldiers as subordinate to their white counterparts. The racism that he experienced on a daily basis during the war was unbearable.

Soon after the war, Fanon pursued psychiatric medicine in Lyons Medical School. The course paved way for Fanon's creation, *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961). The book explores the psychological impact of colonization on the psyche of a colonized. Postcolonialism propagates “reclaiming one's own past” that can be traced to Frantz Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961), a canonical book on the worldwide black liberation struggles of the 1960's. In fact, the three progressive stages of liberatory activism pointed out by Fanon has been quite influential in molding the postcolonial thinkers.

To him, the first level is the colonial assimilation of the politicized native whose identity in the second stage is reconstructed with the ultimate reclaim of the local cultural tradition. After doing so, the native retrieves his self that has been tampered due to colonial subjugation. But his third level is considered by many critics as the most disorderly phase of anti – colonial resistance. His views on using violence as a tool of rebellion is too far away

from Gandhi's non-violence.

In *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961) he fumes over the superiority of culture, language, customs and beliefs of the white colonizers in the literary texts too. The superiority thus established, the indigenous subject develops a sense of inferiority and eventually embraces the culture, language, customs and beliefs of the white colonizers. Nevertheless, he also betrays ambivalence by campaigning against the indirect means of alienation and subjugation of the colonized in the literary creations. If his prime mission is enabling the colonized to recognize their voice and restore their nation's past, his next is to facilitate a wearing away of the colonialist ideology that has devalued the colonial's past. He urges them not to have a negative outlook towards the pre-colonial era as that of barbarism as imprinted by the whites in the minds of the natives. Fanon's creeds are the roots from which the tree of postcolonialism has grown.

Secondly, the French post-structuralists such as Derrida, Foucault and Lacan with their ideologies and the resultant deconstructive impact have influenced postcolonial theorists like Edward Said, Gayatri Spivak, Homi Bhabha, Stuart Hall, Ania Loomba, Gyan Prakash and Leela Gandhi. It is to be underlined that postcolonialism has been directly addressed by Edward Said, an Egyptian-born, a Professor of comparative literature and a Palestinian activist, in his work *Orientalism* (1978). This book has ushered in the beginning of postcolonial studies. Applying non-materialist and post-structuralist approach—particularly that of Foucault's—to the different aspects of colonization, Said brings to fore the worldliness of colonial writing.

In line with Foucault's views, Said stresses on how power permeates through the varied systems of knowledge and how authority is implemented in the colonial scenario. Tapping sources such as censuses, newspapers, laws and anthropological works, the colonizers brand the natives of various colonies as inferior, secondary, effeminate and weak-willed. They also identify them to be people who are incapacitated to rule themselves. According to Said, Orientalist discourses aim at distinguishing the superior colonizers from the 'other'—Orientals, Africans, Caribbeans and Latin Americans. On reading Salman Rushdie and Fanon, Said identifies the tendency of resistance in the reading and writing processes that he terms “contrapuntal”. So he proposes that postcolonial writers and critics should find means of answering back the colonial oppressors in the regime of the texts.

Said also identifies how postcolonial writers by appropriating the styles, forms and symbols of the colonial European texts and by manipulating these laugh at and counter their representations in the Western texts. Best of all is they recreate their identity and present

their perception of the world. Thus, for Said postcolonialism is reclamation of one's culture. He confronts the issue of the Easterners as the 'Other'. He opposes the notion of admitting all that is western as superior and all that is non – western as inferior. He shrewdly points out that East is always viewed as “mystical and seductive”. He also brings to frontage the mindset of the whites that considers the Easterners as anonymous mass of people who lack their self - identity. They are looked at as persons with mean behavior that according to the whites is manifested in them due to the race that they belong to.

Said's views on postcolonialism can be summed up as the native's construction of the resistant and anti - colonial self that contests western outlook of their identity. From there it involves contrapuntal writing back using the techniques of the west, breaking all stereotypes of the other. However, Orientalism inspired related studies such as Ashis Nandy's effeminisation of the colonized vs. the hypermasculine colonizer, Gauri Viswanathan's exploration of Macaulay's educational system in India that instilled in the Indians the western cultural values and Christopher Miller's *Blank Darkness*, a study of the construction of Africa as the third unspoken other in comparison to the Europe and the East.

Nevertheless, Gayathri Spivak, an Indian – born, U.S. based critic, argued vehemently against the heterogenous nature of colonial oppression. She began her theoretical work in the 1980s and tried to figure out the prominent and subtle differences that distinguish the natives or 'the colonised', inclusive of the migrants and settlers in the globe from the colonizers. She points out various kinds of 'othering' and the varied categories in which they are oppressed. Spivak chooses to adopt her mentor, Derrida's deconstructive techniques to pinpoint contradictions within colonial representations, particularly specific gendered forms.

Her work is the result of her interaction with the India – based subaltern studies group of historiographers such as Ranajit Guha and Dipesh Chakrabarty. As a group they were concerned with refocusing colonial and also nationalist readings of Indian history popularizing the term “subaltern”. Tracing its etymological roots it is found that it has been derived from the work of the Italian Marxist, Antonio Gramsci.

Spivak's contribution to subaltern studies is commendable as it does not restrain itself with the study of the colonized but also stretches to incorporate studies on tribals, unscheduled castes, untouchables and very importantly women. In her essay, 'Can the Subaltern Speak?' she voices the mute sufferings of the 'silenced' groups. She smartly recognizes that despite the subjugation of the women being a universal phenomenon, the western women cannot speak for the 'other' as the range and the types of suffering differ.

However, Spivak underscores subaltern consciousness to be a product of elite discourses.

In *Other Worlds* (1987), Gayatri Spivak applying Derridean concepts of 'differance' to the Indian colonial context presents to the readers the prevailing supremacy in many different fields in the world, and how the same is affirmed. She also discusses their point of views, as the perceptible embodiment of civilization in general. Spivak's theoretical work is incomparable in the ways in which it undoes the theory against material circumstance, against the material disparity and deficit which one silently sanctions to allow others to suffer.

Thirdly, the influence of the third world literatures initially labeled as commonwealth literature since the 1950s is noteworthy. They are termed commonwealth because of the only fact that they were once colonized by Britain. However, it is pitiable to note that Great Britain is also an official member of commonwealth. Therefore, attempts have been made by postcolonial writers to engage themselves in decolonization. A shift in their attitudes has brought in a transition in the literary scenario. Such a change has been brought out by many African and Asian writers.

While discussing the postcolonial writers in general and Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* in specific Peter Barry in his *Beginning Theory: An introduction to Literary and Cultural Theory* underscores three stages, viz. *Adopt Adapt and Adept phases*. The writers, he observes, adopt the literary form on the criteria that it has a universal acceptance. Therefore, the blind acceptance of the western model can be called the *Adopt* phase of colonial literature. In the second stage the European form is adapted to a native subject matter. This is the second stage the *Adapt* phase. It is in the final phase, the *Adept* phase that the postcolonial writers announce their cultural independence, a culture devoid of European norms. In this stage the writer ceases to be an inconspicuous novice and turns out to be an independent writer. Besides these three stages, cross – cultural communication is also perceptible in the works of the postcolonial writers.

Of these critical theorists, Homi K. Bhabha is now taken for discussion. At first Homi K. Bhabha appears to be a literary theorist who is more political than literary. Still, he has become much talked about in the critical current of postcolonialism with respect to ethnicity and culture. This Indian postcolonial theorist currently teaches at Harvard University. His contribution to postcolonial theory is based on poststructuralism. He has been deeply influenced by Jacques Derrida and deconstruction by Jacques Lacan and his Lacanian psychoanalysis. In *Nation and Narration* he points out that the postcolonial countries are treated as a homogeneous entity. He also presents a critical assessment of

ethnicity that is practiced in today's academy. His essay, "Of mimicry and man: The ambivalence of colonial discourse" in his book *The Location of Culture* may help one to comprehend his views on mimicry, ambivalence of mimicry, representation and hybridity. Before delving into the mentioned terms, a look into ethnicity is taken because it seems to be the major concern for Bhaba in his essay. So, does ethnicity have something to do with national identity? Most often national identity is built on the identity of the self. The self-identity is an outcome of all the discourses and ideologies that shape a person. The multiple discourses and ideologies are not similar. Self-identity is thus determined by innumerable discourses and ideologies. Above all ethnicity refers to people occupying a "hybrid" position.

Basically, hybridity refers to fusion of Eastern culture with that of the West. However, Bhabha muses over it as a tool used by the colonized to confront different modes of oppression. The concept of hybridity can be applied to all kinds of subject positions but it is contradictory to the concept of nationality. At the outset the idea of nationality or belonging to a nation has to be redefined, according to Bhaba. He opines that all people talk of communities that are nothing but 'imagined communities'. So, nationality is also an 'imagined community'.

If nationality as an 'imagined community' is determined by national boundaries hybridity talks of belonging to many communities. In fact a nation comprises of people who belong to varied imagined communities. A homogeneous 'imagined country' includes also those who do not belong to the nation like the refugee, displaced stateless person and the nomads. The idea of 'nation', which is an idea of an entity, is projected as nationhood. Besides geopolitical and economic ideas of nationhood, a literary notion is also created. It is the task of postcolonials like Bhaba to see to it that we do not recreate the narratives of nationhood and lose the unheard voices in the narratives.

At first mimicry is regarded as the most effective strategy of the Imperial might and knowledge. Indeed, Bhabha in his essay, discusses the colonial mimicry which he states is the need or want to be reformed into the "recognizable other". When members of a colonized society imitate the dress, customs, language, culture and politics of their colonizers, it is said to be mimicry. In due course of imitation, the colonised intentionally suppress their cultural identity.

In fact, mimicry is deemed shameful. Though there is always a significant relationship between the colonizers and the colonized, they have always been condescendingly referred to as mimics or mimic-men. Even Frantz Fanon does not spare

such mimic men. He refers to them as “been-tos” in *Black Skin* and *White Masks*. But, mimicry is not all bad. In his essay, “Of Mimicry and Man” he says that it is sometimes unintentionally undermining. Mimicry at times divulges the artificiality of all symbolic expressions of might. When a colonized tries to mimic the English, especially, a particular code he very soon comes to know about its hollowness.

There is yet another way of mimicking. In course of time the concepts of democracy, equality and justice imparted by the colonizers get amalgamated with the culture of the colonised. Consequently, the adapted notions are merged with the native ideas as did Gandhiji. Gandhiji fused the Indian doctrines of asceticism and simplicity with the Western teachings of socialism and thereby projecting the Indian nationalism.

Along with this “reverse mimicry” or “going native” also has to be studied. If the colonized mimicked the colonizers, there has also been a situation where the colonizers mimicked the natives. For instance, Richard Francis Burton disguised himself as an Indian while he was a colonial administrator here. A similar case of reverse mimicry is evident in Rudyard Kipling's *Kim*. In the literary work he makes a White child grow outside the British Society. Despite his mean statements made about Indians, Kipling himself tried to break away from the Anglo-Indian society and live like an Indian adopting the culture of the Indians.

According to Bhaba, mimicry is camouflage, of becoming “mottled” rather than being harmonized with the background. Mimicry is a sign of double articulation, a sign of the inappropriate. When the colonised mimics the coloniser, the coloniser at one point ceases to be the Subject and turns out to be the Object sans power. Thus, there evolves an ambivalence caused by mimicry, wherein the colonizer and the colonised become both the Subject and the object. There arises a difficulty in identifying who is the 'Self' and who is the 'Other'. There emerges a cultural clash and to combat it the two sides meet “in between in a space called “Third Space”. There is where the negotiation of the culture takes place between the colonised and the coloniser and hybridity takes place. It is in the 'Third Space' of the hybrid that culture as art evolves.

Bhabha then writes about the process of creating culture in which he says postcolonial discourse is involved. It is the ambivalence of mimicry that leads to the excess or slippage. Further, he brings forth “Writing”, a mode of representation that which emerges between mimesis and mimicry. Adopting the process of writing and repetition one desires to be authentic through mimicry. The basis of mimicry is desire that enables an articulation of cultural, racial and historical difference that disturbs the demand of colonial

authority. A written articulation thus facilitates mimicry. Next, he emphasizes on the issues of colonial textuality, a kind of difference that is mimicry that is almost the same but not exactly.

The colonized subjects thus reflect a distorted image of their world to the colonizers by using their language. It is not merely copying but it concerns with reflecting back an image that is subtly different. Bhabha's study is largely centered on Lacan's conceptualization of mimicry as camouflage that targets on colonial ambivalence. Moreover, he reiterates the fact that mimicry repeats rather than re-presents and in the process of repetition, originality is lost. The colonized state strives to assimilate into a colonial collective through symbiotic relationship, in which the indigenous people shun the less civilized customs and cultural heritage, thereby the state becomes a replica of the home nation. The native population taps the principles of the hegemonic power to establish their own identities as subjects of the colonizer. In the essay, Bhabha suggests that the strategies that preach the superiority of the imperial discourse, in fact, showcase its inherent weakness.

Bhabha drives in the notion that mimicry produces something that ceases to be authentic and original. The “other” he foresees to have become a diluted “equal”. The imperial discourse is used by the “erstwhile-colonized people to deconstruct and subvert the language of their former coloniser....” (Dorairaj 147) To sum up, mimicry is both resemblance and menace. The colonizer desires that his subject mimic him but he can never faithfully ape or evade him. Thus, through his writing Bhabha tries to aim at destroying or undermining the assertive codes of the colonized or at finding an expression beyond the established codes.

A study of the renowned postcolonial thinkers and their postcolonial ideologies provides critical insights into what postcolonialism and the way in which it has to be approached. It is indeed a unique kit with varied tools that can be used to read, reread and analyze contemporary literary works. It is also quite useful in shaping one's ideas on how the colonizers have effectively molded many minds to make them silent subordinates of all

that is western.

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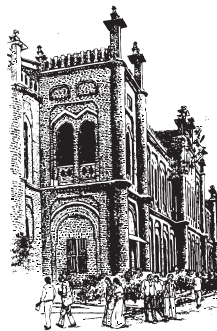
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The Theme Of 'Self Exploration and Quest for Spiritualism' In Jhabvala's *A New Dominion*

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Abstract

Ruth Praver Jhabvala has achieved an international reputation as an Indian novelist. Though she is a European, her marriage to an Indian architect and stay in India has given her deep insight into India's social, political, religious, economic, moral and cultural life. Her knowledge about the Indian social and cultural ethos can be marked by the variety of themes that she has undertaken in her novels. Her artistic excellence, as a novelist lies in the method of handling her material. She always utilized her vantage point of an outsider among India's bourgeoisie to her advantage. Her novels which appeared in quick succession, affectation and hypocrisy in the Indian middle class society. She handles her themes with dazzling assurance and presents penetrating and compassionate picture of human relationship ironically and realistically. Critics have compared her novels to those of Jane Austen because of her propensity for middle-class characters and the associated theme of love, marriage and family life. Her foreignness gives her another artistic advantage. She can explore with considerable assurance the themes of the expatriate in India and the mixed marriage, of Indian and European. Her novels are never about abstraction such as racial conflict or racial integration: they are about human beings- in love or in marriage-(Williams 9-10).

A New Dominion renamed 'Traveller' in its American edition symbolizes the theme as four major characters' journey from Delhi to the holy city of Banaras and thence to Maupur, moves deeper into India and further into experiences that put their sensibilities to severe and unexpectedly traumatic tests. The novel comes as a surprise and a pleasant change for her readers. It marks a new phase in Jhabvala's literary career, and a deviation from the norm which marked her earlier works. *A New Dominion*, is of course, India again but it is no longer the British colony that provided the setting for Forster's 'A Passage to India'. Mrs. Jhabvala presents India of new notes and rhythm reflecting sufficient change into socio-cultural perspective. It is more about the new phenomena of confrontation between the Indian spiritualism and the Western seekers. The theme of this novel does not present the East-West encounter but rather East-West harmony or ultimate compromise. It appears as an Indo-American union. Describing the novel, V.A. Shahne, very aptly writes:

Jhabvala's A New Dominion endeavors to grapple with a vast and varied, harmonious and discordant noble and profane reality that is India, almost ineschaustible in its range and inscrutable in its depth. (Shahne, p.113)

This novel is a sour bid and depression tale about European women tired of materialism; they come to India on a spiritual quest and end up in self-delusion. If Europeans are naive, gullible and weak nerve, the Indians fare no better; they are invariably small minded and sensual with a total absence of any genuine love or fellow-feeling. To the Westerners India is an abode of Spiritual guides; they come here having faith in India's conservative sects, beliefs, traditions and endeavor to merge with Hinduism for spiritual enlightenment. V.A.Shahne remarks in this regard:

India is no longer conceived negatively or pejoratively but rather in positive and adultery terms-as an ancient country with a rich heritage of philosophical thought and Spiritual insights, challenging, provoking, inviting and inspiring three eager-to-learn Western girls, Lee, Evie and Margret. India is evocative, inspiring, fulfilling and frustrating all at the same time in this novel. (Shahne, p.46)

India is always being an attraction for the spiritual seekers as it is a land of spiritual heritage and this country is an abode of spiritual guides. To the Westerners these spiritual values have been a great magnetic attraction which they do not find in their own land of materialistic abundance. Here, Mrs. Jhabvala attempts to transcribe multifarious reality of India. In this new complex of East-West interaction the West is represented by three girls Lee, Margaret and Evie who are on their spiritual adventure in India with a will to merge themselves in order to find their self at soul – level. Raymond, another visitor classed as a tourist. Indian spiritualism has gone profane at least in modern Indian god man's dominion as represented by the charismatic but sinister Swamiji. The novel projects the western view of the contemporary India as these westerners experience a whole race in its nerves.

The new guru cult of Indian religion and spiritual authorities which has been the subject of the two of Markandaya's novels, is another prominent aspect of modern India. But whereas Markandaya prefers to be silent, Jhabvala makes no secrets of her aversion to them, to her these religious gurus (swamiji) of post independence era are dubious characters aiming at exploitation of the seekers of soul. In 'A New Dominion' we observe the swamiji duping innocent female protagonist who drift from Western materialized life to experience the spiritual glory of India. Jhabvala shows how Westerners, especially tired of their life in hectic civilization, come to India in seek of spiritual peace and fall easy victims to these

dubious gurus. In this complex of East-West confronting relationship, these three girls- Lee, Margaret, Evie, who are on spiritual quest in the new dominion. They experience joys and sorrows of unexpected intensity; heaven and hell that India's variety encompasses with her high social tradition and rich spiritual heritage. As Shanta Krishnaswamy observes :

A New Dominion opens with the three Europeans girls, Lee, Margaret and Evie, each trying to get spiritual salvation under the guidance of a swami, a holy man . The swamiji, here, the head of the centre for spiritual rejuvenation, is a disturbing study of an ascetic who uses his powers to create illusions of hope and bliss and claims wholly the souls and bodies of all his disciples. He has no qualms, either moral or religious in abusing these girls sexually. (Krishnaswamy, p.325)

Jhabvala wrote about all her characters like a detached observer . Initially she wrote as an observer writing about things which enchanted her and later on about things she knew too well and found them to be beyond her tolerance and naturally she became bitter and critical . Her criticism always comes through one of her Indian characters Jhabvala excels in presenting incongruities of human characters and situations .The incongruities have social, familial and cultural implication and consequently in all the novels they become the main source of humour. V.A.Shahne analyzed this aspect of Jhabvala's novel wrote :

Jhabval, a merit as a creative writer lies in her being intensely aware of her limitations . She writes about possibly the only social segment of urban Indian, that she knows at First hand .(Shahne,p.231)

She takes the position of an outsider and articulates the experiences of these western women from the point of a woman on a quest. She herself plays the role of an omniscient narrator in this novel, narrating one small story(or episode) after the other under different headings, and we are tempted to compare this novel with B.S.Johnson's extraordinary novel 'The Unfortunates'(1969), which is also divided in twenty seven sections. Jhabvala has written her novel in a definite form, as each episode in the novel has a different line of thought. Her vision is ironic and even acidly sarcastic on the degradation of cultural ethics and spiritual heritage of this sub-continent. She brings the Indian and the western values in colloquy through the association or conflict of the characters from distant races in the Indian setting. V.A. Shahne is correct about this aim of Jhabvala when he says :

Her principal endeavor is to depict the various aspects of 'A New Dominion', the reality that is contemporary India in its social, cultural, religious, political and spiritual context. Since the dimensions of this reality are so vast and intractable, she tries to grasp it in

fragments through the characters she creates, both of East and West; they not only react to each other, creating a complex of human relationship which is central to the novel. (Shahne, p.47)

Lee, the central figure in trio, has a deep rooted quest for obtaining peace and spiritual enlightenment. She comes to India, as Jhabvala puts it, “ to loose herself in order to find herself”.(AND,p.10).Not only Lee, but Margaret and Evie, also came to this world they were weary of the western way of life, its mechanical society, its materialistic trend and its commercial stodginess. They try to get peace in Indian spiritualism and Swamis. Lee meets Margret in the mission of Miss Charlotte, and discuss about her self exploration and quest for spiritualism. She comes to know of Swamiji who lives in Banaras, speaks English, and does a lot for his foreign disciples. Lee decided to go there along with Margaret, with a hope to find peace and that of spiritual glory she has been looking for. In the Ashram they meet another European girl Evie, who has already won the blessing of the swamiji, and now is a sort of a personal secretary of Guru. Their attraction towards Swamiji is due to his magnetic personality and has the powers to create illusion of hope, through his eyes and words. He is the ruler of Ashram and lives as a God among his foreign disciples. Every disciple has to obey his words of orders. He wants all his female disciples not only spiritually but physically, he wants to posses them with their bodies and soul. About his next victim Lee, he explains to Raymond:

I want her to be mine. She must be mine completely in heart and soul and- yes, Raymond; he said, easily able to read his companion's thoughts, in body also, if I think it necessary.(AND,p.146)

These relationship of relatively voluntary dominion and subjugation in the novel fall into two categories, blur and family dissolve it refers to the arms of desire on the one hand and spiritual or religious quest on the other. The female disciples and male guru are linked in a relationship of traditionally sanctioned psychological thralldom of woman whose sexual component is only thinly veiled. Thus these three girls are in voluntary thrall to Swamiji the Spiritual guide as he creates an illusion of divinity by singing Rama-Gopala! Hare Krishna! In reality the Swamiji is a knave humbug waiting to victimize these innocent devotees to satiate his fleshy thirst. The foolish devotion of three girls has been aptly defined by S. Krishnaswamy as:

They placed their faith in the Swamiji, thinking he will being succor to their tormented souls and transform them into new unified beings at peace with themselves and the world.

Instead we have a sordid picture of selfish manipulation, social abuse, midnight orgies and callousness verging on cruelty. The Swamiji treats them as possessions... (Krishnaswamy, p.325)

Lee and Margaret are greatly influenced by Swami. Lee writes to Asha, Rao Sahib's sister widowed sister, how Swamiji has influenced Margaret's view of life and the world. She writes that her eyes have been opened and how she has got adjusted in that Ashram. As regards herself, she writes:

I can become the new person he wants to make me and I want much to be. (AND, p.78)

Jhabvala's narration about the blind faith of European girls in Swamiji in search of self actualization and spiritual peace is pathetic. In her quest to become a new person Lee, in a hypnotized state of mind, walks into the Swamiji hut at midnight where he was waiting to pounce on her. He took the advantage and pulling her on bed, he plunged into her. The tormented girl narrates the trauma of this rape.

He was terrible, terrifying; he drove right on to me and through me and calling me beastly names, shouting them out loud and at the same time hurting me as much as he could.(AND 199)

Lee's sexual harassment by the swamiji is frightening at any standard. After facing this self-destruction Lee's scorn and disgust for her fanatic endeavors for spiritualism is intensely pathetic. Swamiji is a rouge of the first water. It is rouges like him that have brought ignominy to Indian spiritual heritage abroad. They deserve hellish treatment here and in public. Truly speaking, no punishment can be called too serve for them. Kavita Sharma passes the sentence:

There is no room for forgiveness in these god-man's ruthless betrayal of the softest and highest emotions of men and women looking for spiritual rejuvenation.(K.Sharma,34)

The recurrent animal imagery represents a stark contrast to Lee's expectations and sinister Swamiji as a sort of beast or satyr. Such a culmination to the nuanced and thrilling emotionally serves to underline the oft-noted disparities between female romantic expectations and male sexual rapacity. But it is strange that Lee has reached the point of no return in her relation with Swamiji who has no qualms, either moral or religious in abusing her. Though she once breaks out of his magnetic spell and runs under the protective umbrella of rationalistic westerners like Raymond and Mrs. Charlotte, yet her escape is all too brief and in spite of her brutal rape at Swamiji's hands she again returns to his Ashram. Lee's predicament, even at the end of the novel, implicit in her incapability to distinguish

between simple bodily pleasures and spiritual bliss , remains as puzzling as ever.

Jhabvala vehemently attacks bad and savage social practices of India. Moreover, she exposes moral degradation and hypocrisy among Indians of the new dominion through the heart teasing experiences of westerners' here. The contemptuous attitude of Indians towards western women at nothing more than treating them as free indulging sexual cranks and therefore so many Indians stare at Lee only to persuade her to succumb to their sexual desires This attitude of Indians is somehow exposed in the form of Gopi's character, who is not satisfied by his friendship with Lee, he wants more. He knows that it would not be a difficult task for him to force Lee ,and get some physical pleasure. He takes her to the hotel room and indirectly makes his intentions clear. Initially Lee refuses , but on second thought, and in attempt to clear up all misunderstandings and also in her quest to merge herself completely in the Indian society, she gives in, she says O.K. and unbuttons her blouse. Jhabvala's bitterness and irony is apparent when she writes that Gopi does not waste the time and lies on top of her. Lee suffers rather than enjoying this experience.

But she was glad to be doing this for him, and at the final moment thought to herself that perhaps this was part of the merging she has so ardently desired, while looking out of the window.(AND,p.55)

The entire episode comes out rather badly. Jhabvala perhaps has attempted to bring out a union between physical pleasures and spiritual quest. Lee in her desire to merge herself completely in this unknown Indian society succumbs to Gopi's desire, but to a normal reader, the situation is repulsive and degrading. We find Lee doing this not once but repeatedly to lose herself. The question is: does she find herself?

Thus, Jhabvala ironically characterizes Indians like Gopi and Swamiji, as exploiters of the westerners who aim at attaining the actual Indian glory .. Shahne remarks that:

The Indians in this novel are almost invariably sensual, sex hungry, hypocritical, pretentious, egotistic and selfwilled except for Banubai, the puzzling, prophetess, and Bob, a go ahead Youngman.(Shahne, p.52)

This oddity of A New Dominion stems from curious authorial tendency to state everything in duplicate or triplicate. For instance we discover not just one Lee but at least two additional versions of her in the characters of Evie and Margaret, the identical characters whose differences lie mainly in terms of their degrees of commitment to the Swamiji. Margaret has rather a deep faith in Swamiji's spiritual powers deeper even than Lee's because when she contracts infections and deadly diseases she does not admit it. She

has lost all her rationality under the spell of Swamiji's mysterious wisdom and spirituality. However, she pins her faith on the holy man's powers of rejuvenation and, though on the verge of death, she rejects Raymond's advice and offer of hospitalization and treatment at all. She argues that Swamiji has explained to her the right cause:

Doctor's don't know a thing. These diseases that people get in India, they're not physical, they're purely psychic. We only get them because we try to resist India – because we shut ourselves up in our little western egos and don't want to give ourselves. But once we learn to yield then just fall away. (AND, pp. 172-173)

In these lines Jhabvala is ironical, bitter and critical of India, and those of Europeans who in their ever lasting quest for spiritualism and a total merger in this world lose their good sense. Margaret goes back to the Ashram only to die in pathetic condition in the store room of a small hospital in Maupur. The entire episode appears to be highly oppressive and one cannot help but think whether this was her way of merging herself completely in this world, the new dominion, never to return.

On the other hand Evie, has her own way of merging here. When we are introduced to her, she is already with Swamiji and almost indispensable for him. She does everything Swamiji wants her to do without of any hesitation. Evie has implicit faith in Swamiji's spiritual power and purity of mind. The incident of reading the Big Book (a book Swamiji has written) in the ashram is a good example of different attitudes of these western characters towards Swamiji. When Lee and Raymond showed their concern towards the critical condition of Margaret due to her deadly diseases, Evie appears to be totally indifferent. She declares that the relationship of the disciple with the Guru is the most powerful and it cancels all other blood-relationships. Her fascination for Swamiji appears to be inscrutable, and difficult to describe. It becomes gruesome and grotesque, when in the hospital she tells Lee "We will go soon now. As soon as Margaret dead! She, forgetting Margaret's suffering adds joy full. **How happy he will be able to have us back.**" (AND, p.231) Not only this, Evie now considers herself and all those who are in Ashram with Swamiji to be Hindus. As after Margaret's death, the question arises of her burial but Evie is firm in her conviction that she was a Hindu. She says:

Becoming a Hindu is not like becoming a Christian. You don't have to take formal baptism or anything, but freely assent to the truth within you. (AND, p.241)

No one could go against what Evie has pronounced to be the ultimate truth and Margaret is criminated the way Hindus are.

Another western woman character in the novel that Jhabvala has portrait is Miss Charlotte, a missionary who has dedicated more than thirty years of her life doing charitable work in India. It is through her that we see the other face of Indian society. The condition of old Europeans who continue to live in India even after its independence and also the pathetic condition of poor Indian people. Miss Charlotte's work was and full of dedication. She is neither a seeker nor a lover. She is in India with a definite aim to serve the sick and suffers. Describing her Haydn M. Williams writes:

In a novel full of searchers for spiritual peace(Asha, Lee, Margaret, Evie, perhaps even Raymond in his own way), Miss Charlotte seems the only one to peace with herself, God and India. She may have obtained the goal the seekers look for in vain.(p.258)

On the second phase Raymond and Miss Charlotte, the two westerners of vigil reasoning, have no intention of becoming insider as they remain outsiders and travelers here. They are grief-stricken finding the girls of modern advanced society drowning themselves in the Indian slums. They return soon to their own society. Charlotte states that even thirty years of her stay cannot make her adjust to the Indian social environment. Long experience of her life in India made her understand that even if India has some advancements, however, it is not acceptable to her because there are still great conflicts between India and her own homeland- Britain, since home is home.

Besides the spiritual dominion Jhabvala also projects the new complex of East-West interaction on individual level. The action of the novel suggests that the deepest needs of human nature also bring these western characters with Indians, we have Banubai(another Indian Charlotte)the great prophetess, has been portrayed by Mrs. Jhabvala with the least ironic streaks. She is a holy woman and, unlike Swamiji, she helps the poor and those middle-class people who come to her with their problems. She advises them and tries to give them peace and solace. Banubai develops an instant liking for Gopi and disliking for Raymond. It is through her Raymond, that Jhabvala has been able to present the confluence of East and West, spiritualism and materialism. Banubai tells Raymond, "We don't want people like you here." She said, "Only those who truly appreciate our culture are welcome." And says:

For two hundred years you tried to make us believe that you are superior persons. But now the tables are turned. Now that your culture is bankrupt and your lives have become empty and meaningless, you are beginning to learn, where truth has been hidden and stored

away throughout the centuries. You are not capable of learning. To learn from us have to be wide open! And full of humility. (AND, p.161)

The novelist has cleverly summed up the East-West relations in the modern world in the above lines. The West hunger for spiritual values in turning to the East. "What can the East offers them," in the question Jhabvala attempts to answer in her *New Dominion*?

Jhabvala exposes the moral degradation hypocrisy and sexuality of Indians like Swamiji, Gopi and others who exploit the western seekers aiming at attaining the Indian glory. V.A.Shahne is right in his assessment of **A New Dominion**:

The Indians in this novel are almost invariably sensual, sex hungry, hypocritical, pretentious, egoistic and self-willed except for Banubai, the puzzling prophetess, and Bob, a go-head young man. (p.52)

Thus the morality is at its lowest ebb in the country as the novel is not merely of a few individuals thrown together but of a country in a moment of meeting of two different cultures. It fails to solve the enigma of failure of three women's attempt to build a bridge between the two extremes. With the progressive maturity of Jhabvala's vision and skill her focus has probed deep into the feminine soul and psyche of the western protagonists with an artistic excellence. To sum up, it is no exaggeration to state that with these literary embellishments and her superb theme of search for self-definition of woman Jhabvala is certainly, a notch or two above not only the contemporary women novelists but also her predecessors both in India and abroad.

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Inside Out: An Interpretation of *The Home and the World* by Rabindranath Tagore and Satyajit Ray

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Abstract:

Rabindranath Tagore's novel The Home and the World (Ghare-Baire) and its film adaptation of the same by Satyajit Ray have been both milestones in their respective forms of art and communication. Although they both deal with a topical situation, their relevance and significance have transcended the boundaries of time and space and they also evince universal appeal. This is true of the characters, situations, the crises as well as the conflicts that take shape. Some of the marvels of story-telling and perfect narrative technology can be prominently visible in both these works. This paper attempts to explore some contemporary interpretation of both the novel and the film and analyses the components that have succeeded in transforming them into masterpieces and timeless classics in their own right.

One of the greatest singular events in the Indian literary history was the emergence of Rabindranath Tagore as a major source of influence and inspiration. A prolific litterateur with versatile achievements, actor, philosopher, painter, social reformer, rural economist, educationist and humanist, Tagore introduced new prose and verse-forms and the use of colloquial language into Bengali literature, thereby liberating it from traditional models based on classical Sanskrit. Tagore structured *Ghare-Baire* (1916; first translated in 1959 as *The Home and the World*) such that three main characters represent the turmoil of the Partition looming large on India's horizon.

Bimala, married to Nikhilesh (or Nikhil), remains confined within the traditional domestic privacy. She harbours no expectations from her life and never deviates from her domestic duties. Nikhil, educated and enlightened, wants his wife to come out of the secluded existence and realize the real worth of married life and in the process to be able to know the real worth of the man she has married. They are a happily married couple until Sandip a revolutionary activist, whom Nikhil supports financially but not ideologically, comes to Nikhil's *zamindari* and makes his friend's house the centre for carrying on his political activities. Being demonstrative in his emotions, he strikes a special chord of friendship with her before long. He manipulates his background as a political activist and a freedom-fighter and then he begins extolling her potential as her devotee. He idealizes her as the epitome of "Mother" India. He pursues Bimala without reservation, driven by his mission. Flattered by Sandip's attention, Bimala questions the nature of her marriage and her role as a woman. His supposedly unbiased notions about the service to the country and the

vital roles that women can play in this sphere assumes undertones of his personal interest and produces a mesmerizing impact on Bimala's body and soul. Nikhil, who never looks upon his wife as his personal possession but an independent individual, remains only a silent spectator without interfering in Bimala's affairs. To prevent the rift between Bimala and Nikhil from widening Nikhil's elder sister-in-law, out of affectionate consideration for him warns him against the imminent breakdown of the relationship. The climax comes with Bimala's own realisation of Sandip's real character. His avaricious nature eclipses the noble in him. He provokes the eruption of communal violence among Nikhil's subjects. Nikhil goes out to quell the fire. The story ends with the news of Nikhil's serious injury and the uncertainty of his survival floating up to Bimala's conscience stricken feverish self.

Thus, the three characters embark upon an emotional journey that permanently changes their lives, just as India lurches into a lengthy period of upheaval and unrest. The tremendous revolution that was lurking for them with drastic results just before the British quit India. This era of tremendous social change would resonate across the country in unspeakable acts of violence, irrevocable change of lives. Of the three, Sandip is transparently shallow, while Nikhil thoughtfully considers every aspect before embarking on a course of action. The allegorical nature of this tale is evident as the characters plunge headlong into a chaotic future which they could never have anticipated and which costs Bimala her marriage. *Ghare-Baire* presents a rhetoric of some kind of revolution. Tagore stringently critiques its glorification. Bimala gets instigated by it and questions her hitherto happy marriage only to realize the falseness of the sophistication of such a revolution.

This era of tremendous social change would resonate across the country in unspeakable acts of violence, irrevocable change of lives. Tagore stringently critiques its glorification. *The Home and the World* embodies two aspects of socio-political significance—the political upheaval against the British and a wife's emotional involvement with one other than her husband. Similarly, Sandip intrudes into Nikhil's domain and like an impostor attempts to extract both wealth and sensual pleasures and alters situations to satisfy his vested interest by flattering Bimala. The novel poignantly depicts the terrible mental agony and turmoil that Bimala suffers by taking part in the Swadeshi Movement and is torn asunder by the conflicting loyalties to the house and the outside world. Though his narration, Tagore elevates the simple story of a love triangle to literary heights by making the two male characters in the novel, Nikhilesh and Sandip, represent the conflict between realism of truth and illusion. (Sarada 77)

The Home and the World stands distinctly apart from the other novels of Tagore which revolve around the theme of love. The long monologues of the characters fail to heighten the gravity of the impending doom of the complex characters like Nikhil and Bimala. Tagore favours Nikhil's realistic ideologies against the idealistic ones of Sandip. (129) For example, at Sandip's instance when Bimala asks Nikhil to withdraw foreign goods from his Suksara market Nikhil refuses her, thereby incurring her displeasure. The novel describes Bimala's transition from the *zenana* to the world outside. She represents both the traditional and liberated classes of women. B. C. Chakravorty points out that Nikhil wishes Bimala to know the larger world so that her love might develop unfettered by the bonds of matrimonial life. (Sarkar 2003, 29)

Believing that a woman should come out of the *purdah* to realize her true worth, Nikhil, Tagore's mouthpiece, appoints an English governess, Miss Gilby as a tutor to Bimala. Bimala, however, is reluctant and unprepared to be confronted by the outer world but embraces the rigidity of aristocracy though she was born in a lower middle class family. This prompts Nikhil to believe that Bimala has only come into his home but not into his life. The advent of Swadeshi movement synchronises with Bimala's modern education and alters her narrow outlook on life and society. With the passage of time Bimala becomes aware of her illegitimate entanglement with Sandip (Sengupta 223) and that in Sandip's appeals his worship of the country got subtly interwoven with his worship of herself. While Sandip wants to deify Bimala, Nikhil wants her to realize her own individual self. For Bimala retreating to Nikhil is like passing through fire revealing her new acceptance of the limited sphere of activity and self-expression of womanhood. K. V. Surendran points out that what is inflammable had been burnt to ashes and what is left is deathless. Bimala surrenders herself to the person who accepts her sins into the depths of his own pain. (11) Bimala does not really step out of the confines of her domesticity. In the form of Sandip, the world outside actually enters, outlives its invitation, threatens to stain Bimala's chastity, gives her the disrepute of "Robber Queen" from Bara Rani, pains her with the angst of her guilty conscience and demands from Amulya the sacrifice of his life to release Bimala from the serpentine coils of Sandip's world outside. Bimala is also childless after nine years of marriage and though there is no complaint from the family in this regard, the situation cannot be one of satisfaction for Bimala. It is really that and not ultimately her love for Nikhil that saves her from the devastating grip of Sandip. Bimala feels she is in love with Sandip because through him she is embracing a cause and through his words she feels she is

representing India, and its womanly strength—Shakti. Nikhil's unblemished character and his true unswerving love for Bimala makes her cast her lover aside, repent and retreat back to him. (B. C. Chakravorty 208) Bimala's happy re-union with Nikhil is short-lived. At the end of the story, Nikhil is brought home from the outbreak of the communal riots, in a palanquin with a serious injury in the head. Bimala is able to realise the explosive potentialities of a self-centred Sandip who under the guise of a chauvinistic stance unscrupulously exploits the religious and patriotic sentiments of the people with disastrous results—almost breaking Bimala's homelife by postulating a false connection between the home and the world. (Raj 63)

In Tagore's song (untitled) that features both in the novel as well as in the film sung by Sandip in *Ghare-Baire*, the protagonist hails his invaluable connoisseur who wanders in the gardens and plays an emotional tune on an imaginary bamboo flute. He believes that a true artist sings to satisfy his own fervour and not for material wealth. The next stanza contains a significant metonymy. The 'house' stands for protection against the country's surge, refuge, security and the people involved in it. This house discourages the protagonist (who is a rambler, but feigns to be a patriot) from surrendering everything to rescue the nation. But as a patriot, the protagonist intends to willingly surrender—not only all his possessions but also his life, and through his sacrifice, save his country and achieve immortality in the minds of his country-men. The second passage states that those who wish to discourage the patriots from their difficult paths are ignorant of the joy of recklessness. They are unaware of Lord Krishna's summons for the patriots from the end of the warped path. The song is verbally enriched with a host of antithetical and paradoxical phrases like “court ruin”, “death-draught of immortality”, “spurning payments... bought for nothing” and “fearful joy of recklessness”. Like Bankim's song, “Vande Mataram” this song is also meant to be a paean for the true patriots of India.

Through Tagore's song, Sandip claims to undertake the duty of establishing worship of the Divine Mother (or the motherland) in the country but implies Hail Beloved, Hail Enchantress. The nation is evoked more as a beloved rather than the Divine revered Mother. The devotee urges his compatriots—to sacrifice and fling away all the possession to the call of the beloved nation so that the house which stands for the nation could be saved from an alien rule. In the course of this song, Sandip implicitly explains to Bimala that his watchword has changed since she had come across his vision. The mother protects, the mistress leads to destruction--but that destruction is intoxicating. He further says that

Bimala had made the anklet sounds of the dance of death tinkle in his heart and had changed for him the picture (from a recollection of Bankim's song) he had of Bengal --'the soft breeze-cooled land of pure water and sweet fruit.' He visualizes her to have mercilessly offered him her poison cup which he shall drain it, either to die in agony or live triumphing over death. Sandip's song is more of an ostentatious romantic rhetoric lacking sincerity, played out to Bimala who ultimately detects his façade. As seasoned story-tellers, both Tagore and Ray have attempted to capture the plot of their respective genres in a nutshell through this song.

In the film, these sentiments have been seamlessly conveyed by the song in the voice of Kishore Kumar accompanied by no ancillary musical instruments and thus rendered more realistic and yet dramatic. At this juncture it would be relevant to draw some parallels between Indian English Literature and Indian cinema. Both Indian Cinema and Indian English Literature, may be regarded as the consequence of colonization of a text into Cinema. Both transformed Indian Studies in a big way. They influenced the image of India beyond the boundaries of the nation. World came to know India as projected by the Indian English Literature and Indian Films. Many Indian English Literary works have been made into films. Some of them are: *Flights of Pigeons* by Ruskin Bond (*Junoon*), *Five Point Someone* by Chetan Bhagat (*3 Idiots*) etc. Both the genres passed through identical stages of development of evolution: imitative, reactive and self actualized, but Indian cinema did it faster. It has been rightly pointed out, "The Indian film industry, next only to Hollywood, is the second largest in the world, both in terms of films produced and viewership, with more than nine hundred films produced from major film making centers of Mumbai, Chennai and Hyderabad." (Taher, Gopalan iii) Ray has deliberately chosen this popular form of entertainment to convey and revive Tagore's serious message to his audience.

The plot of the novel *Ghare-Baire* has been as powerful as it has been in its adaptation as a screenplay for the film of the same name, directed by Satyajit Ray and released in 1984. Ray has deftly captured Tagore's heritage of words, music, poetry, ideas, ideals and contemporary relevance in the film. Although Tagore cannot be matched in versatility, Ray—the filmmaker, has been exceptionally skilled in the visual arts, a competent musician, a writer of his own scripts, an essayist and critic. Hood rightly points out:

Closely related to his breadth of creativity is his breadth of vision pertinent to both men (Tagore and Ray). Tagore was a devoted Indian who longed for the freedom of his country, yet he could never limit his enquiry and his experience to his native land;

Ray also took pride in his national heritage, yet consciously and deliberately sought to gain whatever he could from the cultural riches of other nations. (237)

In terms of narration the symbolism of the film is offered unobtrusively as part and parcel of the narrative. Yet the deft placing of a symbol in the syntax of the film enriches its texture. The piano, the perfume-bottles, the bedstead do not stand out but speak beyond whatever material purpose it may have.

The characters are vital to the credibility of *Ghare Baire*. According to Hood, He (Sandip) has extraordinary appeal which extends a ready influence over others, especially young men and even more especially, Nikhil's wife, Bimala. In establishing his charisma, the task of the novelist is easier than that of the filmmaker; Tagore need only mention only his spiritual power, the fire in his eyes, the magic is his voice, or whatever--Ray has to actually represent these qualities, and in this most vital aspect of the film his failure is unequivocal. Maybe this is because there is no clear cut development of his character; the Sandip we met at the beginning, with his warts concealed, is perceptibly no different from the Sandip we see at the end with all his blemishes unmasked. The role of Bimala, at times beautifully portrayed by Swatilekha Chatterjee despite the obstacles, is less demanding and yet there are problems here too as the viewer struggles to find some consistency in an endeavour to rationalise her character. (269)

Victor Banerjee has also given a mastery portrayal as the aristocrat in the film.

Modernity being a tendency to reproduce everything to the present, to the observable and reproducible, to what appears in front of or is determined by the camera, and modern art by contrast embodying resistance to this reductive tendency by attempting to liberate its utopian virtualities, cinema, situated at the meeting point of these two possibilities, ought to be the most important thing in contemporary art. (Godard, Ishaghpour 124)

Cinecamera is not a simple means of capturing reality. It may be inferred that when the image of reality is mentioned the "image" proper is always forgotten. Although the film opens with Bimala's veneration for her husband, this feeling is not reflected in her conversation with her husband in the film. However it emerges in a different light in the novel and the consistency in Bimala's humility has been maintained. In the course of the film, however, this discrepancy becomes negligible to the viewer. There is also sufficient emphasis in the film about how using Swadeshi goods could be luxury of the affluent. However, foreign goods though cheaply available were superior in quality than country

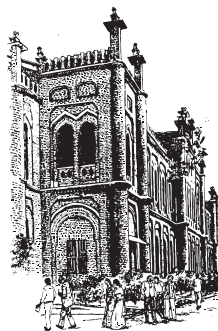
made goods. A key scene marks Bimala's transition from the *zenana* of her home to the worlds outside accompanied by her husband. Although Bimala announces at the outset that she was happy within the confines of her *zenana*--her golden cage, it is Nikhil who prompts her to see the world outside and meet other men, so that she could realize the value of her own husband.

Filmmaker Godard rightly points out "It's cinema, in other words not like literature which is more closely bound to meaning, in film there's rhythm, it's more like music..." (24) Ray has successfully captured the depth of the story in the novel, its mounting crisis, and the lyricism of the script through the appeal in his resonating music. Moreover, his music had already got recognition as an integral part of his films; now it was beginning to receive a separate identification. (Sarkar, B. 81) The conclusion in the novel is open-ended as it is not clear whether Nikhil survives or not in the novel; however Ray's film *Bimala*'s loses all the signs of being a married woman and attains widowhood.

Pather Panchali (1955), the Apu trilogy completed by 1959 as well as some other movies had already brought Ray sufficient reputation as an eminent film-maker and had won him five out of twenty-eight President's Gold Medals, which is unique for a single filmmaker. (Rangoonwala 129, 159) *Ghare Baire* added another feather to his cap. It has been noted that previously "if Western viewers saw Indian films, they were likely directed by the Bengali master Satyajit Ray, whose realistic narratives were widely viewed only by an intellectual elite within India..." (Phillips 344) *Ghare Baire* duly absolved Ray of this charge levelled against him, since he succeeded in making Tagore's tale about the elite and common societies a household name. Whether Ray's film has been a faithful representation of Tagore's novel, cannot be compared because these are distinct forms of art. Ray has not provided a celluloid replica of Tagore's novel. However, "by infusing into his cinema the concerns, values and sympathies that pervade the original works...Ray's appreciation and interpretation of the original texts reflect a faithful and profoundly perceptive reading." (Hood 282) Tagore's humanism in his novels shines out through Ray's films. Thus in all his films Ray represented his people as Tagore created them as those bound within their own interests and shortcoming but have perpetuated through literature and celluloid immortally.

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Subverting the Centre: Writing as Pro-testing in *The God of Small Things*

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Abstract

The God of Small Things depicts the plight of helpless men and women marginalized by those who are in power. This Booker Prize-winning novel of 1997 makes a scathing attack on the patriarchal notions of the Keralean society. The theme highlights the tremendous injustice meted out to the subalterns in the name of religion and caste. Having a strong political undercurrent, it can also be read as a “protest” novel that is radical and unconventional. Roy is one of the few Indian English writers who are actively interested in contemporary socio-political issues and this is evident from the theme of this movingly told fiction. In her debut novel the novelist has shown that she is the master of style and technique. With this innovative narrative technique she strikes back. She has truly subverted the Centre to bring what has been marginalized to the forefront. Thus, her writing is a form of protesting as well as pro-testing.

KEY WORDS:

Subaltern, Patriarchy, Pro-testing, Subversion, Carnavalesque, Paravans

With the publication of Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things* (Booker Prize Winning novel for 1997), Indian English novel has attracted worldwide attention. As rightly pointed out by K. V. Surendran, “... Arundhati Roy has established herself as a novelist par excellence with her epoch making work *The God of Small Things*” (vii). The novel focuses on several things. To Surendran, it is “a saga of lost dreams” (10), to Pramod K. Nayar, “it is a journey to secret places” (73), while Alex Tickell contends that *The God of Small Things* can be read “as complex engagement with certain aspects of postcolonial theory via the formal strategies of the cosmopolitan novel” (67). Having a strong political undercurrent, it can also be read as a “protest” novel that is radical and unconventional. Roy needles the threads of exploitation of women, the marginalization of the subalterns in the fabric of this memorable novel. Roy is one of the few Indian English writers who are actively interested in contemporary socio-political issues and this is evident from the theme of this movingly told fiction.

The God of Small Things is basically a saga that depicts the life and destiny of three generations of a Syrian Christian family in Ayemenam, a sleepy village in central Travancore. As Binoo John rightly points out:

In the tumult of feudalism's dying pang, in the wide swath that the narrative cuts through Kerala's modern history, in its pungent ironies, in the nerve tingling passions, in the overarching pathos, the novel has few modern parallels in Indo-Anglian writing. (qtd. in Shiela Mani 8)

The novel appears as a document on Kerala and a critique of Kerala's social, political, religious and cultural institutions. It presents a cinematographic description that curiously blends fact and fiction and this novel is also autobiographical to a certain extent. Roy herself admitted that - "Writing [the novel] was a fictional way of making sense of the world I lived in, and the novel was the technical key with which I did it" (qtd in Dasan 25). With the locale of her novel set in the lush green lap of Kerala with the mysterious Meenachal river speeding along its periphery, Roy has managed to make the whole world a stage for Ayemenem and its people. The entire story of the novel is cast in the very first chapter that narrates the return of Rahel to her home in Ayemenem (Roy has changed the name from Ayemanam to Ayemenem) in Southern India from America, after her divorce. She returns in the rain to be reunited with her twin brother Estha after a separation of twenty-three years. The story is re-created through the use of flashbacks and linear-narration, reminiscences and memories. Narrated by Rahel, this circular narrative begins almost near its end.

The plot depicts the events in the lives of the members related to the grand old house- "the Ayemenem House, but aloof-looking. As though it had little to do with the people that lived in it" (165). The blind old Mammachi (Rahel's grandmother), widow of the ambitious entomologist Pappachi (her grandfather), presides over it. Efficient and hardworking, Mammachi sets up the "pickle" business (later named as "Paradise Pickles and Preserves" by Chacko) and brings huge profit to it. From her childhood days Ammu, their daughter, had seen and faced the oppressions of patriarchy. A highly educated Anglophile, Pappachi used to thrash up his wife with a vase every night. While Chacko, her brother, is sent abroad to study, Ammu has to remain at home because the only option for a girl at that time was to marry and rear a family. She leaves the ancestral home in utter disgust, goes to Calcutta and marries an alcoholic assistant manager in a tea estate in Assam to escape the misery she was in- "She thought that anything, anyone at all, would be better than returning to Ayemenem" (39). A liar to the marrow and without morals, Ammu's husband plans to sell her off to the English manager of the tea-plantation. Disillusioned, she soon divorces him and returns to Ayemenem with her twins Rahel and Estha. Roy gives a heartrending picture of her return-

Ammu left her husband and returned, unwelcomed, to her parents in Ayemenem. To everything that she had fled from only a few

years ago. Except that she had two young children. And no more dreams. (42)

After she came back home divorced from her drunkard husband, she faced the worst sort of humiliation. Though she helped in managing the pickles factory, Ammu had no claim to the property because as a daughter she had no right to property, no “Locusts Stand I” (57). The twins remained neglected and appeared more like “a pair of small bewildered frogs” (43). Though unloved by others (except Ammu and later Velutha), the “love between Rahel and Estha, the twins who do not look alike but who dream each other's dreams, is so complete and so self-evident to both that it is often experienced not as love of one being for another but as the identity of a single existence” (Ahmad 42).

The God of Small Things enacts the eternal drama of confrontation between the powerful and the powerless. It depicts the plight of helpless men and women marginalized by those who are in power. The Paravans were one such marginal subaltern groups residing only on the fringes of the society. They were expected to crawl backwards with a broom, sweeping away their footprints so that Brahmins or Syrian Christians would not defile themselves by accidentally stepping into their footprints. They were not allowed to walk on public roads, neither were they allowed to cover their upper bodies, nor were they permitted to carry umbrellas. They had to put their hands over their mouths when they spoke so that their polluted breath would not defile their hearers. Even their conversion to Christianity did not alter their fate. Bereft of any privileges, which they should have had from embracing a religion that taught equality for all human beings but practised a complete different norm, they even lost all possibilities of getting any favour from the government as reserved castes because they were now Christians. But Velutha, who “might have become an engineer”, only if “he hadn't been a Paravan” (75) resented these laws made by the upper class. Everything he did- “... the way he walked. The way he held his head. The quiet way in which he disregarded suggestion without appearing to rebel” (76) - proclaimed his difference from the others of his communities who somehow willingly participated in their own subjugation. Lonely and frustrated, the neglected Ammu sees “the untouchable” Velutha. So, when one afternoon they happen to look into each other's eyes, for fourteen nights they “instinctively stuck to the small things” (338). Together, they broke all the rules laid down by a rigid patriarchal society, including the love laws that lay down “who should be loved. And how. And how much” (328). The guardian of law and justice, inspector Thomas Matthew and the “crusader of the oppressed”, comrade KNM Pillai

shake hands and take Velutha in custody when Sophie dies while rowing with Rahel and Estha in the Meenachal River at night two weeks after her arrival merely because he had in a way protested against this sort of colonization – “under his careful cloak of cheerfulness, he housed a living, breathing anger against the smug, ordered world...”(176). He is beaten to death for having trespassed into the colonizer's territory – for sharing his body with the woman whom he had no right even to touch. He had challenged and turned upside down the laws of social morality. So he ends up his life in the lock-up facing the false criminal charges, rape of Ammu and abduction of Sophie Mol brought upon him by the “touchables” as their revenge against him-

His skull was fractured in three places. His nose and both his cheekbones were smashed, leaving his face pulpy, undefined. The blow to his mouth had split open his upper lip and broken six teeth, three of which were embedded in his lower lip, hideously inverting his beautiful smile. Four of his ribs were splintered, one had pierced his left lung, which was what made him bleed from his mouth.... (310)

The author highlights the rigid caste system codes and underscores the serious consequence of the violation of these.

To quote Aijaz Ahmad, Arundhati Roy has written a novel that “has learned all that there is to be learned from modernism, magic realism, cinematic cutting and montage and other such developments of narrative technique in the 20th century, but a novel that nevertheless remains Realist in all its essential features” (33). With the universal themes of love, death, transgression and exploitation, Roy has given us a new direction of Indian English Novel. We are reminded of Roy's assertion:

I have to say that my book is not about history but biology and transgression.... And so the book deals with both things- it deals with our ability to be brutal as well as our ability to be deeply intimate and so deeply loving. (qtd. in Nair 43)

Post independence Indian English fiction constitutes an important part of the World Literature today, and women novelists have made significant contributions to it. Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things* is one of the most valuable additions to the long list of gynofiction by women writers. Being also a social activist, Roy is well aware of the different forms of exploitations that are rampant within our social system. Among many such forms, perhaps the most unchallenged one is the oppression of women by the patriarchal social

norms. This Booker Prize-winning novel of 1997 makes a scathing attack on the patriarchal notions of the Keralean society. The narrative keeps on drifting in a manner that corresponds to the manifestations of the unconscious in women, which is different from men. It is a view that is supported by a number of gynocritics. It is the voice of Rahel going down the memory lane and digging out her mother's past. Where the authorial comment intrudes in, it is from Rahel's perspective. As the narrative unfolds we get a glimpse of the Imperial Entomologist at the Pusa Institute, "Pappachi" (Rahel's grandpa) who wears "a well pressed three-piece suit and his gold pocket watch" (49) and maintains the sky-blue Plymouth. But every night he beat his wife, referred to as "Mammachi" by her granddaughter, with a "brass flower vase (47)". His hypocrisy in posing as a "sophisticated, generous, moral man" is exposed by the narrator in the following sarcastic lines:

But alone with his wife and children he turned into a monstrous suspicious bully, with a streak of vicious cunning. They were beaten, humiliated and then made to suffer the envy of friends and relations for having such a wonderful husband and father. (180)

After his retirement this male chauvinist "realized with a shock that he was an old man when his wife was still in her prime" (47). Meanwhile, though nearly blind Mammachi was excelling in her pickles business. Her husband never came to her help because Pickle making, according to him, was not a suitable occupation for an Ex-Government official. Behaving like a dog in the manger, he greatly resented the attention and importance his wife was getting out of her success. His uncontrollable jealousy manifests itself in such incidents which are many in number. Earlier, in their youthful days, when Mammachi was taking her Violin lessons in Viena, her "lessons were abruptly discontinued when her teacher made the mistake of telling Pappachi that his wife was exceptionally talented and of a concert Class" (50). Mammachi's plight reminds us of the voice of the protagonist in Kamala Das's "You Planned to Tame a Swallow":

You called me wife
I was taught to break saccharine into your tea, and
To offer at the right moment the vitamins cowering
Beneath your monstrous ego I ate the magic loaf and
Became a dwarf.
I lost my will and reason, to all your
Questions I mumbled incoherent replies. (*My Story* 162)

Rahel's mother, Ammu, grew with large supplements of fear and in her childhood version of the Father Bear Mother Bear stories, "Father Bear beat Mother Bear with brass vases" (180). As already pointed out earlier, her Brother Chacko was sent to Rhodes to study and Mammachi even pawned her gold jewels for her son's education. But Ammu's studies were discontinued because of the general held notion that girls need not go for higher studies because the only career open for them is marriage. Ammu had no other alternative than to return with her father to Ayemenem because "Pappachi insisted that a college education was an unnecessary expense for a girl" (38). This reminds us of R. D. Laing's comment: "Man does not always need the bars for cages. Ideas can be cages too. The doors in our minds are the most difficult to open" (qtd. in Anuradha Roy 53). Though she was to wait at Ayemenem for marriage (as per the wishes of her parents), yet none of them was bothering about it. Her eighteenth birthday came and went because "her father did not have enough money to raise a suitable dowry" (38). While attending a marriage party away from home, Ammu accepted the proposal of a man whom she had barely known and married him not because she had fallen in love but simply because, in a fit of desperation, "she thought that *anything*, anyone at all, would be better than returning to Ayemenem" (39). Though she informed her parents nobody cared to reply. She was very soon disillusioned and realized the terrible mistake she had committed. Disappointment became unbearable when her husband, suspended from job for alcoholism, sought to bargain by procuring her for his boss, Mr. Hollick, the English manager of the tea estate. Mr. Hollick suggested his employee to go on leave while "Ammu be sent to his bungalow to be 'looked after'" (42). Ammu's refusal only aggravated her physical and mental torture. Her husband "grew uncomfortable and then infuriated by her silence. Suddenly he lunged at her, grabbed her hair, punched her and then passed out from that effort (42)." But when "his bouts of violence began to include the children" (42) Ammu had no alternative but to break off and come back with her dizygotic twins, Estha and Rahel, to the very same place from where she tried to run away. Ammu left her husband and returned, unwelcome, to Ayemenem- "To everything that she had fled from only a few years ago. Except that she had two young children. And no more dreams" (42).

All her life Ammu had tried to break the patriarchal norms. In wishing to forge an identity of her own she gave up using a surname because "choosing between her husband's name and her father's name didn't give a woman much of a choice" (37). Ammu emerges as a rebel in the novel who challenges the androcentric notions of her society and becomes a

symbol of all that the men folk want her not to be. Throughout the novel Roy gives innumerable examples of double standards that patriarchy perpetuates. One example will suffice:

Though Ammu did as much work in the factory as Chacko, whenever he was dealing with food inspectors or sanitary engineers, he always referred to it as *my* factory, *my* pineapples, *my* pickles. Legally, this was the case because, Ammu, as a daughter, had no claim to the property. Chacko told Rahel and Estha that Ammu had no Locusts Stand I. 'Thanks to our wonderful male chauvinistic society,' Ammu said. (57)

As soon as she came to know about the false allegations brought against Velutha, Ammu rushed to the police station to tell the truth, but the police officer said “ 'If I were you I'd go home quietly.' Then he tapped her breasts with his baton” (8). This incident shows how pitiable the condition of women is in our society- particularly when a woman is a “touchable” divorcee and has defied the love laws “that lay down who should be loved and how. And how much” (31) by loving an “untouchable.” The author drops a hint that the police officer knows full well that he can freely insult this woman without any fear or compunction and he has the sanction of the society too. Ammu faces this ignominy not because a high caste loved a low-caste. The equation is far more complex than that- it is because Ammu is a woman. Chacko, also a Syrian Christian, has sexual relationship with low-caste women and the society becomes lenient because a man's “needs” must be catered to. When asked in an interview, Mary Roy, the author's mother, explained it most logically:

She is talking about a situation where a touchable woman—Syrian Christian, Nair or any other – falls in love with a man of lower caste. Would it not create a struggle even now? Whereas if it is the other way, it is a man from the higher caste having a liaison with a woman from a lower caste, these would not be any problem, then or now. (qtd in B.N Singh, 157)

Ammu is driven out of her house, her twins are separated and “She died alone. With a noisy ceiling fan for company and no Estha to lie at the back of her and talk to her. She was thirty-one. Not old, not young, but a viable, die-able age (161).” Even in her last days she dreams of her “imaginary homeland” where she will be able to keep her twins with her and live with dignity free from the oppressions from patriarchy-

That day was not far off, Ammu said. It could happen *any* day. Soon rent would be no problem. She said she had applied for a UN job and they would

live in The Hague with a Dutch ayah to look after them. Or on the other hand, Ammu said, she might stay on in India and do what she had been planning to do all along- start a school. Choosing between a career in Education and a UN job wasn't easy, she said- but the thing to remember was that the very fact that she had a choice was a great privilege. (160)

Her love for her children, narrated so movingly brings tears to our eyes- “With the last of her meagre salary she had bought her daughter small presents wrapped in brown paper with coloured paper hearts pasted on” (159). But the society will never forgive its transgressor, more so when she is a woman and, therefore, nothing remains of Ammu except- “Her ashes. The grit from her bones. The teeth from her smile. The whole of her crammed into a little clay pot. Receipt No. Q498673” (163).

What is interesting from the feminist point of view is that although Baby Kochamma and Mammachi are women, they never sympathize with Ammu. Women are the worst victims of the age-old Indian traditions and yet they are themselves its sternest perpetrators. Entrapped by deeply entrenched attitudes, women victimize themselves and impose these attitudes on other women. Conservative men and traditional women are enemies of women. Along with the negative implications of the exploitation of the females by the “male” social order, Roy has also shown the progressive evolution of womanpower through the portrayal of the three generations of women in her epoch making fiction. Mammachi represents the feminine, Ammu the feminist and Rahel embodies the female phases of feminist literary history vis-à-vis Showalter's terms. While the “feminine” principle works within the patriarchal social order by mimicking or imitating its codes, the “feminist” one challenges and revolts the norms that are imposed by the patriarchal system and the “female” signifies the union of the male principle and the female principle, the synthesis of the *Purush* and the *Prakiti* of the Hindu philosophy in a perfect whole. Mammachi symbolizes the “silent” feminine protest. Though she never dares to challenge the male superiority, yet, in her management of the Pickles factory she tries to have her own individual identity. To quote Prantik Bannerjee-

what Roy perhaps seeks to convey through the portrayal of Mammachi is that given the socio-cultural compulsions of the sixties in India and of an orthodox community like that of the Syrian Christians, Mammachi's achievement is no mean achievement. In order to hold her own against the autocratic male practices within the family, the only subversive strategy she

can resort to is that of imitation.... So for Mammachi, wife bashing is a small price that has to be suffered for the self-satisfying freedom to work. (85)

Ammu is the rebel who goes against, challenges and defies the patriarchal set-up. Thus, she presents the feminist phase. Rahel and Estha form a complimentary whole and therefore, Rahel symbolizes the last stage. Arundhati Roy deftly weaves the saga of misery of a woman in man's world. Though the book portrays a village of Kerala, the picture it paints is universal.

Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things* (1997) is revolutionary both in its content and form and has won the appreciation of readers both at home and abroad. Through the powerful use of the Indian English language she subverts the centre to write back to the Empire. There is a distinction between the 'standard' British English inherited from the empire and the English which the language has become in post-colonial countries" (Tiffin, et al 8). Kamala Das, the renowned Indian poet, in her "Introduction" to *The Old Playhouse and Other Poems* describes this new, hybrid variant of English thus:

The language I speak
 becomes mine
 Its distortions, its queernesses
 all mine, mine alone.
 It is half English, half Indian,
 funny perhaps, but it is honest
 It is as human as I am human..." (qtd. in Anand 27)

Roy's language, too, belongs to her, throbbing and pulsating with emotions. Colonizers had always used language and literature as a powerful tool in the process of domination, be it political or cultural. The imperial education system installed a "standard" version of the metropolitan language as the norm, and marginalized all "variants" as impurities. It has been seven decades since RajaRao in his foreword to *Kanthapura* proclaimed that:

One has to convey in a language that is not one's own the spirit that is one's own.... We cannot write like the English. We should not. We cannot write only as Indians. We have grown to look at the large world as part of us. Our method of expression therefore has to be a dialect which will some day prove to be as distinctive and colourful as the Irish or the American. (5)

After decades of relentless struggle Indian English literature has been successful in

establishing its own identity. The dream of Raja Rao has come true. The writers of post-modern Indian English fiction have brought a revolution in the use of various techniques which have, no doubt, given their novels a “local habitation and a name”. Roy in her very debut novel has shown that she is the master of style and technique. With this innovative narrative technique she strikes back.

The novel begins with Rahel's coming back to Ayemenem to meet her twin brother. The omnipresent and omniscient narrative focuses on both the twins and sometimes on their mother, Ammu. The story is narrated from different angles, the major one being that of the two children, Rahel and Estha. In many circumstances the point of view of the implied author is that of the seven-year-old child, Rahel. No doubt, the Booker citation says that in her novel, Roy “funnels the history of South India through the eyes of a seven year old twin.” The structure of the novel makes use of multiple time frames and memories that make the past merge with the present. The novelist uses the “flashback technique” to shuttle across time barriers. The beginning of the novel gives us a vision of how a cinematographic camera builds up a scene. The author uses segments of scenes and events from diverse time frames and pastes them one after another, forming a “collage”. Roy herself confesses, “I'd start somewhere and I'd colour in a bit and I'd deeply stretch back and then stretch forward. It was like designing an intricate balance structure” (qtd. in Davees 329). So, in this narrative later events appear earlier and vice-versa. The death scene of Sophie Mol (5-7) is intricately woven with the scene that presents Ammu's meeting with the police (7). The previous narration then again continues in the following pages. The plot abounds in such backward and forward narration. The stream-of-consciousness technique applied in certain sections remind the readers of James Joyce and Virginia Woolf. The carefree handling of narration vis-à-vis the time and point of view, has an overwhelming lasting appeal on the readers. But, despite this apparent sense of incoherence in the arrangement of different events that have no chronological sequence, the work is well organized. This is evident from the title of the eleventh chapter which is placed centrally among the twenty-one chapters that make up the text. Behind this apparently “careless-carefree” attitude lies thoughtful research work.

Inclusion of handful of Malayalam words within the standard English version hybridizes the text. For example, Chacko's “Thanks, *keto!* ... *Valarey* thanks” (70) gives a Keralite flavour to the discourse. Such examples can be multiplied and remultiplied. The poetic license in the use of deviant expressions like “Whatisit”, “whathappened”,

“thangod” shows the regional tinge in Roy's “english” making it unique. The recurrent use of Malayalam words, phrases, lines from folk songs, films, etc. make the novel Indianized. To quote Surendran, “...she becomes totally successful in writing a novel in English in a typical Kerala background and to achieve this her use of Malayalam words, phrases, etc. helps her a lot” (196). Alliteration, rhyme, rhythm, reiteration, capitalization of words in the middle of sentences, italics, mis-spellings, reversal of word orders and many such devices make this text a vast gallery of word pictures resonant with polyphonic music. The title of the first chapter along with the extensive alliterative rhythmic use of language in such phrases as “wind and water with short spells of sharp, glittering sunshine” (1), “slanting silver ropes slammed into loose earth” (1), “sad singing started and they sang the same sad verse twice” (6) give us specimens of this witty alliteration. There is also abundance in juxtaposition of many antithetical motifs- the “big things” and the “small things”, the “big God” and the “small god”, “pessimist” and “optimist”, “sorrow” and “joy”, “touchables” and “untouchables”. The nicknames or references to the twin brother Estha- “Little Man” (99), “Elvis the Pelvis” (62), etc.- also create a special emotional appeal. The recurrently used expressions like “a viable die-able age”, “orangedrink lemondriink man” function like refrains in the novel.

Roy's laughter in the novel is satiric, subversive in the true Bakhtinian vein. In the late 1920s, Bakhtin formulated his theory of the 'polyphonic novel' where different characters express varying, independent views that are not 'controlled' by the author and this 'dialogic' plurality culminates in the 'carnavalesque'. In this mode authority is temporarily disrupted, established norms are turned upside down, formal genre is subverted by comic parody. Everything authoritative, rigid or serious is subverted, loosened and mocked. Roy has used satire, irony and laughter to subvert patriarchal discourses and confront male domination. Satire forms the prominent stylistic element in this novel and brings out the co-existence of the essential contradictions in the lives of people, pulling the mask off their faces and holding them up to ridicule. The opening section portraying the outward environment of Ayemenem is replete with irony:

he house itself was empty. The doors and windows were locked. The front verandah bare. Unfurnished. But the skyblue Plymouth with chrome tailfins was still parked outside, and inside baby Kochamma was still alive. (2)

It is difficult to miss the devastating sarcasm in the portrayal of the happenings in Kottayam Police Station. The whole episode is full of satirical jibe. On the wall hangs a red-

and-blue board proclaiming the ethical principles on which Indian police supposedly work and behave- “Politeness Obedience Loyalty Intelligence Courtesy Efficiency” (8, 304). It recurs at exact moments to remind us of the terrible satirical significance of its presence on the wall.

In *The God of Small Things* humour emerges in the sense of “Carnival”- the anger, the bitterness and the uneasiness of living under a “law” are supplemented through this. Most of the humour in the novel is expressed by the split consciousness of the narrator. It enables the separation of the two 'selves', one that endures the anguish of her own reality and a second self that stands apart and comments, often quite humourously, on the plight of the first. Roy uses Bakhtin's carnivalesque as a way of offering a kind of psychic release through blaspheming what is authoritative and canonical and this acts as a means of erasure of all the above-mentioned differences. The critical consciousness of the carnivalesque, mocking all forms of dogmatism and all forms of restrictions, the 'grotesque' body which links human physiology with the natural environment in a dialogic continuum, are all present in Roy's Booker prize winning fiction. She depicts a world in which everything is absurdly inverted. As already pointed out, structurally the novel defies a chronological sequence in the narration of events. Doubleness- Big and Small, the public and the personal- such types of binaries are constantly at play in the novel. The death of an elephant, for instance, becomes a public event:

A giant burning ghat was erected on the highway. The engineers of the concerned municipality sawed off the tusks and shared them unofficially. Unequally. Eighty tins of pure ghee were poured over the elephant to feed the fire. The smoke rose in dense fumes and arranged itself in complex patterns against the sky. (220)

The elephant invites a ceremonial funeral. By contrast, the death of a sparrow goes unnoticed-

A sparrow lay dead on the back seat. She had found her way in through a hole in the windscreen, tempted by some seat-sponge for her nest. . . . She died on the back seat, with her legs in the air. Like a joke. (296)

Likewise, Sophie Mol, the half English daughter of Chacko and Margaret Kochamma, gets a church burial with a congregation and prayers, whereas Velutha's and Ammu's bodies are disposed off ignominiously.

An important element of carnival is the laughter that is ambivalent: it simultaneously

celebrates and mocks. Baby Kochamma in the novel is a terrifying figure exerting considerable influence on the young lives of Estha and Rahel. The narrator describes her as a person who lives her life backwards-

Rahel noticed that at the age of eighty-three, she started wearing make-up. Lipstick. Kohl. A sly touch of rouge. And because she believed in 40watt-bulbs, her lipstick mouth had shifted slightly off her real mouth (21).

Comrade Pillai is made to appear like a clown too. The grown up Rahel sees him as an exhibitionist enticing people with his nipples and forcing pictures of his son upon them. The clownish appearance given to the negative characters of the novel, when seen in Bakhtinian terms, is one way of narratively taming the terror and of turning it into something comical.

The carnivalesque engages directly with taboo themes: sex, incest, and the sexual mockery of authoritative figures. Plenty of such celebrations of the grotesque are found within Arundhati Roy's book that has all "the reek of the human" which Bakhtin glorifies. For example- the twins pissing with feet nicely balanced over the public pot; children defaecating; Comrade Pillai's "balls silhouetted against his soft white mundu"(14) or nipples peeping out "over the top of the boundary wall like a sad St. Bernard's eyes"(129); the child "insert[ing] his left forefinger deep into his unoccupied nostril"(132); Rahel listening to the "rude sounds of Baby Kochamma's relief dribbling down the Inspector's pot in his attached toilet"(319), - and so on and so forth.

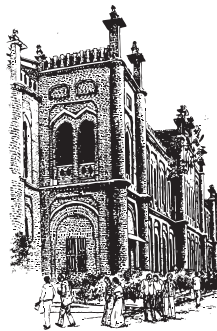
Even death is mocked at in the carnivalesque manner. At Sophie Mol's funeral, the child narrator comments on the advantageous position that one has in a coffin for looking high above rather than while standing amidst "sad hips" in a funeral. Velutha is beaten to death in police custody. His face was swollen and the narrator remarks that his head looked like a pumpkin, too large and heavy for the slender stem it grew from- "A pumpkin with a monstrous smile" (320). Even Ammu's death is also commented upon in a comical vein - "Rahel thought she looked like a Roman Senator. *Et Tu, Ammu!* she thought and smiled, remembering Estha" (162). The characters in Roy's novel embrace the carnivalesque in their language. The children also enjoy a kind of power through their language-games. Their reading backwards is tantamount to a powerful subversion of the established order. For example, Estha's reading aloud, backward, the qualities that are expected in policemen (written on the board on the wall, 313) creates a kind of subversion and is replete with irony.

For subtlety of variation, for sensuous opulence and the creativity in narration, few Indian English novels can stand in comparison with *The God of Small Things*. What Nissim Ezekiel is to Indian English poetry, so is Arundhati Roy to Indian English fiction in the matter of creating a new Indian English idiom. Roy's use of new form and structure and handling of her theme, reminds us of Joseph Conrad's and Salman Rushdie's handling of the English language. She has truly subverted the Centre to bring what has been marginalized to the forefront. Thus, her writing is a form of protesting as well as pro-testing. Therein lies its universal appeal.

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Asif Currimbhoy's *An Experiment with Truth* : An Experiment in Stage-craft

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Abstract

Asif currimbhoy is a prolific writer who has twenty-nine published works to his credit. His works include full-length plays, One –Acters, Radio- drama and even a screen –play. He is a master chronicler of the political history of India and its immediate neighbours. His passion for theatre and experimental sense of stage-craft are evident in his works. The article “Asif Currimbhoy's An Experiment with Truth: an experiment in stage-craft” throws light upon how the dramatist metamorphoses the recorded history as a signifier to have a holistic view of the political, cultural and religious climates of a nation.

The cornucopian aspect of Currimbhoy's creativity is only a curtain – raiser for a drama scholar. The playwright has twenty- nine published works to his credit, of which, there are not only full-length dramas and one-acters, but there is a radio-drama *The Clock* (1959) and a movie-script titled *The Valley of Assassins: a scenario* (1966) .

When the curtain is drawn, for *An Experiment with Truth* (1969) the audience is prepared for a son-et- lumiere in order to foreshadow the chiaroscuro of Gandhi's life. Act I scene i is titled 'Prologue'. It opens with a Shakespearian bang. When the curtain is drawn, three gun-shots are heard from the stage darkness. The next moment, light falls on a man doubling up in pain. He is not Gandhi. He is Vincent sheean, a journalist from Vermont, formerly a correspondent of the United Press, who later became the 'Chela' (disciple) of Gandhi. Sheean authored the book *Lead Kindly Light* (1949). When the auditorium reverberates with Sheean's voice played off a recorder, the audience realizes that it is not the physical pain but the mental agony that has contorted Sheean's face. The soliloquy of Sheean's soul which begins with the cry 'Oh God! Oh God!' reaches its epicentrum with the line quoted from Gandhi: 'The battle of Kurushetra lies in the heart of man'. The utterances in this soliloquy are so well syntaxed to reflect the faltering confession of the national guilt caused by Gandhi's assassination. Later in the play, Patel also echoes the same failure in the exasperating responsibility of protecting Gandhi. It is exasperating because of the recurring attempts on Gandhi's life and his refusal to accept tight police security and scrutiny.

In the play Sheean's voice, like that of diarist, presents a personalized account of the public event that rattled the entire Independent India. Currimbhoy uses the framing-up

device. The assassination–motif is the frame of the plot structure. It begins with Sheean's soliloquy and ends with Gandhi's assassination. Contained in this frame, are the myriad problems the Mahatma as well as the Mohandoss in Gandhi encountered. Asif Currimbhoy uses the Shakespearian devices of double – focus and double- time. The Central action is the Salt-March. The dramatic conflict is that between physical cowardice and moral courage. Currimbhoy dramatizes the trajectory of the 'march' which begins with an unbelievably small band of trained ashramites, the sathyagrahies. To be precise, just 78. It ends with thousands of common men making salt in a symbolic defiance of British authority, at various parts of India. They not only respond to the call of their Bapu, but also obey his command, that none should strike back, when Police strikes them. Currimbhoy conceives the scene significantly, with the physically strong Pathans and Sikhs participating in the non-violent march. They spontaneously demonstrate Gandhi's philosophy that Ahimsa or non-violence is the proof of inner force, the soul-force. Gandhi in the play, openly states that he would rather prefer violence to cowardice. (Act I Sc ii p18). As the Salt-March becomes an unprecedented success, Gandhi has transformed his personal faith into a national agenda. He has succeeded in imaging India as a civilization which believes in peace and freedom, not one at the cost of the other. As Gandhi's character attains its completion in the play, he is assassinated. Currimbhoy fuses the double-focus and double time. As the audience watches Gandhi making salt on the down-stage, on the back-drop, his assassination is visualized as a shadow- sequence. The mission is accomplished. But certainly, *An Experiment with Truth* is not a eulogy on Gandhiji. Between the beginning and the end, there are stroboscopic glimpses of multi-hued moments from Gandhi's life. Currimbhoy presents the dissident voices of Gandhi's detractors as polyphonic and multi-tonal. Patel's iron-handed dealings in resolving the political issues are viewed by Gandhi with complex feelings. Gandhi considers the R.S.S. as a group of misled youth. But Patel's attitude towards the R.S.S is different. Patel tells the R.S.S activist Madanlal who is in police custody after his foiled attempt on Gandhi's life:

The R.S.S aren't a bad organization. They are patriotic Hindus but like the Mahatma said, they are misguided youths... (Act I SP13).

At this point, the prisoner smiles, but too soon because the back of Patel's hand slaps his jaw hard enough that a thin stream of blood trickles from his open mouth. Madanlal as well as the audience would be stunned by this direct and physical act of violence from one of the front- line leaders of Gandhi's Congress. But Patel continues very cool as if the slap was just sawing the air to make a point,

Who understand only one language, Violence, like me. (ibid)

He grabs and twists Madanlal's hair cruelly and professionally. His candid utterance which follows is sharper than the slap. The one whom the called a patriotic Hindu, now has been metamorphosed into a different species:

Listen, you thug. I've held this country together through merciless enforcement of
law

and order, yes, merciless we're in enough trouble without you going around
assassinating Mahatmas..... (ibid)

Currimbhoy brings out the frustration and anger of Patel, precisely by making a subtle semantic change, 'the Mahatma' into 'Mahatmas'. Patel's foxy craft of politicking and also his prejudice towards Muslims are evident when he says,

“Now, there are extremist Hindus and extremist Muslims. Correction: all Muslims are extremists, so, we need to balance them out with a few fanatics like you. So I will shut my eyes to what the R.S.S. does.... within limits!”(ibid)

Patel candidly accepts that there is a similarity between the assassin and himself. So as an experiment of self-evaluation, Patel decides to starve the assassin for every measure of suffering Gandhi undergoes. As the premises of Gandhiji's fasting is love, the premises of the assassin Madanlal's starvation is hate. Thus Patel hopes to understand himself through Madanlal. Currimbhoy's stage- craft emphasizes this point beyond doubt. In Act I Scii., after Savarkar the R.S.S. supremo, who became accused number one in Gandhiji's assassination, comes to see the assassin. He is assured that the assassin would not speak. The 'D' and 'D', (deaf and dumb) would be the response of the culprit during the interrogation. After he leaves, Patel is alone with the assassin. Currimbhoy suggests a combination of two special effects: the first is the shadow- effect of the continuous spinning of Gandhi's wheel on the back-drop, at an upper level and the next is the mirrors placed beyond and away from the

assassin who is suspended under the sharp blaze of light. Thus, Patel, while talking to the assassin, is facing upstage with his back to audience. As he is exhorting the assassin, his mirror- image gives a queer stage- perspective to the audience. He appears like talking to himself, too. It brings out two major points about Patel: one, Patel is a foil, if not an adversary, to Gandhi. The means are as important as the end for Gandhi. But for Patel, all is fair in war. The other important point is, unlike Gandhi who would take the “accusation that he is a Muslim lover' as a compliment, Patel is not at all secular in his political outlook.

Savarkar, whom Currimbhoy portrays as an emaciated old man, with burning bright eyes, and a relentless savage mind which keeps his lifeless body going, tells Patel.

My dear Patel ... your personal views are not unknown. We may not stand together,
but we're not far apart(Act I SC ii)

Savarkar is convinced, as Patel himself confesses earlier to Madanlal the assassin, that he will allow the Hindu extremists to wreak violence within limits. What Patel politically tries to gain from this, is a power balance. Patel would let the extremists to cancel each other out. In Savarkar's words, "the sly Gandhi", suspects Patel's motives. So, Gandhi's fast is a protest against the intentions of Patel too. When Savarkar points out Gandhi's insistence that India should pay Pakistan for its old assets in India worth 550 million rupees, Patel seethes with anger, not at Savarkar, but at Gandhi. Patel thinks that Pakistan would use the money for aggression in Kashmir. According to Patel, it is political suicide. His anger burst out openly when Ali, a Muslim Nationalist meets Patel. Patel is convinced that not all the fifty million Muslims who stayed back in India did so out of their faith in secularism. Patel openly accuses that many of them did so, for their economic and political convenience. He points out that Ali himself committed a Freudian slip that it was always difficult for Muslims to feel brotherhood towards a member of another faith. Even a Mahatma may not be an exception to that. But when Patel accuses him, Ali, reacts even more furiously. He thumpingly asserts that it is a Gandhian secular state and he will smash the one who questions Muslim loyalty to India. He squarely blames the likes of Patel as those who want Gandhi dead. The scene ends with a bitter and hollow laughter from Patel who refutes Ali's charge. But Patel reiterates that all, including the R.S.S pursue the same thing; nationhood after freedom. Asif Currimbhoy depicts only Vincent Sheean and Gandhi's secretary, Mahadev Desai as the ones who not only follow Gandhi physically and politically but they do so philosophically too.

Patel's skepticism does not stop with Muslim Nationalism. He is also against the idea of a separate electorate for Dalits. As Ambedkar frets over his inability to stop untouchables accepting Gandhi as their leader, Patel enjoys the panic of Ambedkar. At the same time, when Ambedkar threatens him with the prospect of the untouchables converting to Christianity or Buddhism, Patel really feels threatened. Thus unlike Gandhi, who pits his inner force against aggression and physical cowardice, Patel believes in mass physical force. So he does not want to lose untouchables from Hindu denomination.

Currimbhoy proves his acumen as a master in scene construction. His scenes are marked by economy, compression and frequent scene-shifting. So the pace of the plot structure never slackens. Currimbhoy does not dramatize the historical events as popularly understood. He illuminates the different shades of history which hitherto were not shown to the common man. Even when he dramatizes the famed pages of Indian history such as the Salt March, he only creates a pulsating tableau of its most intensified moment and tries to link it with the holistic perspective of history. He succinctly uses a Pathan character and a Sikh character as the die-hard believers of their Bapu. It is an answer to the criticism that those who were physically strong joined the I.N.A of Bose and those who were not physically strong followed Gandhi's path of Ahimsa.

Moreover, Currimbhoy focuses on structuring the individual scenes and acts, with internal climaxes. Each and every aspect of Gandhi's life, every motif, act and even scene, has a beginning, a middle and an end in itself. For example, Patel's role in the play begins with that of a desperate protector of Gandhi; the middle is his experiment with Madanlal, hoping for a self-evaluation and, the end is his realization of the difference between the premises of hate and that of love. But these three basic units contain many smaller ones: Patel's confrontation with Gandhi, with Madanlal, with Savarkar, with Ali and with Ambedkar. So the Patel-plot does not move linearly like a darting arrow. Instead, its linear movement is that of a chain of circular movements interlinked with one another. As one motif or episode reaches its completion, it motivates the beginning of the next. Hindu nationalism is the factor, that links Patel with the other characters, Savarkar and Ambedkar. Savarkar is a Hindu fanatic and an extremist. Patel needs his extremism as an answer to Muslim extremism and for the communal power balance. Patel, though a Brahmin needs Ambedkar's Dalit denomination to strengthen the Hindu force. But Patel would not allow either Savarkar or Ambedkar to take an upper hand. He needs someone like Gandhi as an image to ward-off the evil eyes of all criticisms. He needs Gandhi as the icon of India projected to the view of the world. But Patel does not believe in secular-state ideology. For him it is just a political slogan to keep the national jingoism going. Currimbhoy as well as Patel call these three, Savarkar, Ali and Ambedkar as the 'three wise men'. They are the parody of the biblical three wise men who bore witness to the nativity of Christ. These three 'wise men' are what Madame Sosostris, the modern tarot-card reader juxtaposed with Tieresias, the clairvoyant in T.S.Eliot's *The Waste Land* (1922). Savarkar, Ali and Ambedkar are the faithless magi who pretend to bear witness to the nativity of a secular nation. It is Patel who uses expression 'three wise men' first in the play. He uses it with his

tongue-in-cheek when he speaks to Madanlal, the assassin. As Gandhiji's fast – unto – death hangs like the mythical Damocles' knife, suspended in the air, above the head of these three, they concede to wear the garb of the three wise men in spite of themselves. But the double entendre in the whole dramatic motif is that, Patel is the fourth, nay, the chief magus of the whole experience. As the Home Minister, Patel does not want to bear the burden of Gandhiji's death. It would be the Mariner's albatross in Coleridge's poem (*Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, 1798). Thus, though the sequences, Patel- Savarkar, Patel-Ali and Patel-Ambedkar parade on the stage- trafficking, they don't dart like an arrow. They are interlinked. They straighten like a chain of rings. The vestibule or the linking factor among the beads is, the Gandhi – Madanlal motif. Patel tries to understand, subconsciously, whom he resembles; Gandhi or Madanlal? In fiction, it is called oblique narrative. In drama, it is double – focus.

The personal themes of Gandhi's life also run parallel to the stream of political themes discussed above. Gandhi, Kasturba, Manilal and Hiralal form the micro-family. Gandhi, Mahadev Desai, Manu, Gopal and the ashramites are the macro-family which links the micro family with the super family, India. The parent– child theme is sustained skillfully in all these families. There are many parallels among the three spaces: the domestic, the ashramic and the national. The quintessential parallel movement of the multiple plot structure in *An Experiment with Truth*, resembles the structure of a proscenium- arch theatre. The frontal most part of that theatre is the 'façade' which frames the stage-spectacle. At the rear-end of the stage is the 'skene', the scenery or the cyclorama. Beyond the façade and towards the 'skene' pairs of wooden planks, called 'wings' are positioned parallel to each other, facing the audience. As they gradually get nearer the 'skene', they converge towards each other. Thus they unify the views of the audience, seated at different angles, into a single point perspective. Similarly, in *An Experiment with Truth*, Gandhi's life is the façade. The various plots are the wooden planks or the wings. These plots, like the wings, which run parallel to each other, develop and converge into a single point climax, dove-tailing the multiple action, time and place into one meaning: Gandhi's life is his message. Gandhi metamorphosed his personal faith into a national agenda. It was no easy task for him or to those around him, in this case an entire nation. “The deed of gift was the deed of many wars” (Robert Frost, *'Gift Outright, 1941'*). The war was not of the dimension of a blitzkrieg. Mao would have called it a protracted war. Gandhi calls it “the battle of Kurushetra”. Like Virgil's Aeneas, Gandhi braved the thunder bolts of many a God, the British, the R.S.S, the Muslim league and the Dalit leadership. Mohandoss

Gandhi also suffered the undeployed, unuttered and unintended curse of his Dido. Kasturba's questions are poignant in the play.:

“Community schooling and outdoor sleeping and.....Ashrams and hordes of inmates.... Does our family have to be so large, Babu? (Act I Sc ii)

The stage direction states that Gandhi is too taken aback to reply right away, too lost with the poignancy of the question. He is heart – broken.

There is a flash back in the play, in which Kasturba, when forced by Gandhi to clean the toilets in the Ashram, shouts and screams. She recoils from the 'Jharu' (the broom) crying that it is deep in her blood that she is not able to do it. The last conversation between them is even more pathetic. Ba is in her death bed.

Kasturba: Yesterday...son Hiralal came to me. He ...he was drunk....and dirty...(uncontrollable tears)...he said he ate meat and his name was Abdulla. Babu, he ...he wanted to hurt us... event to my dying day.

Gandhi: (barely audible) No, Ba, don't cry. Son Manilal....

Kasturba: I'm talking of Hiralal, Babu – You have many, many sons. I have only a few. You have many, many problems, I have only a few.(Act III Sc ii)

But, Ba declares in the same scene that Gandhi's was the life of a great man and her duty was to follow him. Neither of them could escape the suffering in their lives, and love had nothing to do with it. With denouement so clearly stated, Ba's character attains its completion.

Similarly, Gandhi's experiments in Brahmacharya, celibacy, does not stop with his wife. It is overcoming sexual drive which is the strongest carnal desire. As he overcomes the biological appetite of food, he also overcomes that of sex. He accomplishes it when he feels no difference between touching mau, the young girl and Gopal, the untouchable boy whom he has adopted. Manu who was perplexed by Gandhi's ways and questions, finally accepts him as her true father and says she will be ready to do anything he asks her to. As Kasturba's verdict that Gandhiji's is the life of a great man, Manu's acceptance of Gandhiji as the symbol of Fatherhood is the completion of her character.

Savarkar too, while challenging Gandhi on the grounds of Patriotism, does not slight the merits of Gandhiji's ways which influence the young generation. Savarkar does not indulge in soft- pedaling the fact. He reminds Gandhiji, that he has spent more years in jail than Gandhiji has done. Inside the prison he learned what hatred is. That is the trajectory of Savarkar's political life as an extremist. Savarkar bluntly states that there is no use in

Gandhi trying to change the former's heart. But, Savarkar says:

“There are thousands and thousands of R.S.S. You can try it on them; and you can only do it if you give up your fast. I've promised you a truce from violence and I will live up to it. But you'll have to carry it from there....”. (Act III Sc iii,)

Asif Currumbhoy has suggestively titled the scene as 'Epilogue'. Savarkar and Ali promise to stop violence against each other's community. Ambedkar is ready to give up his demand for a separate electorate. Patel's Congress promises to return 550 million rupees to Pakistan.

As Gandhiji's Salt March successfully challenged the tide of the mighty British empire, his fast-unto-death after the independence, has silenced the dissident voices at home. The half-naked old man at the spinning wheel has become a formidable force in the eyes of all institutions as well as counter institutions. Gandhiji has attained the absolute composure of body and mind. By the end of the play, when Patel tells Gandhi that Madanlal was very critical of mahatmas, Gandhi very genuinely asks to know more about it:

Patel: He said....he said an assassin kills only once but knows that he has sinned. A Mahatma merely admits to a failure that has cost many more lives than his own. (Long silence)

Gandhi: Is that all he said?

Patel: Yes.

Gandhi: Then we must try again....for a deeper truth.

Patel: There may not be enough time for that. (Act III Sc.ii)

A similar situation is dramatized in *Sonar Bangla* (1972), by the same dramatist. Mujib-Ur-Rehman accuses Bhutto of re-tracking on his promise of autonomy to East-Pakistan. Bhutto answers that such things happen in politics. Mujib reacts sharply that he is not a politician. Currimbhoy presents a striking picture of Bhutto's character at this point:

Bhutto: (laughing cynically) Oh,... I see, a statesman? A martyr? The blood of martyrs has made you great, has it? But only dead martyrs survive. Living ones don't. people get disillusioned soon. Only politicians survive. (Act IV Sc.8).

May be Bhutto was right about politicians. But Gandhi, as Currimbhoy portrays him in his play, is convinced that sometimes it is more meaningful to die rather than to live. On January 30, 1948, a young man, aged 35, offered “Pranam”(greetings) to Bapuji, and remarked “You are late today for prayer.” Just at the moment Gandhiji said smilingly, “ Yes,

I am.”, he bumped three bullets at point- blank range in to the frail body of the “ Great Soul”. When Gandhiji closed his eyes eternally, the light went out of millions of lives. Currimbhoy in his production notes suggests a choice between two favourite songs of Bapuji for BGM ;' Lead Kindly Light' or 'When I see Christ on Cross'. Even before the fateful day, four attempts had been made on his life. On June 25, 1934, in Poona, a bomb exploded near the car in which Bapu and Ba were travelling. In that incident, the Chief Officer of Municipal Corporation , two police men and seven others were injured .In May,1944 ,a group led by Nathuram Vinayak Godse reached Gandhiji's place of residence near Pune and during an evening prayer meeting, Godse, with a dagger, rushed towards Gandhi, shouting slogans. He

was overpowered Again in September 1944, a group led by Nathuram Godse accosted Gandhi while he was leaving Sevagram for a meeting with Jinnah. Godse carried a knife at that time too. Just ten days before the assassination, Madanlal Pahwa, Godse and four others were involved in a bomb attack on Bapuji at Birla House. On January 26, 1948, Two days before his assassination, Gandhi announces :

If I'm to die by the bullet of a mad man, I must do so smiling. God must be in my heart and on my lips. And if anything happens, you are not to shed a single tear.

(The Hindu, Jan. 31, 1948).

At a time when politics is increasingly rated as a rarefied realm of corruption and its values have been soiled, one is surprised to witness the lives of such a leader who shared the same space with our elders during India's freedom struggle.

It is astounding to watch Currimbhoy's stage- craft transforming a well- known historical fact, such as the end of Gandhi, as a causeway to cross a quagmire of unnecessary details, and reach a different domain of understanding. Asif Currimbhoy's experiment to demonstrate how history can be used as a signifier in the semiotics of drama, qualifies *An Experiment with Truth* as a contemporary classic.

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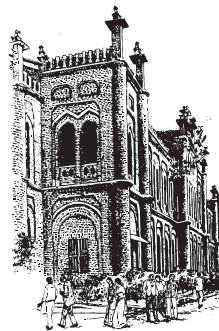
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Use of L1 as a strategy for acquisition of English in the bilingual Indian context

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Abstract

Code-switching/-mixing has enormous pedagogical value in the Indian bilingual context of teaching English and it can promote interactive classroom which is otherwise difficult in an artificial monolingual “English only” classroom. In addition to creating a healthy and encouraging home-like ambiance for interaction in the formal classroom setting, this bilingual approach by the learners helps them overcome certain social-psychological problems like cultural disloyalty, negative language attitude, and subconscious language behaviour; and linguistic factors like lexical gap, low level of competence, and communicative inability. Moreover, code-switching/-mixing is a rule-governed behaviour as a result of interaction between two contact languages in society aiding communication in both languages at once. Code-mixing and –switching between the home language and English is more beneficial to the acquisition of the latter at phonological, grammatical, lexical, sentence, and discourse levels. It creates awareness in the learners of similar and dissimilar linguistic elements and idiomatic expressions between languages. It is also a natural way of learning a second language in multilingual contexts. Some teachers' attitude toward this natural bilingual phenomenon is negative on the ground that it promotes communication neither in English nor in the home language. They fail to perceive language basically as a social phenomenon and they fear that it will ultimately stunt learners' growth at the level of subordinate bilingualism, an unfounded fear. The present paper analyzes the attitudes of English teachers toward the use of Tamil as a perfect strategy in the English class that is the home language of the vast majority of English learners both in regional and English medium schools.

Background to the present study

Except a tiny minority of “Anglo-Indians,” all other Indian learners of English are either bilingual or even multi-lingual with English. For pedagogical and political reasons, English teachers who 'owe allegiance' to the Direct Method and politicians and regional language activists/champions who 'champion' the cause of Indian languages, exhibit a high level of intolerance toward the use of the home language in the class and English in social discourse respectively. Such Indian teachers of English are pedagogically tied to the theories, approaches and methods of TESL which have been designed by and large in

monolingual contexts, and they show indifference toward bilingual approach that inevitably encourages the use of the known language to learn the unknown. No book on, or an anthology of, teaching methods of English either as a foreign or a second language includes the bilingual approach. The widely used text in the Indian universities by **Jack C. Richards (1986)** doesn't even make a mention about the bilingual approach to TESL. Teaching methods play a major role in the acquisition of English as a second language. The social environment in which the teaching takes place is also equally important. English is an additional or second language to the vast majority of Indian learners of English. Most of them internalise their home languages by the time they are sent to school and majority of them are therefore successive bilinguals.

Indian society is necessarily a bilingual society. Code-switching and code-mixing is the linguistic identity of bilinguals of all kinds. Most Indian learners of English are to be understood as subordinate or coordinate bilinguals in the class. Besides, an effective English classroom is no longer a traditional Presentation-Practice-Production classroom. Rather, it becomes an interactive classroom for communication skills of students to be improved both in English and the home language. 'English only' classrooms have become a suspect since it is not simply implemented in task-based interactive classrooms. It would have been possible and desirable for teacher-fronted classrooms where students are kept as passive audience meant for listening to the teacher talk on all possible themes that include morals and values. Indian teachers of English need to address the issue of the use of L1 in their classes in stead of simply condemning its use without any valid pedagogical value.

Aim of the study

It aims at investigating the phenomenon of using L1 in English language classes as a learning/teaching strategy by way of code-switching and/or –mixing. It proposes to elicit the attitudes of the practising English language teachers at the tertiary level and to analyze both positive and negative impacts of L1 use on English language learning in the classroom.

Hypotheses

The study began its investigation with the following assumptions:

1. English teachers at the tertiary level are intolerant of using L1 in the PPP class or interactive class.
2. Use of L1 in English class promotes communication and confidence.

Research questions

The following research questions framed at the beginning of the investigation helped the

researcher to focus his attention on the topic without any diversion or meandering into the allied areas.

1. Can the bilingual Tamils learn English through 'English only' method/approach?
2. What's the role of L1 in English classes?
3. How do English teachers at the tertiary level view this code-switching/mixing phenomenon?
4. Does code-switching/mixing help learners and their languages?
5. Does it have a pedagogical value?

Research design

Since the present study is primarily a teachers attitude study on the use of L1 in English classes at the tertiary level, the subjects are 18 college English language teachers chosen at random from among the city colleges in Madurai (**N=18**). Twenty teachers were contacted in person and through an email attachment, but response could be received only from 18 of them. The questionnaire was prepared after consulting the existing literature in the field and some of the colleagues with their confirmed stance on this issue. The questionnaire consists of 15 statements on a Likert-type five point scale from “strongly agree, agree, no idea, disagree, to strongly disagree” with 5,4,3,2,&1 points respectively for all positively worded statements and it was reversed in the case of negatively worded statements.

Review of literature

Though there is very little literature in the field to which one can have access, these sources were not inaccessible. **David Carless (2007)** discusses the natural and inevitable use of Cantonese in English as a foreign language classes in Hong Kong. **Thomas and Collier (2002)** support the view that English language development appears to be enhanced by strong first (L1) language abilities. Positive and negative consequences of the home language are highlighted in **Anton & DiCamilla 1998; Swain & Lapkin (2000)**. **Holliday (1994)** argues that learners need not use English all the time during interaction.

Discussion

Designing, implementing, and assessing the appropriate methods of teaching English as a second language in the multilingual context has always been a contentious issue within the academia. Majority of the practising teachers of English are habitually using an eclectic approach to ELT. The continued allegiance to the “English only” method is seen as part of the colonial hangover and it is now fading very fast with the changing socio-economic backgrounds of first generation Indian learners of English and teachers

with non-metropolitan bilingual and bicultural backgrounds. The relative merit of a bilingual approach to ELT in the multilingual Indian context needs to be explored. One of the starting points, it was presumed, is to assess teachers' attitude toward the use of the home language in the teaching/learning process. The use of the home language at the word and sentence levels is, after all, not a bizarre phenomenon since it is reflective of the bilingual/multilingual society.

Bilingualism means the learning of, proficiency in, and use of two or more languages. Almost all Indian learners of English satisfy the first criterion of the working definition and they may accordingly be called subordinate bilinguals and as they progress in the acquisition of English, they move toward becoming compound bilinguals in whose mind both the languages are intermingled and operate with a single or fused semantic base. One of the significant aspects of bilingualism is the process of learning a second language. Many Indian children begin learning English along with L1 or at the age of 5 after they start going to school. Some learn it as adults for a variety of reasons. In all such situations, the learning of an additional language like English has far-reaching consequences to the individual, to the group, and to languages concerned.

The learning of two languages is not a burden to learners, but it proves to be an enabling and enriching phenomenon. It increases the linguistic repertoire in terms of their expressive power. It makes them more versatile in terms of communication and interaction. It makes them culturally sophisticated in terms of broad-mindedness and tolerance to varied cultural conventions and customs. It also increases their 'reach' in terms of information and knowledge. The bilingual group begins to use both languages for a different set of functions without any friction since functions are perceived in a hierarchical order. They are seen in a 'diglossic' relationship. In the case of English that has the rare rapport with Indian languages, both operate in complementary roles and they enjoy equal value and respect. Both English and the home language influence each other because of their proximity and as a result of such a healthy contact, both undergo structural changes at the phonological, morphological, and syntactical levels.

Due to habitual use of English and the home language in different domains and situations, Indians code-mix and code-switch. It is an inevitable and normal consequence. Code-mixing/-switching are the phenomena of using two languages simultaneously for communication. This has gained wide currency and respectability and acceptability. Such bilingual behaviour can be seen from advertisements to imaginative literature. There are

divergent views on the use of the home language in the English classroom. Those who do not advocate it are the followers of the “English only” method that presumes that a) there is adequate exposure to English, b) there is sufficient motivation to communicate, and c) it enables the learner to think in English. The other group argues that the direct method is not feasible with students who are weak in English because a) they do not get adequate exposure to English, b) there is little motivation or compulsion to use English, and c) thinking in English is not possible without adequate knowledge of English. Arguably, code-mixing and code-switching can be beneficial to both teachers and learners.

It helps learners overcome certain social-psychological problems like cultural disloyalty, negative language attitude, and subconscious language behaviour. There exists in the yet-to-be-decolonized minds of Indian learners of English a love-hate attitude toward English. Though they know the value and role of English as the language of modernization and not of colonization any more, they take pride in the use of the home language and they long to use it in all domains for the overall development. Many teachers also have this dual attitudinal problem though they do not articulate it explicitly. They are caught in between a sense of love and loyalty for the home language and a feeling of necessity and contingency for English. English teachers and English-medium students are sometimes suspected of cultural disloyalty and of breeding negative language attitudes. Code-mixing and –switching help them overcome such socio-psychological crises by providing roots in both languages and in fact, the bilingual users can be seen moving closer to Indian ethos than the Western on a continuum.

It also helps English language learners overcome linguistic barriers like lexical gap, low level of competence, and communicative inability. There are a number of factors that act against learners' interest in communication through English. A major problem is their inadequate command over the choice of vocabulary. This lack leads to both low level of competence and communicative inability. Communication flow can be ensured through code-mixing and –switching and in that process they can learn the apt expression and sentence patterns from each other either explicitly or through observation. They need not be denied of a chance to communicate in English simply because they should try only in English. In real life, code-mixing and –switching is resorted to the various reasons: lack of lexical items at one's command, or no equivalence, or, cultural differences, language's inability, the nature and suitability of certain topics, et al. Moreover, learners feel less inhibited to communicate when they are allowed to code-mix/-switch.

Code-mixing/-switching creates awareness in the learners of similar and dissimilar linguistic elements and idiomatic expressions between languages and learning processes. A comparison with the home language makes learners aware of the rules in their mother tongue which allay their fears of acquiring English as a second language. The comparison can be at all levels: grammar, sounds of language, sentence patterns, combining sentences and so on. For instance, Tamil is a phonetic language whereas English is highly unphonetic. Both languages have or do not have certain sounds and a comparison can drive home the point and can instil confidence in learners. Tamil is an inflected language while English is a derivative language and this simple fact will enable Tamil learners of English to develop positive linguistic attitudes toward English in the realm of word formation and enhancement. They can also appreciate the fact that certain experiences cannot be accommodated in English expressions at all. They can be phrases, idioms, or lexical items. Moreover, as **Cook (1991: 63)** argues, “people use similar memory processes, reading processes, and listening processes in both the L1 and the L2, even if they are less efficient at using them in the L2.” Hence, code-mixing/-switching is neither unusual nor abnormal. It is an ordinary fact of life in bilingual societies.

Home language provides a common ground and brings both teacher and learners together. While teacher can exploit the language that learners know thoroughly for the teaching of what they want to learn, learners can also use their home language for the learning of English, the object of their learning. The use of the home language is only a means to an end. Its use saves time and facilitates greater comprehension. Code-switching is possible simply because both interlocutors know both the languages or else there will be either transliteration or no communication at all. The ultimate aim of learning English as an international language is **NOT** to become a native or near-native speaker at all but to become “a person who can stand between the two languages” (**Cook: 66**). Hence, code-switching enables 'reciprocal language using': both the languages readily available for use rather than functioning exclusively in one or the other. The fact that the teacher knows the language of learners signals the undeniable reality that the classroom itself is often a code-switching situation. According to (**Faltis, 1989**), Jacobson developed a teaching method known as “New Concurrent Approach” that recommends teachers to balance the set of the two languages within a single lesson. For instance, teachers can code-switch when concepts are important and difficult, or when learners are getting distracted, or when learners should be praised.

English language development appears to be enhanced through strong home language abilities. If learners are not given practice in both languages for development, both of them are likely to be lost. Those who lack reading habits in the home language cannot be expected to be good at reading in English. If any learner of English feels shy for communication in the home language, they cannot be good at English speaking skills. When students have not developed the habit of writing in the home language, they cannot master writing skills in English, either. Stressing the importance of the home language in English language learning, **Erben, Ruth & Castaneda (2009: 28)** recommend that “by reaching higher levels of proficiency in their first language, an English language learner will be able to transfer the cognitive benefits to learn English more effectively.” They argue that providing mere English instruction in the classroom will not suffice for effective interaction.

Here is a brief analysis of teachers' attitude on the phenomenon of code-mixing/-switching in the English class. 78% of subjects agree that code-mixing or –switching enables feedback in reading comprehension sessions. The same percentage affirms that it provides scaffolding for learners to learn English. The same number again feels that it helps learners overcome both social-psychological and linguistic barriers during the acquisition of English. All the subjects think that learners have little inhibition to use English in the interactive classroom if they are allowed to do a little code-mixing and –switching. Majority of teachers feel that it is a strategy for both teachers and learners in the teaching/learning processes and hence, it need not be restricted to teaching alone. 56% of them do not buy the argument that the use of L1 fails to encourage English language production and practice. Again, 78% of the teachers disagree that it promotes communication neither in English nor in L1. The similar number confirms that the use of L1 not only allays the fears of learners in acquiring English as a second language, but also brings both teachers and learners closer. Friendly ambience and lack of stress and anxiety are the basic requirements for interactive classrooms. Teaching fraternity is, however, more or less equally divided on the issue of 'English only' method. In spite of their being aware of positive impact of the use of L1 on learners and learning in the interactive classroom, 55% of teachers feel that “English only” method is beneficial to English language learners. Of course, it can be understood as an expression of their inherited legacy of colonial language policy that was framed in the absence of any theoretical study on bilingualism and methods of teaching designed without any reference to the social fact that Indian society is historically a bilingual one.

Recommendation

The following suggestions can be inferred from the present study:

1. English teachers should have a working knowledge of Contrastive Analysis.
2. Bilingual approach to English language teaching should be adopted without any sense of guilt.
3. Bilingual English classroom is not an aberration but a reflection of a typical bilingual society.
4. Learners benefit the bilingual approach immensely.

Summing up

English language teachers exhibit positive attitudes toward the use of the home language in the English classroom. The first hypothesis that English teachers at the tertiary level are intolerant of using L1 in the traditional or interactive class is totally invalidated. Code-mixing and –switching helps learners over socio-psychological and linguistic barriers. It also promotes confidence for communication and interaction. Bilingual approach is better than monolingual or the English-only method for the simple reason that the higher level of proficiency in the home language is directly in proportion to proficiency in English.

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Appendix

Use of L1 as a strategy for acquisition of English in the bilingual Indian context

No	Variable	SA	%	A	%	NI	%	DA	%	SDA	%
1	In a reading comprehension class, code switching by students provides the necessary feedback			14	78			4	22		
2	Mixing/switching home language in English class supports English language learning	4	22	10	56	2	11	2	11		
3	Bilingual approach helps learners overcome certain social-psychological problems like cultural disloyalty and negative language attitude	2	11	12	67			2	11	2	11
4	Bilingual approach helps learners overcome linguistic problems like lexical gap and communicative inability	2	11	12	67			4	22		
5	Mixing and switching increases learners' linguistic repertoire and reach in terms of communication & knowledge	2	11	12	67			4	22		
6	The students feel less inhibited when allowed to do a little code mixing	6	33	12	67						
7	Home language allows students to express humour	6	33	8	44	4	22				
8	Mixing & switching can be used as a teaching strategy by teachers only	2	11	2	11	2	11	10	56	2	11
9	Use of home language fails to encourage English practice and communication	6	33					10	56	2	11
10	Mixing & switching promotes communication neither in English nor in home language			2	11	2	11	14	78		
11	A comparison with home language makes students aware of the rules in their mother tongue which allays their fears of English			14	78			4	22		
12	The use of home language proves a time saver and facilitates greater comprehension	2	11	10	56			4	22	2	11
13	Home language provides a common ground and brings the teachers and the taught closer to each other.	4	22	14	78						
14	Grammar teaching also becomes interesting if home language is used			12	67			2	11	4	22
15	Learners can benefit the Direct Method (English only method)	6	33	4	22			8	44		

Idioms as Vehicles of the Existential *Angst*

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Abstract

Premising that every literary genre or linguistic device has a function to perform this paper argues that idioms [in English] convey the 'Existential Angst' as experienced by humans on a day-to-day basis. There are various religious and philosophical traditions that acknowledge the pain and absurdity of human life and suggest remedies for the same. But idioms at large, which only reflect the predicamental nature of life with no reference to relief of any kind are seen predominantly Existentialist.

Idioms [e.g. *between the devil and the deep sea, fish out of water, left with the baby*] that are described as “anomalies of language, [and] mavericks of the linguistic world” (*Dictionary of Idioms and their Origins* 6) are the language elements that have been studied from the perspectives of applied linguistics, cognitive linguistics, psycho linguistics, socio-linguistics, semantics, and pragmatics. However, this paper which endeavors to inquire into the recurrent motifs of the English idioms by studying their import: the connotative pragmatics rather than the denotative semantics (Stanley 393-94) in the light of the Existential philosophy is relatively non-linguistic and non-native by perspective. The hypothesis of the paper: *idioms in English are vehicles of the Existential Angst* or in other words *English idioms are generally negative* by attitude, has been discussed here from a largely philosophical standpoint enunciated in a humanistic manner of discourse. Endeavoring to define idioms, the *Cambridge Idioms Dictionary* says:

[I]t is often impossible to guess the meaning of an idiom from the words it contains. In addition, idioms often have a stronger meaning than non-idiomatic phrases. For example, *look daggers at someone* has more emphasis than *look angrily at someone*, but they mean the same thing. Idioms may also suggest a particular attitude of the person using them, for example disapproval, humour, exasperation or admiration, so you must use them carefully. (vi)

The negativism of the idioms in English drew my attention as a school boy while learning English as a second language. Although the idea eventually faded in prominence it struck back when I, as an instructor, had to teach idioms in ESL classes. Explaining idioms for the benefit of my students often included comparisons with Tamil equivalents—rather

than translations, and it only reinforced the idea in me that idioms at large were pointing to the darker side of human life. Observations of acclaimed linguists such as Fernando (100), Moon (247), and Liu (34) on the negative tone of English idioms provided the much needed impetus to study the negativism—i.e. “the practice of being or tendency to be negative or skeptical in attitude while failing to offer positive suggestions or views” (Oxford); or, “a pessimistic approach to life” (“Negativism”)—in them and identify the same as a reflection of the 'Existential anxiety' inherent in human psyche.

This anxiety is the bedrock of what is multifariously known in the existential parlance: the Kierkegaardian “despair and dread”; the Heideggerian “*Angst*”; or, the Sartrean “anguish” (Reynolds 5). These exponents of Existentialism alongside Camus in Absurdism have exerted on posterity an influence that is far reaching and interdisciplinary. The study holds the negative attitude of idioms as an expression of the existential “anxiety, boredom, nausea” (Macquarie 18) discussed by the aforesaid thinkers and the like. The study presupposes that idioms, as any other genres or devices in literature, have a 'function' to perform and it perhaps is: to communicate one kind of negative feeling or other which correlates with the innate human *Angst*.

An acute sense of the human predicament and the means to mitigate the same has been the all-time preoccupation of various religions and philosophies as follows. For them, acknowledging this darker side of life has been the foremost prerequisite to address the same. Hinduism lays stress on *karma* as the cause of human suffering and suggests ways to get rid of it. Buddhism that perceives life as miserable recommends the “*path of moderation*” (“Buddhism”) for salvation and the Ecclesiast in the Bible who reckons all as “vanity and vexation of spirit” (Ecc 2:17) suggests faith as the means to overcome that.

Legend has it that Socrates, 'the Wisest of the Greeks' did not seek a reprieve from the death sentence inflicted on him despite the pronounced possibility of the same. But rather he stoically remarked on the face of his persecutors: “The hour of departure has arrived, and we go our ways—I to die, and you to live. Which is better God only knows” (qtd. in Russel 95). A single idiom such as *to live long in the slaughter house* might sum up Pascal's view of life. The mathematician-physicist-philosopher wrote: “Let us imagine a number of men in chains and all condemned to death, where some are killed each day in the sight of others, and those who remain see their own fate in that of their fellows and wait their turn, looking at each other sorrowfully and without hope. It is an image of the human condition” (qtd. in Critchley 147).

This possibly affirms an awareness of the darker side of life and the perennial pessimism that stems from it. This innate gloom has found its place in the works of those thinkers who saw life as problematic. Such negativism toward life, manifest or latent, can be easily traced in some of the philosophical strands, predominantly of the West. They may be arranged in the order of Cynicism, Stoicism, Nihilism, Naturalism down to Existentialism and Absurdism. Although these “philosophies of retreat” suggest different remedies—or, no remedies sometimes, they concur with each other on diagnosing human life of a pervasive negativism fostered by elements of the irrational. Even as they try to infuse confidence in humans by professing means to overcome or cope with such darkness they admit that existence is essentially predicamental. As they all consider suffering as the characteristic of human life Cynicism prescribes austere and virtuous living as the way to cope with it; Stoicism persuades us to be indifferent to both joy and suffering besides living a simple life upholding morality; Nihilism finds no value in the world and subsequently encourages even the destruction of the world; Naturalism finds suffering as inevitable and declares that we have no control over the forces that operate on us; and both Existentialism [of the atheistic kind] and Absurdism consider life as irrational but ask one to lead an authentic life in the midst of the absurd—without recouring to suicide, faith, hope, God, or reason. The list of idioms that follows contains various motifs that are recurring and akin to the existential anxiety that emanates from freedom, decision, responsibility, finitude, forlornness, and guilt in addition to the aforesaid boredom and nausea.

Perhaps Proverbs and Tragedies (Classical / Shakespearean) on the one hand and Idioms, Existentialism, and Absurdism on the other share a common ground in regarding human life as essentially predicamental. Nevertheless, there is a major difference between them. Proverbs and tragedies try to rationalize human life: with the former suggesting ways to avoid suffering with the help of forethought and prudence whereas the latter—particularly after Euripides and his application of what Nietzsche disapprovingly calls the “*aesthetic Socratism*” (62)—fixing life in a cause-and-effect framework and interpreting the catastrophe in a tragedy only as the result of some human error which in turn is the outcome of the 'tragic flaw': without which tragedy is impossible. But, Idioms; Existentialism; and Absurdism that dwell on the misery and meaninglessness of life find no room for logic, reason, or hope in all that. *The Concise Encyclopedia of Western Philosophy* perceives Existentialism as the portrayal of the “roughness and untidiness of actual life” and distinguishes it into “profoundly religious” and also “sometimes, overtly atheistic”

(131). *Wikipedia* declares: “Existentialism is a term applied to the work of a number of philosophers since the nineteenth century who, despite large differences in their positions, generally focused on the condition of human existence, and an individual's emotions, actions, responsibilities, and thoughts, or the meaning or the purpose of life.” Existentialism is also viewed as the “philosophy of human unrest” (Patka 33). Such human unrest or *Angst* could be seen in the list of idiomatic expressions as follows:

IDIOMS	THEMES
1. a cat and dog life - - - - -	disharmony
2. a cat on hot bricks - - - - -	nervousness
3. a fish out of water - - - - -	hardship
4. a slip of the tongue - - - - -	proneness to error
5. a snake in the grass - - - - -	hidden danger
6. a sitting duck - - - - -	vulnerability
7. a skeleton in the cupboard - - - - -	deceptiveness
8. a thorn in the flesh - - - - -	constant botheration
9. a wild-goose chase - - - - -	futility
10. a wolf in sheep's clothing - - - - -	deceitfulness
11. axe to grind - - - - -	opportunism
12. back to square one - - - - -	futility
13. bolt from the blue - - - - -	shock
14. butterfly in the stomach - - - - -	anxiety
15. dog in the manger - - - - -	obstruction
16. frog in a well - - - - -	ignorance
17. hand in glove - - - - -	complicity
18. in soup - - - - -	trouble
19. left with the baby - - - - -	helplessness
20. out of frying pan into fire - - - - -	deterioration
21. pot calling kettle black - - - - -	condescension
22. slip between the cup and the lip - - - - -	possible failure
23. to bang one's head against a brick wall - - - - -	futility

24.	to bury one's hand in the sand	-	-	-	-	evasiveness
25.	to count one's chickens before they hatch	-	-	-	-	vain hope
26.	to open a Pandora's box	-	-	-	-	problems
27.	to put the cart before the horse	-	-	-	-	wrong order
28.	to rub salt on the raw wound-	-	-	-	-	aggravation
29.	to run with the hare and hunt with the hounds	-	-	-	-	double standards
30.	writing on the wall	-	-	-	-	forewarning

Idioms as illustrated above arguably reflect different shades of the Existential *Angst* that are analogous to the “restlessness of the self” (qtd. in Maquarrie 48) as attributed by St. Augustine to mankind; the Self's feeling of “thrownness” (Heidegger 174) and “not-being-at-home” (233) in the world as identified by Heidegger; the pressure of the “limit situations” as phrased by Karl Jaspers “where we come against the wall” (qtd. in Maquarrie 36); or, the pain of the “four-fold bond” i.e. every individual is in conflict with their own body, past, environment, and society (qtd. in Titus 103-4) as articulated by Paul Weiss. The *Angst* conveyed by idioms is the basis of what we call the “primary 'ontological' feelings” (Macquarie 164) or the “phenomenological experiences and moods” (Reynolds 2) without any operational provision for God, hope, reason, or suicide. Through their non-sentential structure idioms defy the semantic and syntactic protocols. And they, thanks to the situations they concoct and the mental pictures they evoke together with the *Angst* and absurdity of life as their recurring motifs, can be loosely and unconventionally described by borrowing Martin Esslin's definition [of the absurd plays] as follows: “[They have] no story or plot...[or] recognizable characters [They]...have neither a beginning nor an end.... [They are like] reflections of dreams and nightmares... [and] consist of incoherent babblings” (21-22). The aforementioned idiomatic expressions also convey feelings, experiences, and circumstances with no story or plot, recognizable characters, beginning or end. But they are no less effective in conveying the absurdity of the human drama and the 'tragic sense of life' (Macquarrie 164) not only by virtue of their negative content but also their bizarre form exemplifying “incoherent babblings”.

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Play with the Language

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Abstract

This article presents activities relevant for teachers of English to ESL and EFL students taking (creative) writing courses, especially for mixed ability groups. These activities have been used in a writing course at the University of Hildesheim for ERASMUS students, that is, students from throughout Europe. Many ERASMUS students in Hildesheim are involved in language or translation studies. The group consists of motivated and inquisitive students, however, the language abilities of the learners can be quite varied, from level A2 to C2 according to The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR 2008) which are guidelines for the level of learning, teaching, and assessment of languages across Europe. Flexibility and differentiation in teaching are achieved through setting tasks simple enough to be understood by all, yet giving students the chance to work to their individual targets and meet their learning needs. Creative writing is not the sole writing style employed during the semester, but it has proved to be an effective springboard to launch students into understanding and applying other styles, such as English for Academic Purposes. Having the contrast of styles in one course provides students the chance to choose appropriate writing styles for specific contexts. For details of ERASMUS in action, consult the texts by Breede (2011) and da Silva (2011) and for an appreciation of the big picture relating to language and culture in Europe, read Eco's talk to The Guardian (2012).

Teaching with questions and inspiration

Plato (380 BCE), in book VI of *The Republic*, demonstrates the role of questions, whether earnest or playful, in searching for the desirable nature of a philosopher. “Then in addition to our other requirements we look for a mind endowed with measure and grace, whose native disposition will make it easily guided to the aspect of the ideal reality in all things” (cited in Shorey, 13).

Just as pondering is an important skill to develop in any person, not only in philosophers, so too is the skill of acting on thoughts, and there is no better teaching philosophy for a teacher to fully engage the students in attendance than to let students know their thoughts and contributions are required.

“An individual step in character training is to put responsibility on the individual” (Baden-Powell (n.d.) cited in Liebersohn, 18). This quote by Baden-Powell does not demonstrate the nature of playfulness at the heart of the Scouting movement he founded, but

it shows how seriously the task of giving each individual an opportunity to develop his or her own talents is taken. This article attempts to provide teachers and students with ways to enjoy their English.

Superhero: who inspires you?

At the start of a course, it is beneficial to have an inspirational figure to catch the imagination of all in attendance. What better way than to create a story together? A rather simple drawing on the board is enough to conjure up the image of a larger than life figure (a figure with a mask, cape and a belt with three buttons). Then the adventure begins: getting the participants to propose the name, mission, and three super-powers of this figure. It is recommendable to take three suggestions for the first two categories, and then to have the class vote for the suggestions that catch their attention. Some very interesting and thought provoking names and missions have emerged in the past; most recent was *Money-Man* on a mission to save the Euro. The third category can then be discussed in smaller groups, optimally with two or three students. Students have mentioned a wide range of issues: anything from passion, love, the power of laughter, time travel, mind-reading to environmental regeneration, even instantaneous food or sweets production. This activity encourages imagination, so the freedom to laugh and enjoy the creativity together is strongly recommended. But, as some students may want to point out, what does this game have to do with the serious task they have awaiting them: how to improve their writing skills? This story is of course an analogy (Sperber, 45), which should be brought to their attention:

Who is the superhero? You are. You have a name, an identity. You are sitting in this class and your mission is to improve your writing. You have three powers to assist you in your Writing mission: Reading, Listening and Speaking. Use them or lose them... that is the way (super-)powers and languages work. Or stated more positively, the more you use them, the better you get.

I was born in... Where were you born?

As the previous activity may have suggested, language finds relevance in the context in which it is used and important in this is the concept of identity. This activity can give the teacher a general sense of the language skills of the group, as well as the mix of nationalities through setting up a comparison of *Past Simple* with *Present Simple*. It is performed more in an informal style students may recognize as it begins as a normal game of Hangman is played. The teacher writes the following on the board: *I was born in _____*. Students can learn something about their teacher, not only the town of birth, but also the country,

something recommendable for the students to know if the teacher is foreign and new to the class. Having played a round of Hangman, the next round would be for the students to play in pairs, to guess the birthplace of their partner. If many students come from the same area, it could be worth considering the time of day, the month or season of the year, or other possibilities which could be modified to fit the teaching context. Having discussed at least one past event, or fact, students can be given extra tasks to get to know their speaking partners, by interviewing them to find facts that have remained unchanged or those which have changed, such as the house or neighbourhood they live in, their hobbies and interests, pet hates or other topics.

I have done... Your life is an open book, so what have you written?

In general, mention of *Present Perfect* is enough to make students tense. It is thus best introduced integrated into activities; so taught implicitly. Making an analogy to the growth of a tree could help to introduce this activity: growth is additive, so year by year a tree continues to grow, with each passing year a new ring is formed inside the tree's trunk, despite the static appearance to the observer. For humans, especially those programmed to think in English, experiences continue to be accumulated throughout life: events are necessary and integral to character, even if their influences are not always visible. It is also an opportunity to consider things within the realm of the possible: not just what has been, but what could have been. If this sounds too abstract, here are examples taken from the class activity:

I have...

- ❖ *shaken hands with Nelson Mandela*
- ❖ *lived in India for six months*
- ❖ *published a book of South African stories*
- ❖ *swum in the world's largest open water swimming event*
- ❖ *acted on stage at the theatre*

The students decide fantasy from reality based on their impression of the teacher. Thus, not all are true. This sort of game-show interaction, where the student is spectator and participant is a worthwhile activity in building a group dynamic. It is usually interesting to see what students consider as possibilities based on what they see in the teacher. Having discovered how good they were at judging the person standing in front of the class, it is then time for them to write at least four sentences, two of which should be true, drawing on their life experiences. If students are creative and quick, they could be encouraged to write more

sentences. These sentences are then read to their partners for them to choose fact from fiction. The aim of the game is not so much about being the best judge of character, though that is an in-built motivation for the interaction (Hall, 204), but rather a chance to exchange information, and to experience their own imaginative capabilities and those of their partner.

Fast Write: how much can you write in 10 minutes?

The rules of the activity are about “overcoming 'blank page' terror and getting ideas flowing” (Scrivener, 195) and not so much about following the standard rules of writing, such as paying attention to punctuation or capitalization, which students are generally schooled to consider before embarking on anything creative. Even if words and ideas are slow in coming, the pen should continue to kiss the page, caressing it in movements, taking on the form of words or not. This may sound strange, but one of the only rules of this game is that a student's pen should not stop moving during the ten minutes.

Words: what relationships and connections are possible?

When it comes to generating ideas, *Brainstorming* and *Mind Mapping* (Scrivener, 197) are perhaps commonly applied, though to get the most out of using them, it is highly recommendable to read the works of de Bono and Buzan. What amazing tools they are for navigating a way through a language! This is true exploration, defining the borders between words, and how they show their allegiance, for example how synonyms and antonyms help visualize the playing field of meaning and correlation.

Having introduced *Fast Write* to the group, it is at such times worthwhile for the group to define for themselves the meanings and relationships between words. Four words which have proved to be a treasure trove of ideas, discussion and writing in class are: *games*, *rules*, *creativity* and *discipline*.

Image in imagination

What would imagination be without images? If it is not an easy question to answer, then it surely is a question worth some thought. It is not the job of an English teacher to be an artist, but it is necessary in recognizing that students need different starting points on their journeying: across the page, into themselves or out into the world. For the teaching context, however, the spoken word can be fleeting and ambiguous, whereas images are concrete and eyes are far better at recognizing the universal forms of images. As Hall (176) points out from his own experience, learning is related to how we work, whether verbally or visually. *Rory's Story Cubes* (The Creativity Hub) can be brought into a lesson very quickly and easily, and using them is one example of how visual cues can stimulate story-telling, story creation and even forming group stories.

Learner Diary or Reflection Journal: who are you becoming?

Just mentioning the word *diary* makes some students feel uncomfortable. The images or associations that first surface could range from: girly, pink, hearts, teenager, intimate, honest, emotional, truth, vulnerable to even shared diary, travel log or blog. Perhaps *manly* does not spring to mind, though, what would Star Trek be without the *Captains log*, and how would sea-bound voyages of discovery have changed the world without careful and regular writing? Mention is made in class of a teenage girl whose existence would most certainly have gone unnoticed, if not for her careful recording of life in confined circumstances. Anne Frank was not thinking of fame when she put pen to paper: she did write, and her thoughts and experiences continue to move people.

Perhaps what makes it such a difficult task to bring into teaching is the notion that someone could violate or invade the privacy of the author. This is a very legitimate concern. One way to allow for a pragmatic compromise is to encourage the pursuit of regular personal writing, and to give assessments that ask students to reflect on their own impressions of the development of their personal writing, without the need to steal a glance at the students' work. This does require empowering the students to become involved in the act of assessment, and to take on the responsibility of making changes and choices they see as necessary for improvement. This sort of assessment, encouraging reflective practice, Kolb defines as an *experiential learning cycle* (Criticos *et al.*, 376). It is increasingly being used in teacher development, in such training programmes as the PGCE, ESOL or CELTA (Spratt *et al.*, 7), and it can be an exciting way for students to observe their own progress.

Conclusion

As Hall (190) points out, education, following the traditional European pattern, has as its aim the schooling or institutionalization of people to conform to their culture. Learning occurs as a part of the process. When focusing on learning as an aim in itself, motivation and play are key ingredients in driving the process (204).

In a programme such as ERASMUS, which seeks to maximize the learning of young Europeans today, especially the inter-cultural and trans-cultural learning, every effort should be taken to encourage the process using the wisdom and methods available.

“[A] free soul ought not to pursue any study slavishly; for while bodily labours performed under constraint do not harm the body, nothing that is learned under compulsion stays with the mind”.

“True,” he said.

“Do not, then, my friend, keep children to their studies by compulsion but by play. That will also better enable you to discern the natural capacities of each”.

(Plato, 380 BCE, cited in Shorey, 215/217)

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Semantics and the Crisis of American Conservatism

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Abstract

This paper examines the difficult situation of the United States' Republican Party after the presidential election of 2012, and the crisis of American conservatism that is currently discussed in journalistic and academic discourses. This crisis has diverse and complex reasons, and while the prime line of reasoning in the public discussion has been focused on demographics and quantitative analyses of voter turnouts, this article argues that also on a linguistic, particularly semantic level, conservative ideologies face serious problems, as they find it more and more difficult to communicate with American voters, now and in the future. To illuminate this point, this paper analyses a central 2012 speech of Republican presidential candidate Mitt Romney with a critical, discourse analytical perspective, to show on several examples how conservative discursive practices have uncoupled from the real-life experiences of many mainstream American voters. Extrapolating from this microscopic example, this article makes the case that formerly harmless expressions and speech acts, which had over decades symbolized and reinforced conservative normativity for a majority of Anglo-Americans, must today be considered sites of hegemonic struggles across demographic boundaries, such as ethnicity and gender, as they have undergone resignification processes on a large scale in mainstream American society.

When the dust had settled after the 2012 U.S. presidential election, and journalists, pundits, and commentators had overcome their surprise that the race had not been as “razor-tight” (Guthrie) as many had projected in the weeks and days before November 6th, the reasons and lessons that could be learned by Obama's reelection were quickly identified in the media. President Obama, analysts pointed out after studying the exit polls, had performed overwhelmingly well among African-Americans (which had been expected), but also among the Latino community, who had strongly supported Obama with 71%, while representing 10% of the electorate (CNN Election Center). Also, the incumbent won 55% of the votes of female Americans, particularly those of single women (*ibid.*). Thus the media quickly concluded: women and Latinos are the new power base for the Democratic Party and the Obama presidency, a narrative that soon became common sense in the aftermath of the election (Abdullah). As the Latino population is the quickest growing minority in the United States, and because the trend that women, particularly single women, partake in

elections and side with rather liberal progressive ideals will probably remain in place in the near future, the ensuing discussions about the interpretation of these results predict a rather bleak future for the Republican Party (Terkel). The conservative camp in the American mediasphere, apart from pointing the blame at Mitt Romney for being too stiff, too distanced, and not aggressive enough during the campaign, vented its frustration by pointing fingers at Obama's "new" power base. Some implied that particularly ethnic minorities had voted for Obama because they felt "entitled" to help from the state, which Obama had promised them. Young, unmarried women predominantly had voted Democratic, some insisted, because they lacked the moral compass of a traditional family and the dedication to a brighter American future that married women and mothers (who allegedly cared more for America's future) still had (Kelly & Baier; Marcotte). Obviously, the borders became blurred between a reasonable interpretation of demographic data and latent racism and/or misogyny. Yet, even publications from the left, liberal, progressive spectrum argued along the lines of such simplistic bipolarities as well, and made the point that in fact the power base of the Republican party was fighting a losing battle: for them, the election served as an indicator of the "end of white America", as most Republican voters supposedly came from a shrinking pool of wealthy white males (Hua; Roberts).

In this paper, I would like to problematize this simplistic interpretation of the election results, which focuses so heavily on a "blunt" interpretation of obvious demographic factors in exit polls, such as race and gender. This simplified logic on the one hand opens the gates for inadequate and potentially dangerous stereotyping, and on the other hand, these explanations base on presuppositions which must appear flawed when we analyze the demographics in a more differentiated way. In the second part, I would like to point out that the problem of the Grand Old Party, or American conservatism in general, may be a linguistic one as much as a demographic one, and examine in how far some of the basic semantics of conservative discourse may be incongruent, or "incomprehensible", for a growing portion of young Americans, independently of their ethnicity or gender.

Firstly, arguing that more than one fourth of the electorate (namely: women who voted for Obama) made their decision solely on the basis of their gender seems rather preposterous, and no serious analyst of the election results data would argue that. If gender was a decisive factor for people's political conviction, then this logic should work for men as well, though African American and Latino men tend to vote Democratic by vast majorities. Similarly, doesn't the mere fact that every state has the exact same proportion of male and female voters (50/50, give or take a tenth of a percent), yet the states yield so

decidedly different results, prove that other socio-demographic, economic, and cultural factors must play a much larger role? While this logic seems rather obvious, some commentators seem to ignore it for the sake of simpler explanations and rather binary world views. This became apparent when during the presidential campaign, in the second televised debate of the candidates, the tone and style of both Mr. Romney and Mr. Obama became much more aggressive and confrontational. Pundits in several 24-hour news channels asked themselves, whether this increasingly belligerent debating style, particularly by Mr. Romney, would not end up as a “turn-off” for female voters, ultimately damaging his chances in the election (Mitchell). These reactions only barely concealed a reactionary, clichéd school of thought that implies that women base their political decision making process on emotions, gut-feeling, and potentially the attractiveness of the candidates—whereas male voters are supposedly able to actively listen to political contents, opinions, strategies and then make an informed decision. Also, applying this cliché to some extent defies logic, particularly in the sense that if “typical” masculine-aggressive debating style was in fact a “turn-off” for undecided female voters, then why wouldn't it be a “turn-on” for undecided males, who—allegedly—favor strong masculine leadership for the position as head of state a.k.a. commander-in-chief, thus cancelling out the effect in the election result?

A similar point must be made for the supposed second pillar of Obama's reelection, the 10% of voters with a Latino background, of whom 7 out of 10 voted Democratic—statistics that are also roughly translatable to other federal and state elections and hence particularly worrisome for Republicans. It is a truism that in multicultural America it becomes increasingly difficult to define precisely who falls into ethnic categories such as “Latino”, and who considers themselves “white” or “Latino” or “black” after all. The label thus includes a huge sociocultural range, ranging from third-generation immigrants, fully assimilated into English-speaking America, whose only reminder of a Hispanic family history is a Spanish-sounding last name, to families that are still deeply entrenched in traditional Mexican-American, Cuban-American, or Puerto-Rican-American subcultures and solidly Spanish-speaking neighborhoods in the urban centers along the coasts (Tafoya). This truism however does not keep the exit polls that were so widely discussed in the American media from simply regarding the Latino community as all of one piece, and to simply “lump together” a tenth of the American population based on a detail in their family heritage.

Admittedly, socioeconomic factors do partly work as explanations for the partisan allegiances of the Latino community (whatever we mean by that). Latinos do have a lower average income than white Americans (U.S. Census Bureau), so, similarly to African-Americans, it appears logical that they are much more likely to vote for a party that runs on issues such as a strong welfare system, affordable healthcare for low-income jobs, and adequately equipped public schools. Yet, this logic deserves a second thought, if we add the perspective provided by Thomas Frank's research about the “conservative backlash” between 1980 and 2000.

In Frank's book *What's the matter with Kansas* (2004), he attempted to find an explanation for the fact that many “solid red” states in the American Midwest and South consistently vote for Republican candidates in federal elections, even though the socioeconomic structure of their populations would provide more congruent reasons for the support of Democratic positions, for example relatively strong labor unions in “coal counties” and other blue-collar industrial districts. After all, Kansas (which serves as Frank's prime example, but which can be extrapolated to most states around it) traditionally features low average incomes compared to the rest of the U.S.A., along with rather weak education standards and infrastructure in rural areas (Frank). If we accept the Democrats as the more leftwing party, which is in favor of more social equality and better welfare paid for via higher taxation of the rich, it may certainly appear irritating that many Midwestern Americans in solid red states consistently and fervently vote against their own socioeconomic interests, when they give their vote to Republican candidates. Frank's explanation for this irritating tradition has become famous, or, some say, infamous among political scientists. Conservative politicians, he points out, in their campaigns successfully play on “explosive” social issues to rally support among low-educated white social conservatives: “hot-button issues” such as gun control, abortion, gay marriage, (illegal) immigration are brought to the forefront of the political discussion, *i.e.*, topics that appeal to (conservative) “emotion” and Christian concerns, rather than detailed descriptions of economic policy strategies. By doing so, conservatives tap into the anger towards the wealthier, more educated “liberal elites” in the coast regions, who allegedly intend to harm the “average American” in the American “heartland”. When conservatives are in power in the legislative and/or executive branch in Washington—which they have been more often than not between 1980 and 2012, we must not forget—interestingly none of those “hot button issues” are “solved” or “improved” in favor of traditional, Christian, conservative

values. When in power, most Republicans in Washington usually become too moderate or too pragmatic to start a serious controversy over such “contagious” topics, which would alienate a large chunk of their colleagues across the aisle. Therefore, the situation in Kansas and comparable states remains the same: the infrastructure remains weak, public education is not improved, which, in the information age, keeps average incomes on a low level as well. Thus, the anger against the liberal progressives in the urban Northeast and West continues to linger and can be reignited the next time around by conservatives pointing out how the government in Washington forsakes traditional, Christian, Anglo-American values.

Frank's hypotheses are controversial, and it is not the task of this paper to reevaluate their implications in detail. Rather, I would like to return to the Latino community, because, as a matter of fact, there exists no logically cogent argument that would prevent the “Frank hypothesis” from being applicable to non-white ethnic groups in America as well. If conservatives generate their repeated success in economically weak counties by playing on latent homophobia, an ideology-based fascination with firearms, combined with traditional interpretations of the Bible when it comes to heteronormativity, extramarital sex, and abortion rights, why shouldn't this strategy work in economically weak Latino neighborhoods as well? Particularly so, if we consider that Catholicism—the denomination of most Latinos—must be regarded as at least as conservative/reactionary as its Protestant correspondent on most social issues. Socially and religiously conservative Latinos exist in relatively high numbers (and the same point might be made for African-Americans, too, by the way), so it would be most unwise to presuppose that ethnic minorities are immune to conservative ideology on “hot-button issues” such as gay rights, firearms, or even immigration reform, just because they are minorities. It stands to argue that many conservative pundits were secretly hoping for a “Latino Frank-effect”, when they predicted that Romney would have a serious chance at winning swing states such as Florida. However, a “Latino Frank-effect”—winning a larger share of the Latino vote based on religious-ideological reasons rather than socio-economic ones—has not developed thus far and it seems unlikely that it will any time soon. Simplistic explanations, for example the idea that Latinos with low incomes and a low education standard are in some way “smarter”, “better informed” or “politically more active” than white Southerners with a similarly low income and education, and thus cannot be “baited” into voting against their own socioeconomic interest, must be withheld, as these would represent attempts at explaining the failure of one stereotype with the help of another.

So how else then can we explain what happened in the last presidential and senatorial elections? I hold that more attention has to be paid to socio-cultural variables that are more difficult, maybe even impossible to extract from exit poll statistics. Some attempts at reframing demographic data have been executed by off-mainstream online publications and their journalists, for example Cohn's analysis, who points out that, in swing states, Romney had huge problems with winning white voters, too (2012a), and who explains that among wealthy suburban Americans—by tradition voters that would “lean red”—Obama's support held surprisingly strong in both 2008 and 2012. This may have to do with the fact that the wealthiest counties in several parts of the U.S.A. today also belong to the most ethnically diverse ones (*ibid.*).

Further analyses show that young age increases the chance that a voter supports Democratic positions, independently of their gender and ethnicity (CNN Election Center). Thus, even many white men from Texas and Arizona—whom the media labeled the “losers” of the 2012 election—more often than not supported the “winning team” by voting for Obama, statistically most often if they are young and have received a college education. The degree of urbanization, education, income, and age hence appear much more decisive than gender and ethnicity. Yet of course these immensely complex sets of data cannot be boiled down to striking headlines such as the end of the “Angry Old White Man” (Roberts), and have hence been rarely discussed in the limelight of the media in the U.S.A. and worldwide.

So, “number-crunching” of complex exit poll data is certainly a useful tool for political analysts, but it obviously reaches its limits when it comes to finding reasons for *why* certain groups make their decisions for one candidate or the other. Why is there no such thing as a “Frank-effect” for strongly religious Latinos or African-Americans? And also, why shouldn't the Republican Party be able to convince urban, non-white Americans to vote in favor of fiscal conservatism, free markets, tax cuts for entrepreneurs *etc.*, considering that a growing amount of them are business owners themselves, have increasing incomes and may benefit from market liberalism and low taxes, just as their white peers? Even if we accept the notion that the Republican Party shoots itself in the foot with many Latino voters by emphasizing its tough stance against illegal immigration, there is no “natural” and irrefutable line of reasoning, why multicultural America should not be interested in and even supportive of conservative economic, fiscal, domestic and foreign policies.

This is where it seems in order to turn to the field of linguistics and discourse analysis, which may provide tools for the cultural scholar to shed some light on the “crisis” of American political conservatism from a different perspective. I hypothesize that there may be discursive discrepancy between the discourse of conservatism and young urbanites that goes beyond the details of politics and electoral campaigns, but in fact touches the meaning of certain words and phrases, *i.e.*, the 'social semantics' of the U.S.A. as a discursive community. In simpler terms: conservatives, particularly politicians, use language that young urbanites do not understand anymore.

As a case in point, I would like to take a look at one particular discursive event for a qualitative discourse analysis, to finally see how the qualitative results of that analysis communicate with the quantitative data that has been mentioned above, and other inter-discursive trends that will be discussed below. The discursive event in question is the concession speech of Republican presidential candidate Mitt Romney during the early morning hours of November 7, 2012, about two hours after it had become clear that President Obama would stay in office, and that in fact the Republican Party had not lived up to its own expectations. It is a valued tradition in American political discourse that, in such situations, the losing candidate gives a rather short, humble address, thanking his supporters and his voters, and congratulating the winner with a most statesmanlike poise. On a symbolic level, the concession speech marks the end of aggressive partisan campaigning, particularly so in 2012, after an irritatingly negative and vitriolic election race in the weeks and months before; the speech represents a first ritualized step towards re-uniting the nation and “healing the wounds” that overly aggressive bickering between the two camps may have caused. Also, the defeated candidate will always hope to prevent any voices from labeling him a “sore loser” by using humble and conciliatory tones with his opponent; a good concession speech proves a candidate's character, patriotism, and responsibility even on the day of defeat. Both John McCain's and Mitt Romney's concession speeches met largely positive feedback within the American media.

Politically, the concession speech is rather insignificant, or so it may seem. At that point in time, it is “game over” for the losing party; from one day to the next, political-rhetorical strategies about how to rally support for one's policies to squeeze out another couple of votes have become entirely useless. Therefore, the concession speech, although it is usually broadcast live by every major news channel and watched live by a huge part of the population, receives comparably little attention and analysis by commentators and analysts

in the following days—unlike every speech and debate a few days earlier. So on that evening, for the first time in months, Romney gave a speech in which he did not intend to convince anyone to vote for him. In fact, on November 7, Romney avoided political topics and, apart from congratulating his opponent, spoke about rather personal, emotional matters.

Though even concession speeches follow certain rhetorical patterns and strategies, as Farris (2012) shows, even his harshest political opponents would concede that Romney probably means what he says, when he thanks and praises his family members and closest allies. Therefore, I hold that it is particularly the seeming “unpolitical-ness” of Romney's concession speech that enables us to glimpse the core of the conservative worldview and that this speech proves particularly revealing if we try to understand those Americans who gave Romney their votes, but also particularly those who did not. So what exactly did Romney say, on an ideational, textual, and interpersonal level?

My methodic approach to answering this question relies on the well-established methodological toolkit known as *Critical Discourse Analysis* brought forward most notably by scholars such as Fairclough, Wodak and Meyer. This method proposes a systematic three-level analysis mode for political texts such as this one to then embed the results into larger sociocultural frameworks, in an attempt to understand hegemonic struggle over meanings and resources in modern media democracies. This method is of course reasonably complex, so for the sake of volume at this point I have to refer the interested reader to the original works by said scholars. For my line of reasoning, it may in fact suffice to extract the three most eminent semantic and connotational patterns throughout this 5-minute speech.

Firstly, there is Romney's rhetoric when he speaks about himself and when he speaks about the U.S.A., repeatedly making explicit mention of religious institutions and activities. He says:

We look to our pastors and priests and rabbis and counselors of all kinds to testify of the enduring principles upon which our society is built.

By explicitly including representatives of non-Christian faiths, Romney cleverly prevents any accusations that would mark his worldview, and the “principles” that he talks about, as exclusively Christian. Discourse-analytically, the subject of this sentence is interesting, as the personal deictic “we” co-references to a more precise “we citizens” in the previous sentence. This strategy, using first person plural, presupposes a relatively homogeneous

“in-group”, for whom religious representatives are in fact important sources of knowledge when it comes to “principles” of American society. This statement must of course be read as part of the debate about the “true” intention of the Founding Fathers, when they drafted a Constitution and a Declaration of Independence, that supposedly refer to decidedly Christian values, however without ever explicitly mentioning Christianity or the Bible. Yet also, it must appear irritating to citizens who, by self-definition, are not part of that in-group “we”, because they are non-believers, skeptics, or even believers without ties to institutionalized religion (I will return to this question of implicit in- and out-group definition further below.)

Still even more strikingly, already in the first part of the speech, in which he congratulates President Obama and thus concedes defeat, Romney offers the Christian ritual of prayer as a token of reconciliation:

I pray that the president will be successful in guiding our nation.

Later, this thought, or more precisely, this activity appears a second time in the speech, interestingly as the very last sentence:

And so Ann and I join with you to earnestly pray for him and for this great nation.

The activity of praying to God thus provides the 'bracket' for everything else that is said in this speech. Particularly the second quote, from the very end of the speech, features two microscopic details that deserve further attention. Firstly, the verb “to pray” is amended by the attribute “earnestly”. This is rather surprising, as for a believing Christian, one would think this expression is rather redundant: prayer must always be an “earnest” or “honest” conversation with the Almighty, a “non-earnest”, or “insincere” prayer is nonsensical for a true believer. Thus, this adverb is probably included for a different function: Romney hopes to emphasize that he means what he says, that he honestly wishes Barack Obama well, and for Romney, prayer is the activity that best proves his sincerity. Pointedly put, God could “vouch” for Romney's honesty; religious conviction and moral uprightness go hand in hand, in Romney's definition.

Secondly, Romney constructs himself and his wife Ann as the grammatical subject of that sentence, followed by a transitive verb “join” and a direct object “you”. The signification of the latter personal pronoun, used in its plural form here, must of course remain rather vague. Is Romney speaking about his supporters, or rather about the entire country, whom he joins in prayer? This remains intentionally obscure, yet in either case, the

sentence subtly introduces Romney's conviction that every member of that larger group, “you”, regularly prays to God. Furthermore, we may in fact interpret this sentence as a directive speech act, rather than a simple declarative sentence. Priests use a similar rhetorical device when they begin communal prayers with words such as “we join in prayer, oh Lord, to ask you. . . .”, in which the initial subject-verb construction is usually understood by the congregation as a demand to stand up (or kneel down, depending on the denomination), fold their hands, and begin to pray at exactly that moment.

This is, I hold, where we can catch a glimpse of the communicative discrepancy, particularly concerning semantics, between the speaker's intention, and the interpretation of (many) recipients about what is said. For Romney, alluding to his act of praying is the best way to emphasize his honesty, morality, and good character. It is highly questionable though, whether a society in which 19.6% identify themselves as non-believers (Pew Research Center) and 4.7 % follow a different religion than the Christian one (*ibid.*), and hence may have very different interpretations of the act and the function of prayers, actually shares this logical connection. Other Christian conservatives certainly have no problem following Romney's presupposition that prayer is inherently good, sensible, and omnipresent, but moderates in America—those, whose votes the Republican Party direly needs—have grown rather skeptical about the idea that praying will help the problem-solving process in politics. At the same time, people who do not pray do not—rhetorically—exist in Romney's speech, or, if they do, are excluded from the “in-group” (“we” joining “you”) that Romney is addressing. Naturally, this must irritate religious skeptics, atheists, and undogmatic Christians alike. Choosing a rhetorical construction that subconsciously reminds of a missionary or a patriarchal priest who gently but authoritatively orders his congregation to pray (because that is the morally right thing to do for the country) rather adds to that irritation or alienation. Romney's problem is not the ideational meaning of what he says: we have no reason to doubt his and his wife's honesty and goodwill towards the president and the country. His problem is the relation of signifier and signified that he presupposes in his audience.

To illuminate this incongruence of semantic signification within different groups in the U.S.A., one example is in order. In 2010-11, left-leaning journalists uncovered and heavily criticized the Christian counseling “clinic” owned by Republican presidential primary candidate Michele Bachmann and her husband, which advised homosexual “patients” that prayer could rid them of homosexual urges and “re-orient” them to a “normal” Christian lifestyle (Ross *et.al.*). In the following days and weeks, progressive

commentators and satirists overtly enjoyed mocking the conservative hope to “pray away the gay” (Evans). Admittedly, one could argue that said leftists would never vote for a Republican candidate anyway, but if we connect Bachmann's “clinic” with Romney's speech, it becomes apparent that the traditional inherent moral “goodness” of prayer cannot be taken for granted, as Romney does, if ultra-conservatives and other Republican Party candidates use the same verb for exclusionary, some may even say hateful messages. In 2011, the opponents of Mrs. Bachmann and her ultra-conservative policies singlehandedly connected the term “prayer” with connotations such as superstition, backwardness, exclusion, and division, and the very term had thus become a site of hegemonic struggle. Even many moderate Christian voters, not to speak of politically undecided non-believers, are probably well aware of that discursive conflict that has been taking place in the public sphere. Romney's problem may be that he is either unaware of, or chose to ignore that subaltern discursive strand that has undermined the traditionally positive connotation of a term that he takes for granted and uses as a “bracketing” device of his speech.

Let us turn to the second recurrent element in Romney's speech that—if this was a truly political speech—would probably stir irritation among many progressives, particularly progressive women. Mitt Romney in fact mentions several women in this speech, surprisingly starting with the First Lady Michelle Obama and her daughters, when he includes them in his good wishes at the beginning of the speech:

I wish all of them well, but particularly the president, the first lady and their daughters.

About a minute later, Romney's wife Ann is mentioned during the most emotional part of the speech, in which he praises her human touch, and her “compassion and her care”. Romney concludes:

She would have been a wonderful first lady.

Again, we have no reason to doubt Romney's genuineness. It may be significant to remark however, that Romney exclusively identifies highly traditional and “typically female” values as the central qualifications for the “job” of First Lady. As a counterpoint, Michelle Obama, who has already been doing this “job”, has repeatedly earned different positive attributes, such as “intelligent” and “self-confident” (Trice) and continues to transcend classic interpretations of femininity in politics.

This leads us to the third group of women that is explicitly mentioned in the speech: Romney thanks and praises his sons for their “tireless work” in his favor, but then also

makes a point of mentioning his daughters-in-law, and their contribution.

[I] thank their wives and children for taking up the slack as their husbands and dads have spent so many weeks away from home.

This passage is obviously quite revealing concerning the role that women play in traditional conservative settings: all women in Romney's speech are defined by their role as wives. In this last instance, Romney decided to include the colloquial figure of speech, “taking up the slack”, probably to emphasize that managing family life—particularly when the husband is away on business—is “hard work”, too. Still, a statement that Romney—most likely—has included in his speech to showcase his appreciation of young women and their important role in society, must come across as the direct opposite in the eyes of many modern, urban, young women. The idea of a woman simply “taking up the slack” while her husband is away on important business is too obviously reactionary, and incongruent with the life of modern urbanites. It remains unclear why Romney made the choice to include that statement with exactly that idiomatic phrase: Romney is usually not known for particularly colloquial, idiomatic word choices, neither did he use similar expressions in any other part of this speech, and a different choice of words to communicate the same idea—thanking his daughters-in-law for their sacrifices during the campaign—is easily thinkable. Again, it appears as if Romney is either not aware or not content with the fact that the role of wives, potentially even the meaning and connotation of the term “wife”, is hegemonically contested terrain.

If we broaden the perspective towards all evaluative attributes that are used in this speech, and differentiate by gender, it turns out that the terms “intellect”, “hard work”, “commitment”, “tireless”, “dedication”, and “effort” are in this speech exclusively reserved to males (Paul Ryan, Matt Rhoades, and Romney's sons). Women are mentioned and praised as well, but with the attributes “love”, “compassion”, “care”, and for “taking up the slack while their husbands are away from home” and all adult women in this speech are only defined by their roles as wives (Michelle Obama, Ann Romney, Romney's daughters-in-law), without mentioning any other qualifications or occupations. In that light, it certainly comes as no surprise that particularly college-educated single women with a dedication to their career, and potentially above-average incomes, overwhelmingly often opted for Romney's opponent.

The third pattern that I would like to spotlight here is closely connected to the role of women in society, but for several reasons I would like to isolate it as a semantically

particularly debated field: the term “family”. For Romney, it represents one of the principles upon which our society is built: honesty, charity, integrity and family.

Furthermore, he strikingly often alludes to other terms implying family relations, involving social roles such as “parents”, “wives”, and “husbands”, but also—surprisingly—several children, such as the daughters of President Obama. Mitt Romney himself is a lucky man when it comes to family life, as the proud patriarch of a family including 5 sons and 18 grandchildren (Wikipedia), virtually all of them healthy and successful—his choice of words may from this perspective be understandable. Yet he chooses to paint with a larger brush, extrapolating from his own situation to the rest of the nation, or, in fact, the whole world, when he implies that

in the final analysis *everything* depends on the success of our homes.

This latter statement is immensely ideological, and, again, must appear irritating to many voters, particularly the younger generation. As of the latest estimate from 2012, almost 50% of all marriages in the U.S.A. are divorced at some point (though acquiring absolutely accurate data is immensely difficult, see Copen *et al.*), about 35% of today's children grow up in single-parent families, and many young Americans live in households that include people with whom they are not directly related (*e.g.*, stepparents and -siblings) (National Kids Count Program). Sociologists point out that new, more differentiated vocabulary may be necessary to describe the increasingly complex situation of how children of today (and voters of tomorrow) grow up, and what they experience as “family” (Search Institute). Interestingly, Romney uses the term “homes” here, which may be reminiscent of the standardized phrase “broken home” for exactly those kind of single-parent situations, in which the negative connotation of the attribute mirrors how supposedly harmful a “broken” home may be to the development of a child.

It is not the intention of this paper to analyze sociologically whether and in how far Romney has a point when he addresses the “success of our homes” as the foundation on which “everything” in life depends. Yet, there are certainly many American voters—young ones, who grew up in single-parent households, and older ones, who themselves had to raise children without a partner at their side—for whom the picture-perfect family that Romney so values has never been a viable option, but who, despite that fact, consider themselves successful, happy, and in socio-economic terms should even lean towards conservative policies. What may their reaction be, listening to a politician who admittedly has a wonderfully successful, supportive, and loving family, but who also claims that

“everything” depends on a healthy family background, which logically implies that “nothing” can be alright without it? Romney's role model potential in this issue may be rather small, one would expect rather mixed, but potentially negative, emotional reactions in this case: frustration about one's own “imperfection”, jealousy, or maybe even guilt, or spite? Either way, none of these reactions are strategically desirable when it comes to winning support for conservative policies in future elections, considering the growing pool of Americans (as mentioned, a very rough estimate is 50%, see Copen *et al.*) with ambivalent experiences around the term and concept “family”.

The trend away from traditional patriarchal families, towards smaller and/or alternative families obviously also involves lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender Americans. If we believe Gates's estimate that between 3.5 and 5% (again, better estimates are hard to come by, see Gates 2011) of the people belong to one of those non-heterosexual groups, Romney's and other conservatives' choice to “rub in” their insistence on traditional “family values” as the basis of American society again may mean that the Republican Party is heavily damaging its own chances when it comes to voter turnout in future elections. Younger Republicans have understood this already (Cleary, quoted in Greiner) and there may be a generational change concerning such anti-gay discourses within the party soon. Right now, however, the very term “family values”, just like the terms “prayer” and “wife”, does not have an intrinsically positive connotation anymore. It is not even a “neutral” semantic token, but in fact a “battleground term” in the debate over sociocultural values. For example, Lind and Brzuzy argue that throughout the 1990s and 2000s the expression “family values” had been hijacked by rightwing thinkers and coined as a code word for persecution of those who conservatives presumed to be “anti-family”, *i.e.*, sexual minorities. Often, the expression was used as a prelude to, or a justification for, homophobic political agendas. This even led to curious situations in non-political discursive fields: for example, left-leaning, tolerant, and progressive atheists of course do have families as well, and many of them may in fact cherish the positive formative power of an intact family life, without ever connecting that sentiment to anti-gay agendas. But recently, they may have been unable to voice their standpoint on “family values” without coming across as homophobic and reactionary in certain circles along the liberal coast regions. As the term “family values” was “hijacked” by the Christian right, it became “toxic” in liberal progressive discourses, some worry, which helped neither traditional, nor alternative families, and prevented constructive dialogue (a point that was formulated as early as 1995, see Dionne for example). The upshot of this hegemonic struggle on the semantic level may

be—again—a problem for the Republican Party in the long run, as the “debatedness” of this term in other contexts radiates into comparably harmless contexts like this speech by Mitt Romney. So, while Romney is certainly not a covertly homophobic ultraconservative (his track-record as a businessman and Governor of Massachusetts indicates rather tolerant perspectives), his reliance on the concept “family” as the staple of his concession speech may be indicative of a conservative crisis that goes beyond ethnicity and gender.

Naturally, my suggestions here—*i.e.*, that there is strong irritation with and negotiation over formerly positively terms such as “prayer”, “wife” and “family” among mainstream Americans—forego quantitative socio-demographic evidence and find no representations in voter polls during elections. That, however, is exactly the point: questions such as “Are your parents still married to each other, or were they until they died?”, “How well do you get along with your parents, siblings, and children?”, or “Do you have family members or close friends who are gay, lesbian, or bisexual?” would of course be considered too personal and politically not relevant enough, and will thus hardly find their way into voter turnout analyses. Yet, the answers to these questions may be most decisive when it comes to the question whether one's own life is congruent with conservative policy aims or not.

As mentioned earlier, these questions are largely uncoupled from classic exit poll categories such as ethnicity, gender, and even income. Republicans may be faced with the problem that even before actual political issues—economic, fiscal, social, and foreign policy issues—can be brought to the table, a growing chunk of young urbanites turns away from a party that, even on a very basic semantic level, “speaks a different language” than they do. Romney's concession speech—at first glance a friendly, conciliatory speech full of positive emotions, praise, and warmth towards friends and opponents alike—is, I hold, symptomatic of that semantic incongruence, as I have shown using some central examples. From a more theoretical perspective founded in *Critical Discourse Analysis* and *Hegemony Theory*, we may argue that American public discourse has undergone a classic case scenario of hegemonic discursive reorientation: a formerly hegemonic discursive pattern, namely that said three terms have an intrinsically positive connotation, has long been a dominant status and was taken for granted by a large majority in U.S. society. Recently though, a subaltern discursive strand has subtly undermined this dominance via acts of resistance and “resignification”; in this process, satire and humor usually belong to the sharpest tools in developed media democracies. Thus the subaltern strand today represents a viable,

seemingly more modern, “funnier”, potentially “cooler”, and thus popular alternative for speakers in that discursive community. The result is a new, relatively volatile “hegemonic equilibrium”, that will continue to be negotiated and heatedly debated from both sides. It is certainly not yet decided which interpretation will prevail, though recent election results indicate that the conservative interpretation is fighting an uphill battle.

The fact that a young urban and sub-urban professional class in the United States is moving to the left—with ethnic minorities leading the way, but white Americans showing the same tendency—must not necessarily imply that conservative positions on the economy could not find resonance within that class. In fact, philosophies that foster individual initiative, self-reliance, economic liberties, low taxes, and career-oriented mobility should in fact communicate quite well with that class of young professionals and with urban small-business owners, independently of their ethnicity or gender. Yet, as long as the Republican Party continues to insist on “principles” that reach—some may say “invade”—the core of human life (people's belief system) and human interaction (their romantic relationships), but which are at the same time founded on an entirely different semantic framework than the one voters utilize in their everyday life, conservatism will remain in deep crisis and find it difficult to return to political power.

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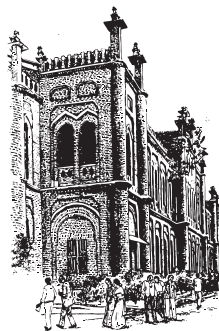
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'Mother (Language) on Death-Bed : Children in a Quandary':

A Postcolonial Dilemma

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Abstract

The metaphor succinctly emphasizes the role of mother language in foreign language teaching/learning, particularly in a multilingual context. There is so much of tottering of language policy in the Indian educational context, that it neither facilitates the acquisition of mother language nor a foreign language. Most often, a foreign language is chased with so much of frenzy that the mother languages are either killed or allowed to die naturally. The height of such a glaring neglect of mother language in the teaching/learning of a foreign language is sure to create natives who think in a foreign language and end up living 'unauthentic' lives. The purpose of this paper is not to lament about the lacuna in the system of language education in the Indian subcontinent but to explore means of harmonious acquisition of Mother Language and foreign language/s.

Keywords: *Mother Language, Foreign Language, Multilingual context, Multiculturalism, Affective domain, Cognitive domain, Language policy, Remediation, Acquisition.*

In any learning context, prior knowledge acts as the starting point for the acquisition of new knowledge. Studies state that learning occurs best when it is linked to prior knowledge (Beyer; Kujawa and Huske; Roschelle; Konstantellou; Resnick; Glaserfeld). In the context of language learning, previously learnt language, especially one's mother tongue, constitutes prior knowledge. Since the advent of the behaviourist school, mother tongue has been regarded a chief influence on the learning of a second language. Many researchers have examined the impact of one's mother tongue on one's learning of second language. Flege, Piske et al, and Chan in their studies bring out the significant role one's mother tongue plays in L2 pronunciation while Fang, Petra, Elston-Guttler et al, and Wang and Wen report its influence on L2 writing. There are numerous similar studies on L1's influence on the learning of L2.

In the multilingual Indian context, we should aim at harmonious and simultaneous acquisition of both Mother Languages and second language. The crisis in language learning in India is the frenzied acquisition of second language at the cost of Mother Language. As a result, Mother Languages in India are slowly falling into disuse and are dying their natural

death. Infact, the reciprocal influence of L1 on L2 and vice versa sustains, nourishes and strengthen both languages.

*(While mother tongue influences the second language learning, one's expertise in mother tongue also gets modified by the learning of L2. It is especially evident in the case of learning English as a second language. By the time an ESL learner becomes proficient in English, he/she tends to use English in all real life situations. As a result, his/her proficiency in mother tongue becomes weak. When such a situation happens at a large level, it leads to the death of a language.)

The most common process leading to language death is one in which a community of speakers of one language becomes bilingual in another language, and gradually shifts allegiance to the second language until they cease to use their mother languages. There is also the question of snob value attached to the foreign language. Competence in a foreign language promises better prospects for the learners, particularly in a globalized world. This is what is happening precisely in the Indian subcontinent. Parents and stakeholders force children to learn a foreign language with frenzy, at the cost of their mother languages. As a result, most of the Indian languages are dying.* There is often a lot of discussion of language policies, but the policy keeps changing as political ideologies crisscross language policy issues. The result is that there is no consistency in language policies of the country. The slippery ground on which policy makers, who are unfortunately politicians, tread is linguistic parochialism, exclusionism and narrow regionalism. In the southern part of the India, Dravidian parties harp on the importance of mother language like Tamil only as a political plank.

As globalisation sweeps around the world, it is perhaps natural that small communities come out of their isolation and seek interaction with the wider world. But death of mother languages is a big loss. What we lose is an enormous part of our cultural heritage, the way we interact with nature, the world. We lose the way we express ourselves, our emotions, love, humour, and sensibility. According to Claude Hagege, languages are not simply a collection of words. They are living, breathing organisms holding the connections and associates that define a culture. When a language becomes extinct, the culture in which it has lived also becomes extinct. Language is cultural identity. Language is an intrinsic link between culture and ethnicity. Preserving the language is preserving the history, cultural heritage and ethnicity.

Rationale:

The present study seeks to discover whether the ESL students are proficient in their mother tongue and whether their proficiency in their mother tongue has any correlation with that of English as a second language.

Method:

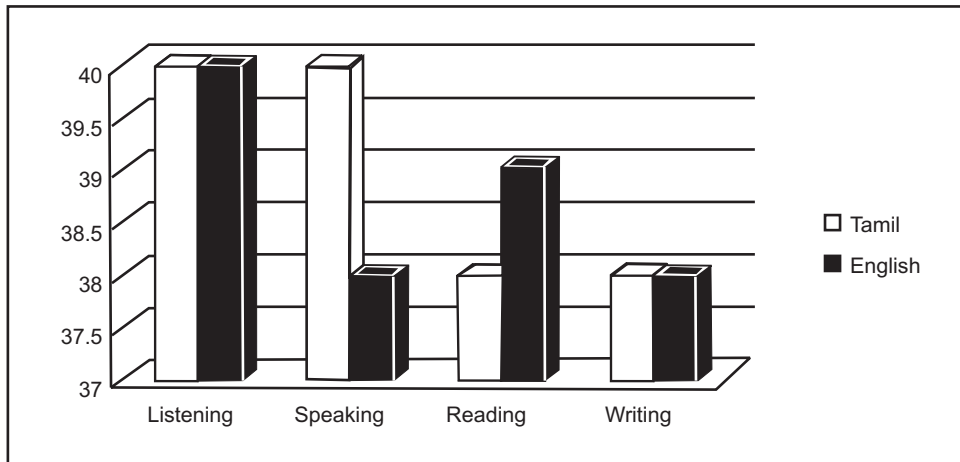
The present study elicits the necessary data through a descriptive research that is primarily concerned with “the analysis of the relationships between non-manipulated variables and the development of generalizations, extending its conclusions beyond the sample observed” (Best and Kahn 129). In this study, the non-manipulated independent variable is the ESL learners' proficiency in their mother tongue while their proficiency in English is the dependent variable. The correlation of these two variables are analysed through a small scale survey among the ESL learners at the tertiary level.

Participants:

Forty freshmen majoring on various disciplines at The American College, Madurai, India responded to the questionnaire. Of them, 26 are male and 14 are female. The average age of the participants was 18. Tamil was all their mother tongue and all of them have opted English as their medium of study both at the school level and at the tertiary level. A questionnaire (Appendix) containing fourteen questions about their abilities in Tamil as well as in English was distributed. Based on their answers, their abilities were measured.

Result:

The present study clearly shows that the ESL learners are more confident about their proficiency in English than that in their mother tongue. Of the forty participants, all the 40 learners are confident about their listening skills in both Tamil and English. When it is speaking skills, 38 are confident in both the languages and the remaining two are confident in Tamil; 38 learners believe that they can write well in both the languages while the remaining two are good at writing neither in English nor in Tamil. Similarly 38 learners are confident about their reading skills in both the languages; one is good at reading English and the other is not good at reading in both the languages. The data has been furnished in the following table and chart. While answering question number 14, five respondents stated that they had difficulty in pronouncing the Tamil sounds accurately.



	Tamil	English
Listening	40	40
Speaking	40	38
Reading	38	39
Writing	38	38

Discussion: From the above data, it becomes clear that the ESL learners who participated in this study are less proficient in Tamil, their mother tongue than in English, their second language. Though the difference between their proficiency in Tamil and that in English is not vast, the difference is significant enough to highlight the fact that the ESL learners are losing their proficiency in their mother tongue.

When individuals and communities slowly let go of their mother tongues, a point may be reached when no one speaks the language any more. Many Indian and world languages have 'died' for socio-political or economic reasons. This is precisely the problem facing Tamil – mother language to seventy million speakers. In 2010, Boa Senior – the only surviving speaker of one of the Great Andamanese group of languages called Bo – passed away. With her death, her ancient language, full of stories, songs and

myths became extinct. With every language that dies, we lose a part of our shared history. Today, fewer people in cities teach kids their mother tongues – their reasons range from the socio-economic, to the psychological and the political. Governments spend a lot of money to restore Heritage Buildings, why not they spend their time and money to protect Mother Languages which are on the brink of extinction.

Therefore, it is imperative on the part of the natives to resuscitate the Mother Language. It can be done in the following ways:

1. Besides, Mother language being the language at Home, should be introduced to children formally first in the initial years of education
2. Medium of Instruction up to 8 or 10 years should be in the mother tongue
3. At a philosophical level, it should be instilled in the minds of children that if they do not learn their mother language, they tend to lose their culture, their identity
4. De-accelerate the frenzied acquisition of English as a gateway to the world
5. Foster Mother languages in the midst of harmonious acquisition of other languages both native and foreign

Conclusion:

The acquisition of language is essential to a person's cognitive development. The early years are recognized as the foundation years for a person's development. In particular, the first six years are crucial for young children in developing their first language and cultural identity, and it is during these early years that children build up their knowledge of the world around them (Clarke, 2009). Therefore, the mother tongue is a child's strongest ally and should be used systematically. Using the mother tongue, we have (1) Learnt to think, (2) Learnt to communicate and (3) Acquired an intuitive understanding of grammar. The mother tongue is therefore the greatest asset people bring to the task of foreign language learning and provides a Language Acquisition Support System (Butzkamm, 2003). The purpose of this paper is not to lament about the lacuna in the system of language education in the Indian subcontinent but to explore means of remediation. Probably, one of the reasons for the dying of mother tongues in India is the dearth of dialogue among the languages at the national level and the absence of promotion of multilingualism and multiculturalism at the international level.

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Appendix

Your Language Skills:

Choose the most appropriate option for the following questions.

1. Are you able to speak well in English with others?			
(a) Not at all	(b) Yes, with some mistakes. And I do not know those mistakes	(c) Yes, with some mistakes. But I know those mistakes and how to correct them	(c) Yes, without any mistakes
2. Are you able to speak well in your mother tongue with others?			
(a) Not at all	(b) Yes, with some mistakes. And I do not know those mistakes	(c) Yes, with some mistakes. But I know those mistakes and how to correct them	(c) Yes, without any mistakes

3. Are you able to write well in English?			
(a) Not at all	(b) Yes, with some mistakes. And I do not know those mistakes	(c) Yes, with some mistakes. But I know those mistakes and how to correct them	(c) Yes, without any mistakes
4. Are you able to write well in your mother tongue?			
(a) Not at all	(b) Yes, with some mistakes. And I do not know those mistakes	(c) Yes, with some mistakes. But I know those mistakes and how to correct them	(c) Yes, without any mistakes
5. Are you able to understand when you listen to someone speaking English?			
(a) Not at all	(b) Yes, I can understand if they use simple words and phrases	(c) Yes, I can understand even if they use difficult words and phrases.	(d) Yes, Completely
6. Are you able to understand when you listen to someone speaking your mother tongue?			
(a) Not at all	(b) Yes, I can understand if they use simple words and phrases	(c) Yes, I can understand even if they use difficult words and phrases.	(d) Yes, Completely
7. Are you able to understand when you read a passage in English?			
(a) Not at all	(b) Yes, I can understand if they use simple words and phrases	(c) Yes, I can understand even if they use difficult words and phrases.	(d) Yes, Completely
8. Are you able to understand when you read a passage in your mother tongue?			
(a) Not at all	(b) Yes, I can understand if they use simple words and phrases	(c) Yes, I can understand even if they use difficult words and phrases.	(d) Yes, Completely

9. Do you make any grammatical errors when you speak or write English?			
(a) Yes, a lot of mistakes. I do not even know how to frame a sentence	(b) Yes, some mistakes. And I do not how to correct them	(c) Yes, some mistakes. But I know how to correct them	(d) No, I do not make any grammar mistakes
10. Do you make any grammatical errors when you speak or write your mother tongue?			
(a) Yes, a lot of mistakes. I do not even know how to frame a sentence	(b) Yes, some mistakes. And I do not how to correct them	(c) Yes, some mistakes. But I know how to correct them	(d) No, I do not make any grammar mistakes
11. Do you look for words when you speak or write in English?			
(a) Yes, always. I do not even know ordinary words	(b) Yes, often. I stop and think because I cannot manage without those words	(c) Yes, sometimes. But I can manage without those words	(d) Never. I am familiar with all words I need
12. Do you look for words when you speak or write in your mother tongue?			
(a) Yes, always. I do not even know ordinary words	(b) Yes, often. I stop and think because I cannot manage without those words	(c) Yes, sometimes. But I can manage without those words	(d) Never. I am familiar with all words I need
13. Are you able to pronounce English words well?			
(a) No, I mispronounce even ordinary words	(b) No, I mispronounce difficult words even though I know that it is wrong	(c) Yes, but mispronounce unfamiliar words without knowing that it is wrong	(d) Yes, always.
14. Are you able to pronounce words in your mother tongue well?			
(a) No, I mispronounce even ordinary words	(b) No, I mispronounce difficult words even though I know that it is wrong	(c) Yes, but mispronounce unfamiliar words without knowing that it is wrong	(d) Yes, always.

Learners' Identity Construction through Ethno-Cultural Components of EFL Training Programs among English Translation Students in Payame Noor University of Chenaran

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Abstract

It is clearly obvious that learning a foreign language is not just a process of capturing and using only the linguistic, but the sociolinguistic level of communication as well. An inseparable element of the sociolinguistic approach to language and language learning is culture. Regarding the communication issues, culture is a broad concept which needs to be handled carefully. It is easy to talk about, for example, the learning problems of a particular group of students as being influenced by 'American culture', or 'British culture'; but such cultures, if indeed they are identifiable, are so complex and vast that they are no longer useful devices for investigating what is happening in the classroom between instructors and pupils. This is mainly because a language cannot be taught without coming to grips with its cultural content. This paper, as a case study of teaching EFL in Payame Noor University of Chenaran, investigates a substantive degree of conflict, a misfit between the culture-specific aspects of teaching syllabus for language teachers in this university. Based on personal experiences as the chairman of English department in this university, it is finally examined to what extent the ethnical background of each student may affect his / her level of acceptance of a foreign culture and how students build a social identity of their own through ethnical components of EFL programs while dealing with familiar subjects.

Since the Industrial Revolution, all the communities of the world have been competing with one another in acquiring an international language to make it possible for them to survive in a global village. In this regard, acquiring foreign ethno-cultural practices, as a byproduct of teaching a foreign language, is the main concern of many cultural specialists around the world. In this regard, a drastic change in teacher training syllabus, especially cultural components of such resources seems unavoidable. Hence, this paper starts with problems and prospects of English teaching in Iran with specific focus on target-language culture in EFL among the students of Translation in Payame Noor University of Chenaran. Later, some of the researcher's practical techniques for teaching the national culture in EFL classroom in this university are discussed. Finally, the necessity of teaching the target language in relation to the source language's ethnic identity is considered as a positive force in creating a proper situation for removing all cultural denigrations caused by teaching English to these students.

While searching for the secondary sources for the present study, this researcher found an article on Chinese EFL programs and international communication skills. Certain differences between a Chinese approach as well as opportunities in their English classes encouraged the researcher to have a brief review of article that has been suggested and make an instructive comparison with the researcher's experiences in Payame Noor English classes. As the writer of this article ventures, for the Chinese, the ultimate aim of English study is not limited to knowledge of the language and its grammatical structure itself. The goal is rather to develop certain communication skills which may allow Chinese to interact with people from other ethno-cultural backgrounds. They believe that interaction occurring through printed and visual media such as books, magazine, newspaper as well as scholarly articles is indirect. But the opportunity that this researcher earlier mentioned is that more and more foreigners go to China to work, study, or visit and more and more Chinese go abroad for the same purposes. Hence, there is a constant increase in the amount of direct face to face interaction with foreigners. Such an opportunity is deprived for many Iranian students, especially those with English Translation as their majoring discipline. Consequently, unlike Chinese students who fall into a process of give-and-take cultural negotiations, Iranian students' only interaction with a foreign culture is through text books.

Of course, one of the similarities between Iranian and Chinese approach is the fact that in both educational systems the primary students' attention is generally focused on learning the mechanics of the English Language so that they can do well in examinations, but in upper levels and through the above-mentioned opportunity, Chinese students can practice their ethno-cultural interactions as well. In this regard, it is much easier for them to turn their attention to the broader goals of English study—the ability to understand what people of other socio-cultural backgrounds mean as well as make one's self understood to people of other cultures. Hence this idea that the true purpose of English study is mastering intercultural communication skills is understandably challenged for Iranian students. (Chinese EFL Programs 1)

In an investigation on Iranian Students' weaknesses in Spoken English by Iran R. Dolati and Salbiah Seliman in the University of Malaysia, a total of 100 male and female third-grade students and 20 teachers in two high schools were asked to state their views on Iranian Students' English speaking weaknesses. The most significant finding has been “improper method used to teach English language in Iran” (94- 99). Therefore, the lack of opportunity in face to face communication for English students in Iran, along with the improper syllabus—based on this finding—has made it much difficult for Payame Noor students to build up an acceptable communication skill even by the time of graduation.

While teaching advanced writing to the senior BA students of English Translation in this department at the Payame Noor University of Chenaran, the present researcher found out that the students were more comfortable in writing about the tangible ethno-cultural subjects related to their ethnic backgrounds. For example a Turkish student finds it much easier to write on the differences and similarities between Farsi and Turkey elements. Or if the students are asked to write on Nowrooz—the Persian New Year—they do not happen to have difficulties in designing a general layout for their advanced writings. On the other hand, when they are asked to write on American Thanksgivings for example, even though they have been enlightened by certain information in Farsi, their writings seem less plausible. The same situation happens in Oral Translation classes as well. Students find it much easier and comfortable to convert from English to Persian especially when the material is around a cultural practice among Iranians. On the other hand, converting from Persian to English becomes more difficult partly because of the less proficiency in Speaking skills and mostly because the target language's cultural components are less familiar to these students. It was pretty much the same situation in panel discussion classes. No one was ready to talk about American ethnic practices in Christmas Eve but they welcomed discussions on various ethnic practices about local marriages. Jonathan Snell in an article entitled “Improving Teacher-Student Interaction in the EFL Classroom” states, “a common problem for EFL teachers is dealing with a passive class, where students are unresponsive and avoid interaction with the teacher.” This is especially true when a teacher is looking for interaction with the students, such as asking questions to the class as a whole, expecting at least a couple of students to respond. This is of course a frustrating experience for both the teacher and the taught. Obviously, there are times when no student answers the teacher's question even if they understand the question, know the answer, and are able to produce the answer. For example, when it comes to students' participation in panel discussions or oral translation courses, girls find it embarrassing to give vent to their views openly about some American and British concepts such as, blind dates, making proposal, and moving together. Therefore, the researcher finds it more comfortable not to bring up such discussions in mixed classes. Instead, talking on religious concepts or national and local ceremonies engages more students in class participation.

The history of language teaching has undergone several controversial and challenging debates on how to make this process more effective. In this regard, for more than a hundred years, debate and discussion within the teaching profession have often centered on issues such as the roles of linguistic structures in language curriculum, the development of accuracy and fluency in the methods of teaching, teaching certain

productive or receptive skills, motivating learners and finally, the most important, the role of teaching components and materials. Based on such debates and discussions raised around the nature of language learning and teaching over recent years, one can obviously perceive the above-mentioned complex nature of language learning and teaching in turn. As mentioned earlier, this researcher believes that one good indication of this is the emergence of local approaches which need to be applied by EFL teachers. To conclude, so far our educational system has not been able to propose a widespread method of language teaching as the panacea to solve all the problems in this field. The time has come for each individual EFL teacher to invent his / her own personal method in dealing with the students. For this purpose, the researcher personally finds it more practical to change the syllabus and make certain additions and omissions based on the students' needs/desires. For example if bringing up a discussion on certain American ethnic practices is about to cause embarrassment, and instead a subject on a certain local ethnic practice of North-East Kurmanjs of Iran engages more students in panel discussions, it is better to stick on to the local component. Let us hope someday in an early future, the educational system in Iran will incorporate the local ethno-cultural components in the syllabus and make it possible to export Iranian cultural identity through components of EFL training programs.

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Integration of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT's) and Vocational Education and Training (VET) towards developing 21st Century competency in a knowledge-based set- up

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Abstract

Information and communication technologies (ICT) have become readily used entities in all aspects of life today. In the past twenty years, the use of ICT has changed the practices and procedures of nearly all forms of life within business and governance. Within vocational education too, ICT has begun to have a presence. Education is a social- oriented activity and quality education has traditionally been associated with ICT-enabled teachers having high degrees of personal contact with the digital generation learners. With the world moving rapidly into digital media and information- science, the role of ICT in education is becoming more and more important and this importance grows and develops in the 21st century. This paper highlights the various impacts of ICT on contemporary vocational education and training(VET) and explores potential future developments.

Keywords: ICT, VET, social- oriented activity, future.

1. INTRODUCTION

Information and communications technology or **information and communication technology**, usually abbreviated as **ICT**, is often used as an extended synonym for information technology (IT), but is usually a more general term that stresses the role of unified communications and the integration of telecommunications (telephone lines and wireless signals), computers as well as necessary software, storage and audio-visual systems, which enable users to create, access, store, transmit, and manipulate information.

When looking at the current widespread diffusion and use of ICT in modern societies especially by the young – the so-called digital generation it should be clear that ICT, will affect the complete learning process of VET today and in the future.

There have been a number of factors obstructing the success of using ICT in VET across all spheres of life. These have included such factors as a lack of funding to support the purchase of technology, a lack of trained teaching practitioners, a lack of motivation and need among teachers to adopt ICT as teaching tools (Starr, 2001) to update the system of teaching and learning. But in recent times, factors have emerged which have strengthened and encouraged moves to adopt ICTs into classrooms and learning settings to change the

scenario from rote learning to ICT-enabled competitive learning which makes one more employable. The growing use of the Internet and World Wide Web (WWW) as tools for information access and communication (eg. Oliver & Towers, 1999) has also contributed to bring about a change in the world of business, commerce, education, research, governance, entertainment and various aspect of economic activity. As we move into the 21st century, these factors and many others bring strong forces to bear on the adoption of ICTs in vocational education and contemporary trends suggest significant changes in the way vocational education is planned and delivered as a consequence of the opportunities afforded by ICT. In particular, the paper explores the emerging impact of information and communication technologies likely to be in coming years on *what* is learned, *when* and *where* learning will take place and *how* the learning will occur.

2. NECESSITY TO INTEGRATE

Vocational Education and Training (VET) is an effective process by which quality, updation, information literacy and knowledgeable workers are prepared through training worldwide. UNESCO and ILO (2002) defined VET "as a comprehensive term referring to those aspects of the educational process involving, in addition to general education, the study of technologies and related sciences, the acquisition of practical skills, attitudes, understanding and knowledge relating to occupations in various sectors of economic and social life." In short, VET helps prepare human resources for the dynamic world of work. For effective participation in the world of work the 'study of technologies and related sciences' as defined, is of utmost importance that can be realized with adequate ICT arrangement in VET institutions. It's now an advantage to deliver practical skills by a well organized ICT set up. Hands-on learning has been replaced by ICT-enabled teaching. Software and interactive video produced by many ICT-supported institutes (e.g., The British Institutes) and publishing houses (e.g., The Oxford University Press) in and around us made it easy for practical skills to be taught using ICTs. The jobs that requires only hands-on experiences are now possible via computer programming. The use of ICTs in the training, up-grading and re-training of the work-force as well as facilitators has become "an essential aspect of teaching's cultural toolkit in the twenty first century, affording new and transformative models of development" (Leach, 2005). VET also aims at preparing people for (self-) employment and to be a medium of evolution for people to the world of work; by developing in an individual a sense of belonging in their communities which they often lack. It helps in bridging the lacunae between the school or college (i.e., place where studied) and the industry they would be into on completion. Consequently, VET is seen as an

instrument for reducing extreme poverty (Hollander and Mar, 2009) as well. These distinctive features of VET make ICTs application a mandatory component that can aid to achieve a sustainable and globally recognized workforce . ICTs according to Zarini et al. (2009), 'facilitate the development and strengthening of VET around the world by enhancing networking and knowledge sharing opportunities'. To habituate the would be work force into the new system of high-end work culture , investment in the integration of ICTs in the curriculum implementation process (teaching and learning) becomes mandatory. Zarini et al. (2009) further stressed; “Services based on computing, telecommunications and information retrieval are developing rapidly. Some key-words like real-time information, multilingualism, location awareness, targeting and personalization have become the call of the day. Government functions and services are increasingly moving on-line. Internet shopping in the form of mega- online-stores have made works easier. Furthermore, business companies and public administrations are working to develop and introduce more automated and self-service solutions.” As a result, application of ICTs into VET changes the face of the world from “knowledge- based” to “ICT-Capable” work force. Therefore, a ready application of ICT resources into the teaching and learning process of VET should be emphasized at all levels. It would therefore lead to the reinforcement of VET by enhancing networking and knowledge sharing opportunities helping students come out of the monotony of mechanically operated training, thereby helping students learn even beyond class hours. Practical learning experiences therefore is helping them work instantaneous. Thus problem-solving through decision-making has become easier to a certain extent. Despite the fact that, the need for information and communication technologies in education and VET is a global phenomenon, it is mostly needed and used in developing countries where poverty and health are conflicting issues that takes a toll on human lives.

3. FACTORS AFFECTING INTEGRATION

Constant reviews show several factors affecting the integration (Brummelhuis, 1995 in Drent and Meelissen, 2008) and agencies (BECTA, 2004). However, these studies were limited only to general degree education. Among the 21st century studies, Kotsik et al.(2009) observed the integration of ICTs into VET and suggested the non-negligence of the following: strategic readiness, pedagogical readiness, organizational readiness and technical readiness. The authors describes the components as explained below:

Strategic readiness is the preparing stage that is accomplished by developing a master plan for the incorporation of ICTs into VET. It includes the vision and mission, values and objectives, strategies, timeframe and the evaluation scheme for ICT initiatives. It should also provide the budget to cover costs related to connectivity, maintenance and training the trainers to enhance the imparting of skills.

Pedagogical readiness focuses on ICTs and teaching and learning practice. It should be a need based analysis, where the trainers would be ICT-mediated and VET institutions must complete an assessment of the compatibility of ICTs with the current philosophy of learning, opportunities for including ICTs in VET, an assessment of the technological proficiency for teachers and learners, ensuring that ICTs will meet learners' educational needs.

The following key questions are used to assess organizational readiness. To what extent do VET institutions embrace innovation and change? Do teachers support the integration of ICTs in VET? Has the necessary leadership been provided to champion and rally support for ICT integration? Has the existence of training support systems been communicated to VET teachers?

Organizational readiness also ascertains that the necessary actions have been taken to ensure that VET teachers possess the necessary ICT competencies. These actions include conducting needs assessments to determine the ICT comfort level of teachers, establishing minimum training standards, developing training plans and establishing appropriate mechanisms to monitor training results.

Technical readiness addresses issues related to infrastructural requirements for ICT integration. The following key questions are used to assess technical readiness. Has an overview of existing technologies been established? Have existing technologies been benchmarked against those available in the marketplace? How well does the current technological infrastructure meet the basic requirements for ICT integration in terms of hardware, connectivity, educational software, software licenses, systems maintenance and staff training? Is it necessary to develop a plan for a new technological infrastructure? Has the existence of technological support systems been communicated to all key stakeholders?

4. CHALLENGES ACCRUING FROM THE EFFECTIVE INTEGRATION OF ICT'S IN VET

Effective integration of ICTs in VET is not devoid of certain drawbacks. Several problems were identified by researchers and educationists. Studies on the application of

ICT to general education and VET reveals some challenges encountered by stakeholders toward successful integration of ICTs, for example, lack of time and lack of need analysis in the preparation of teaching materials and lack of knowledge and skills for the presentation of advanced ICT teaching materials manifested in a study conducted in vocational institutions in Malaysia (Saud et al., 2010); expense and access to tools (security, purchase, software and maintenance), inadequate trained technical and administrative staff and insufficient time to plan instruction (Collins and Halverson, 2009) and development of improper instruction due to lack of the schema; beliefs about teaching, about computers, rigidity to change existing classroom practices (Lawrence, 2007); lack of funds (Jantrakool, 2010) and also the unwillingness to disburse funds due to the lack of awareness of ICT by headship in many institutions poses a great threat to the reach of ICT in all round development. Interrupted power supply in many areas also contribute to the slowness of development. Along with this, Hayes states that teachers' "slowness to adopt ICT reflects their effort to discern how best to incorporate new technologies into old teaching practices" (p. 394) and often do they fail in their commitment in imparting knowledge and helping students, develop skills. Thus fulfilment of future objectives fall flat very easily. The challenge also lies in the competitiveness of teachers' motivation to adopt and put the skill across to the trainees for effective integration of technology-based learning. The most pressing challenges to the effective integration of ICTs in VET according to Kotsik et al.(2009) includes; "content and curriculum; appropriateness and efficacy; quality and branding of ICT-mediated learning; stakeholders' resistance; lack of appropriate software; the digital divide; the cognitive and copy right issues". Serious thoughts regarding the doing away of the worseness of the situation, considering the fact that the fast changing world of work never awaits anybody, has to be done.

CONCLUSION

The use of ICT has really made the work places more digital in "Knowledge management" (Kim and Park, 2009). thereby making it more multilateral in nature. Skill development with the composition of both technical and non-technical competencies (Kim and Park, 2009) has also gained momentum in recent years. It has therefore instigated to reduce the lacunae between the training field and the post training field. Tas (2010) concluded in his analysis on the topic "ICT for development: A case study" that; "ICT education is a "must" for the ever growing and ever changing global economy." It is because, Tas had a vision on the increasing competence of the ICT usage at least at learning

of the basic level of IT that could contribute to the development and welfare of the community at large. Specialization in education, training and professional development courses show, the integration of ICTs has as the basic requirement and the area that needs special care. Thus, to maintain a good economic bias in a country, the development and integration of ICT in VET would be an added advantage. However, all challenges identified from the literature reviewed have been duly acknowledged, their impact on the effective ICTs integration into VET could be properly addressed through adequate planning, and management of ICT resources.

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Developing English Language Learning among Pre-service Vernacular Medium Teachers through a Social Constructivist Approach

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Abstract

It is needless to say that accurately developed communication skills are indispensable for the job market today. But the fact is that pre-service vernacular medium teachers end up with B.Ed degree, however lacking in effective communication. So, the researcher had tried to apply constructivist teaching strategies and practices in the language learning for developing communicative competencies of vernacular medium pre-service teachers. Mixed method embedded experimental design was used. In the organization of the project, the researcher, English method master, 15 prospective English language teachers were assigned the job of the mentors of fifteen vernacular medium pre service teachers (mentee). The data was collected through Pre-Intervention and Post-Intervention Testing, Semi structured interviews; Reflection logs. Result showed that communicative competencies of the pre-service vernacular medium teachers were enhanced and they were found more enthusiastic to use the language with these teachers of other subjects and their peers.

Introduction

Origin of the research problem:

Think like a wise man but communicate in the language of the people.

William Butler Yeats.

This quote has coerced me to think deeply.... that is the focus of this research proposal. As the English language is getting consolidated as a global language, it is indispensable for all the countries to teach and learn English. Otherwise, it is difficult to keep pace with the development in the world. In particular, it is very essential for a multilingual and developing country like India to learn this global language. But it is a universal grievance in many states of India that the pre-service teachers of various universities are not able to communicate in English very effectively specially those who have not studied English as a first language. It is needless to say that accurate developed communication skills are indispensable for the job market today. But the fact is that pre-service vernacular medium teachers end up with B.Ed degree, however lacking in effective communication. Derogatory remarks are often hurled at vernacular medium pre-service teachers when they try to converse in English which

results in inhibitions against conversing in English. Soon enough, it leads to development of an instinctual apathy towards English. 9.23% of the total dropouts who left B.ED is due to language problems. They found it difficult to cope with English as a medium of instruction at B.ED.

Another factor that makes the English learning process a dull and boring experience for students concerns the pedagogy of English teaching in which vernacular medium students are taught. However, in 21st century, winds of change are blowing and a significant shift has to take place. The goal of language teaching is to develop what Hymes (1972) referred to as "communicative competence". So, the purpose of the research is to understand and apply constructivist teaching strategies and practices in the language learning for developing communicative competencies of vernacular medium pre-service teachers.

2. Objectives:

A social constructivism based instructional design was developed for enhancing communicative competencies of pre-service vernacular medium teachers. Following was the objective of the study:

To study the effect of social constructivism based instructional design on communicative competencies of pre-service vernacular medium teachers.

3. The Research Question:

The following research question has been developed to address the research problem:

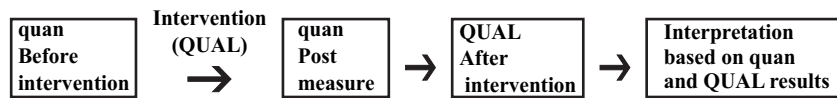
1. Were social constructivism based strategies effective for enhancing communicative competencies of the pre-service vernacular medium teachers?

4. Hypothesis: For objective following hypothesis was framed:

Ho1: There is no significant difference between pre test and post test scores before intervention and after intervention of social constructivism based module.

5. Methodology

5.1 Research design: The researcher used mixed method embedded experimental design. As a method, it focuses on collecting, analyzing, and mixing both quantitative and qualitative data in a single study or series of studies. Its central premise is that the use of quantitative and qualitative approaches in combination provides a better understanding of research problems than using either of the approaches alone.



5.2 Participants: In this study, *purposive sampling* was used- This study was conducted at K. J. Somaiya Comprehensive College, Vidhyavihar for the reason of familiarity between the pre-service teachers that is essential for this approach In the organization of the project, the researcher, English method master, 15 prospective English language teachers of K. J. Somaiya college of Education were assigned the job of the mentors of fifteen vernacular medium pre service teachers (mentee) for engagement in a social constructivist learning environment.

5.3 Plan of Work: The researcher had conducted the study on the following lines

1. Pre-testing: The first task was to create pairs of mentors (English proficient pre service teacher) and mentees (non – English proficient pre service teachers). This was a flexible coupling process and the mentees were allowed to choose their mentors for the entire duration of the study. In the beginning, the vernacular medium students were asked to introduce themselves. This was a quantitative test which made use of the same rubric that was used to assess the participants in the pre test. However no guidance was given by the mentors for this test. The mentors judged their performance with the help of a rubric (APPENDIX A).

2. Development of module: English method master of K. J. Somaiya college of Education had designed instructional module for providing opportunity of hands on experience to the pre-service English language teachers to try out socio constructivist approach for developing communicative competencies of vernacular medium pre service teachers.

Details of module are given in following table:

Sr. No.	Communicative Skill	Activity	Technique	Assessment Tool
1	Narration	Story Telling	Scaffolding	Rubric for Storytelling
2	Description	Role Play	Simulation	Rating Scale
3	Giving and Seeking information	Newspaper in teaching English	Reciprocal teaching	Worksheet based on reciprocal reading
4	Making requests	Situation based learning	Comperative learning	Worksheet based on different types of situation
5	Conveying notion of possibilities, necessity and obligation	Mini lessons	Peer tutoring	One-on-One Conferences, Journal Grading

Execution of module: After the pre testing was completed the execution of the five instructional modules was initiated. Two week long project was carried out at the start or at the end of a regular instructional day on the college premises. Once the mentor-mentee pairs were set in place a schedule was chalked out which took into consideration other priorities of the B.Ed course. Once everyone had agreed to the plan of action the modules were conducted regularly. There were group interactions as well as one on one interaction among mentors and mentees. For those activities which require group efforts a group of mentors was formed under whom mentees were allotted e.g. group of 4 mentee & 4 mentors.

6. Results and discussion:-

To study the effect of social constructivism based instructional design on communicative competencies of pre-service vernacular medium teachers the data was collected with the help of

1. Pre-Intervention and Post-Intervention Testing.
2. Reflection logs of the pre-service teachers.
3. Answers and explanations on open ended questions given in written form regarding the extent of effectiveness of socio constructivist approach developing communicative competencies.

The collected data was analyzed quantitatively as well as qualitatively. Based on this analysis the attempt is made to answer the following research question:

RQ. Were social constructivism based strategies effective in enhancing communicative competencies of the pre-service vernacular medium teachers?

To answer this question, firstly null hypothesis was framed for first objective i.e. there is no significant difference between pretest and post test scores i.e. before and after intervention.

As part of the quantitative approach of the study, the participants were asked to introduce themselves. After the completion of all five skills module based on the socio constructivist approach, a post test was conducted. This was a quantitative test which made use of the same rubric that was used to assess the participants in the pre test. Like in the pre test, the participants were once again asked to introduce themselves. However no guidance was given by the mentors for this test. The mentors judged their performance with the help of a rubric. This was done before and after the intervention.

The rubric scores collected from the pre test and post test were analyzed and calculated statically.

Following are the results obtained from this data.

Variable Group	Mean	SD	SEd	't' Value	I.o.s*	
Peer test	9.6	9.64	2.49	3.86	0.05	0.01
Post test					2.14	1.76

The value of 't' test was found to be 3.86; this confirmed the rejection of the null hypothesis.

The null hypothesis was framed based on the first objective of our study. It was found that there was significant difference between the scores of the pre test and the post test of the instructional design based on social constructivism.

Qualitative Data Interpretation: To enhance the communicative competencies of vernacular medium students, five activities were conducted which were based on the five communicative skills. Following are the results which confirm whether social constructivism based strategies were effective for enhancing communicative competencies of the pre-service vernacular medium teachers:

Skill -1

Skill Developed: Giving and Seeking Information

Activity: Newspaper in teaching English

Dimensions for rating:

Comprehension: Out of 15, 5 Pre-service vernacular medium students were able to comprehend the passages in a supportive context.

Interpretation: Out of 15, 12 Pre-service vernacular medium students were able to share about their interpretation of the text with each other. Some students had difficulty in understanding the meaning of some words, so they were asked to refer the dictionary.

Vocabulary: All the fifteen students learnt a minimum of 10 new words from the text.

Reading: Three students were very confident in reading the news paper.

Thus *reciprocal teaching strategies*, helped to improve students' reading comprehension though a handful of students felt that it was time-consuming to follow the procedures from one strategy to another, proceeding from predicting to questioning, clarifying and summarizing before they could answer the comprehension questions.

Skill -2**Skill Developed: Making Requests****Activity Conducted: Situation Based****Dimensions for rating:**

Quality of Description: Out of 15, 8 pre-service vernacular medium students had good accuracy in description, though some details were lacking. Rest 7 of them lacked some accuracy in description and some critical details were missing that made it difficult for their peers to complete the task.

Fluency: Out of 15, 12 pre-service vernacular medium students' speech was relatively smooth but was characterized by some hesitation and unevenness caused by rephrasing and/or groping for words. 3 pre-service vernacular medium students' speech was frequently hesitant and jerky, with some sentences left incomplete.

Language control: : Out of 15, 9 pre-service vernacular medium students had developed good language control; good range of relatively well chosen vocabulary; some errors in grammatical structures possibly caused by attempt to include a variety though 6 had adequate language control; vocabulary range is lacking; frequent grammatical errors that did not obscure meaning; little variety in structures.

Mentees promoted each other's success. Each student demonstrated satisfactory mastery of the role being played. Each student was accountable for their learning and work, social skills that were learnt as a result of the successful cooperative learning were effective communication, interpersonal and group skills.

Skill - 3**Skill Developed: Conveying notion of possibilities, Necessity and obligation****Activity Conducted: Mini lessons**

Marks based on worksheet: There were 10 blanks based on modal verbs. Out of 15, 11 pre-service vernacular medium students were fairly good at using the modal verbs in simple English sentences. 4 were getting little confused in selection of appropriate modal for sentence. Otherwise, all mentees were very enthusiastic to learn these words.

Skill - 4**Skill Developed: Description skill****Activity Conducted: Role-play****Dimensions for rating:****Clear speech:**

1. **Eye contact and body posture:** In the beginning, the student teachers (non-English proficient teacher) were nervous, unsure and hesitant to perform the role play with eye contact and proper gestures. But gradually most of them developed confidence and could speak fairly well in the English language making proper gestures and maintaining good eye contact.
2. **Comprehension:** Pre-service vernacular medium students were able to comprehend the meaning of each others' dialogues in a supportive context.
3. **Preparedness:** When pre service teachers assumed the roles relevant to their interests, they were attentive and collaborative. Initially mentors had to prompt each mentee by reading aloud a word from one of the sentences on the conversation cards but later on mentees (pre-service vernacular medium students) were engaged in the dialogue without referring to cards except one or two who used to refer card when they fell short of words.
4. **Stays on the topic:** All the pre-service didn't deviate from the topic though sometimes few students were repeating their dialogues.

This activity allowed the participants to be more engaged in interaction with others and in critical reflection.

Skill-5**Skill Developed: Narrative Skill****Activity Conducted: Storytelling****Dimensions for rating:**

Voice Intonation: 9 pre-service teachers did phrasing fluently and their voice was also forceful, the rest 6 did phrasing properly but were not good in voice modulation as per the context of story.

Gestures: All the pre-service teachers had tried to use hand and body movements for enhancing their story.

Projection: Most of pre-service teachers' voice could be easily heard by the entire audience except one or two who initially required mentor cueing.

Eye Contact: All the pre-service teachers had made eye contact with audience most of the time during storytelling.

Story Structure: Most of pre-service teachers narrated the story from beginning to end with a few mistakes.

Optional: 2 pre-service teachers used different sounding voice in accordance with the characters of the story.

Both quantitative and qualitative analysis indicates that social constructivism based strategies were effective in enhancing communicative competencies of the pre-service vernacular medium teachers.

7. Conclusion

This project implied a set of tasks based on interactive and communicative approaches in other words a socio constructivist approach, with the purpose of helping pre service teachers of the vernacular medium to improve their oral skills in the English Language. The instructional design based on social constructivism successfully improved the communicative competencies of pre-service vernacular medium teachers in their communication skills of narration, description, giving and seeking information, conveying notions and making requests in the English language. The beneficial effect of peer tutoring on developing the communicative competencies of pre-service vernacular medium teachers was indisputably demonstrated by this study. Finally this project was successful in eliminating the English language barrier that exists between English proficient and non-English proficient pre service teachers by enhancing the confidence of the pre service teachers and motivating them to use the English Language more frequently with negligible inhibition through the application of the social constructivist approach to learning the English language.

8. Suggestions

Based on the successful findings of this study the following suggestions can be made for further research and study:

1. The effect of a more elaborate module consisting of more language development skills over a larger period of time, needs to be assessed.

2. An investigation of whether language education should be based on the central themes of socio constructivism, thus making a course integrated, inquiry-oriented and community-based.

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Creativity in English Classroom

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Abstract

This paper attempts to define the scope for creativity in English classroom. It discusses, demonstrates and applies the tried and tested techniques allied to creativity in the teaching of grammar, prose, poetry, drama or fiction. Creativity is defined as a novel and personally meaningful interpretation of experiences, actions, and events (Beghetto & Kaufman, 2007). Here it is limited to mini-c, i.e., the creativity found in School and College children. Creativity now as a component is used in various fields in bringing about commitment to the work on hand. Of late, it is realised to be a great motivating force. It might serve to rejuvenate language learning as well. So an attempt is made in this paper to discuss, and demonstrate the tried and tested techniques allied to creativity in the teaching of grammar, prose, poetry, drama or fiction.

Keywords: *creativity, English language classroom, teaching, drama, short story*

Creativity is often considered the privilege of a few chosen individuals. Truth is far from it. Everyone has this faculty, the only problem is she/he has not identified it or attempted to use it. Creativity is defined as a novel and personally meaningful interpretation of experiences, actions, and events (Beghetto & Kaufman, 2007). It is never of course limited to arts and music but actually extends to almost any area of human experience, to language teaching-learning included. Early life encounters with 'mini-c' -- the creativity found in children (school & college) (Beghetto & Kaufman, 2007) -- can be nurtured by teachers, parents and mentors. When learners encounter activities that encourage their curiosity and exploration and that lets them make decisions, their creativity develops. The right and left brain work together in these tasks and will take them to the higher levels of creativity.

Of late, there is a general awakening in all fields of its great utility in bringing about commitment to the work on hand and thus it is recognized to be a great motivating force. Such an environment is congenial to try its efficacy in the languishing field of language teaching-learning.

The reason for the disorientation and disinclination for language learning is not far to seek. English in India is rarely looked upon as a skill to be mastered by learners, and taught as a content subject. Learners learn by rote memory, short summaries of a lesson,

write examination and be done with it. English textbooks are rarely utilized either by the teachers or the taught for rehearsing their language skills. Learners go through all the stages of learning – primary, secondary and tertiary – without an awareness of the relevance of learning the language. It becomes extremely difficult, to motivate them to learn it with the routine procedures of classroom instruction with chalk and talk as the only aids. It is in this unnerving context creativity can come handy in a language classroom. A creative and innovative teacher, by promoting activities that seem to be unrelated to language learning, can surprise the learners to discover that they have learnt the use of language without being too conscious about it and remain motivated in the process of learning the nuances of the use of the various skills of language.

To begin with the samples of creative experiences, a typical classroom starter need not necessarily be: “Take your book, Page number 10, second paragraph...” or “Today, I am going to teach you ...” This does not serve any of the language learning purposes that the text may aim at. Instead it could be any novel activity to trigger the minds of the learners and keep their spirits high to accept what is to follow. Once creativity gets lighted up, the task becomes appealing to their minds. As Torrence (1987) rightly notes, when the children are expected to return to an “uninteresting” task, they are almost twice as “creative” as they were when they anticipated the resumption of an “interesting” activity.

I would like to record one of the activities I tried out to stimulate the learners' creativity. The activity, I must acknowledge, is only a replication of what I witnessed in one of the workshops on creativity ('Fostering Creativity' – Christ University, Bangalore 16 – 17 Nov, 2012). The participants had been divided into groups of five and asked to come out with a new animal/bird. With each one of the members' favorite put together and they were asked to name it. One of the groups chose lion, giraffe, dog, tiger and horse. These animals were put together and they drew a picture of a new animal. They named it **Lidgersaffe**. Then one of the members in the group described the picture and the qualities it symbolized. In this case, they had named their animal choosing one or more letters from the name of the constituent animals; Li - lion, d - dog, ger - tiger, s - horse, and affe - giraffe. The unique quality of each animal was represented in the picture. The head was of a lion as the lion is the king of the forest, the neck was of a giraffe as that is the animal with the longest neck, the body was of a tiger as that is the animal with stripes, the legs were of a dog as they could not picturise faithfulness and the tail was of a horse which has a fluffy tuft. The new animal they drew is given in the sketch below:



Lidgersaffe

This activity as an icebreaker, gave the participants a chance to converse with each other while in a group and respect each other's opinion in finalising the outcome i.e, promoted interpersonal skills. As the participants were from different regions of India, the medium of conversation was, of course, English. When one of them was asked to introduce their new species to other group members, she was so confident in describing their newly created species and was able to readily defend their creativity. Thereby, the participants' minds were prepared for the sessions thenceforth. Their thought process was stimulated which passed on to the subsequent tasks. It is ultimately, the way the task was presented and explicated that animated the session. The aim of the activity was to make the participants feel at ease and be creative in a new environment and it created an opportunity to converse with each other and it happened.

When I tried this activity in a language classroom, where the learners had rarely comprehended a whole passage of their English text, they responded to the step by step command – form a group of five; each one has to select either an animal or a bird; now select one feature of that animal that you like; put together all your group members' favourite to create the new species; give it a reasonable name and explain the new species you have created. They understood the language as their focus was on the novel idea, that they were trying something new. When it was time to explain, the representative of each group was thrust forward to demonstrate. They came out with initial difficulties like: dog head, pig body, rat tail, instead of using the possessive form. Altogether, the aim was to make them shed their inhibition and come out with something that they felt proud to say in an alien language. Moreover, as it had an element of fun, they were out of compulsion. But my intention was to promote their speaking skill and I was happy that succeeded.

Similarly, a short-story or a novel need not be always presented in the usual format - - beginning, middle, climax and end. One of the techniques could be presenting a short passage first, where the central message of the story reveals itself and then eliciting

responses as to guess the story line and the possibility of occurrences before and after. The best way of promoting creativity, Amabile (2010) says is perhaps for the teacher to remain non-judgmental and encourage freedom of expression. While eliciting responses, it is better not to label them as right or wrong. Whatever their response, it is just one of the several possibilities. This mode of presenting the story would help learners to pool their previous knowledge of themes and break their mindset of hitting at one right answer. In fact, the task could be extended with one of the possibilities expanded into a full fledged story which in turn may lead to another creative activity (writing/speaking).

For instance, in a language classroom, which is meant to promote writing skills, I presented the story, *The thieves who couldn't stop sneezing* by Thomas Hardy. The story goes like this:

Hubert - a boy who was travelling alone on a horseback through a forest was robbed and thrashed by robbers. Later when the boy regained consciousness and was about to seek refuge in a nearby mansion, he overheard the robbers' plan to rob the mansion. Hubert planned to save the inmates.

I stopped the narration there and asked the learners to complete the story. 'How did he save the inmates from being robbed?' and they came out with the following ideas:

1. He understood that they were afraid of ghosts and disguised himself as one such and frightened them. They fainted and later he handed them over to the police.
2. He informed the inmates about the thieves. They pretended to sleep and locked the thieves in the respective rooms when they set out to hunt. The police were informed.
3. He informed the police through cell phone. They came in mufti and surrounded the bungalow. They planned an operation and caught the thieves.
4. He informed the inmates about the thieves and their plan. He then asked them to move all the things to a safe place and then with the help of neighbours, they managed to catch them.
5. He stepped out silently and found the keys of the cupboard and locked them inside it and then informed the inmates about the thieves.

These were some of the possible ways, the learners suggested, that Hubert might have applied to save the inmates. Surprisingly, the story which was written in 1877 did not of course carry elements like cell phone or operation plan by police. But the learners, who were exposed to such situations in movies and television, pooled their knowledge to bring out such conclusions. Originally, Hardy gave it an altogether different ending which was a bit

tricky for the learners to guess. But when given a chance, they came out with these logically possible ideas.

As the area of operation is limited, with the end already given, the pooling required careful scrutiny before becoming logically applicable in the current (given) context. The analysis of the possible solutions got from the previous knowledge to suit the context, which is done within the limited time space, increases the problem solving capacity of the learners.

Added to this, the activity of 'branching away from the text' stimulated the creative writing skills of the learners. Even the learners, who were otherwise left with no idea, were inspired by the story without an end. They had a gap which demanded their gestalt to fill it with. It enabled them to express themselves continuously in L2. The teacher at this stage should remain positive and should neither intervene with her/his ideas nor judge their responses.

Likewise, a drama/one-act play could be preceded by a theme-based skit, which could be followed by discussion. This would prove an appetite to see the full text with interest. The discussion gives the learners, a role to play in the teaching-learning process. Even illogical, rule-discarding, wacky ideas can be welcomed and can be built over in the learning process (Von Oech, 2008). Invention of Polaroid camera could best illustrate this.

For example, a skit based on contemporary middleclass household situation, where there always exists a tension between the man and his wife could be a preliminary exercise to lead on to the teaching of, say, Shaw's 'The meeting in the forest' (*Androcles and the Lion*). As a pre-reading activity, the learners were assigned the task to find the reasons for dispute among married couples. When tried at a tertiary level classroom these were some of the reasons for the family quarrel, the students came up with, after their discussion in groups:

1. Food not cooked properly.
2. No good clothes or jewels available to wear.
3. Husband/wife coming home late.
4. Dirty clothes getting piled up in a corner awaiting the wife to clean.
5. Baby-sitting with unmanageable children.

And they came up with a variety of novel ideas as possible solutions to the problems.

1. When food is not cooked properly, they can go to a restaurant (a cheaper one in case of economic constraints), or they can try recipes from cookery books or T.V. shows, or either of them should learn to cook from neighbors/friends/relatives, or better still they can go for uncooked/natural/fresh foods/fruits/vegetables.

2. If there are no new clothes or jewels to wear for special occasions, they can always go for imitation jewels and rented costumes, or they can start making their own jewels and create fashion out of old and used clothes which indirectly, when marketed, would add to their income.
3. If a wife or husband comes home late, her/his first attempt should be to explain the situation and if it fails, she/he can take spouse to their work spot or have a webcam fixed (like mobile phones) to minimize the distance, or change both of their working time.
4. When dirty clothes get piled up, they can start a laundry, or they can start using 'use and throw' type clothes which will not make a pile inside their house, or they can go for clothes which never get dirtied or get cleaned according to the climate.
5. The babies are possessions that require highest attention. But the torturing ones can be handled with the help of fly swatter, or fixing a silencer or muting when required, or have a toy like 'giggler' which giggles and makes the baby stop crying, or a toy which cries louder than the baby!

One can see the amount of creativity that flowered forth from them. The learners came out with plenty of ideas, which they encounter in their household. Only the most common of them were chosen for further discussion as listed above. When asked for solutions for the problems they had mentioned, they came out with those too. Some learners came out with the ideas of starting a laundry, making paper jewelry, making a toy 'giggler', etc. It was altogether a wonderful speaking activity that made them hunt for the words in English to express the idea which they had conceived. This gave a chance to put together the established phrases known to them like 'food not cook properly husband cook' or 'dirty clothes start laundry ... get washing machine' or 'baby crying ... give a doll, food', etc. They were able to express it phrase by phrase and they were in need of continuous expression towards which some guidance was given at the end.

Moreover, this task gave them an insight that they could offer solutions or could solve the problems that they face daily. This unconsciously registered in them self-confidence to manage the problems they might encounter and a view that any problem is manageable. Their futuristic plan of creating a toy called 'giggler' or clothes which could get cleaned according to the climate are samples of great visionaries. The ideas, although seemingly wacky were received with great applause.

After such an exercise, the text on hand became easy to comprehend. They identified the relevance of the play to what they had discussed. This occurs only when they experience freedom to express their ideas and when there is a chance to come out of the mandated curricula (Amabile, 2010). As not the content, but the skills are the objectives of language learning, what is wrong with such efforts?

Similarly, Music is another portal of creativity. English songs/verses could be utilized in learning the nuances of language, like rhyme, rhythm and intonation. They all together could listen to it and sing it or if someone could play an instrument to accompany their chorus or students may compose a new song, based on their text. This breaks the barrier of limiting the language to textbooks and classrooms and makes language learning possible even at a leisurely pace and outside the classroom.

At another instance, in a Phonetics class at EFLU, when the teacher was about to teach rhythm in speech, she brought a guitar to the classroom. We thought that she might have come straight from the music class and we were eagerly waiting for her to play it. Instead, by the middle of the class, she gave us the lyric of the first stanza of the song 'I have a dream' in the album *West life* and asked every one of us to read it once to familiarize ourselves with it. The lyric is as follows:

I have a dream, a song to sing
 To help me cope with anything
 If you see the wonder (wonder) of a fairy tale
 You can take the future even if you fail
 I believe in angels
 Something good in everything I see
 I believe in angels
 When I know the time is right for me
 I'll cross the stream - I have a dream

This was certainly a new activity to us, who had never seen a teacher playing guitar or sing an English song. To begin with, she sang the song first accompanied by the guitar. Later she asked us to follow her. At first, we giggled and could follow neither the guitar nor the lyric, but with successive attempts we were in tune with the guitar. Then she explained the reason behind such a session. She created an environment for us to learn the rhythm intuitively through singing. This kind of activity in any other environment is very likely to produce a stress-free and unconscious learning of what is envisioned in the objectives. She

then proceeded with individual examples in prose piece to illustrate how rhythm is maintained in speech as well. We were left with the eagerness to learn the whole song.

When I tried this type of singing session with a trying set of learners, who were restless with the usual classroom, they cooperated in learning the song and enjoyed it. By the end of the session they came forward to sing it to the whole class. They learnt to pronounce certain words, and were able to utter words in phrases instead of stressing each and every word. Although it did not bring the change the same day, they became aware of speech rhythms. This could possibly help them at some point in future or be a spark to ignite them towards language learning or learning music.

Creativity is a component existing in every individual and the present day need is to identify and enhance it. It is the responsibility of the teachers and parents to identify in the children the presence of this natural ability and encourage them to proceed further and in case they lacked this ability, they should promote activities that would make them creative. The children with such ability should not be ignored or labeled a loon.

Any flat session can be turned into a peppy one with a pinch of creativity. If the teacher attempts to be creative, the monotony of the classroom can be broken with little or no additional materials. It is apparent that, whatever the technique employed by the teacher, it can equip the learners to join the race of those who are creative (Gardner, 1983). Language learning, often uninteresting if not downright boring anointed with grammar and syntax could be made attractive when approached in a different perspective. It should also be challenging enough to meet the demands of the multi-tasking and multi-talented learners. Creativity, which by no means is a prerogative of arts and music, has proved to be effective in many other areas of human enterprise, and its potential is being tapped. Why not in teaching language also?

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Communicative Language Teaching: An Evaluation

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Abstract

Communicative Language Teaching appeared at a time when language teaching in many parts of the world was ready for a paradigm shift. Communicative Language Teaching appealed to those who sought a more humanistic approach to teaching, one in which the interactive process of communication received priority. Since its inception Communicative Language Teaching has passed through a number of different phases as its advocates have sought to apply its principles to different dimensions of the teaching process. (i) primary concern was the need to develop a syllabus that was compatible with the notion of communicative competence. (ii) Communicative Language Teaching focused on procedures for identifying learner's need. This resulted in proposals to make needs analysis an essential component of communicative methodology. (iii) Communicative Language Teaching focused on the kinds of classroom activities that could be used as the basis of a communicative methodology, such as group work, task-work, and information-gap activities.

Today, Communicative Language Teaching may be discerned in the huge range of course books and other teaching resources based on the principles of Communicative Language Teaching. In addition, it has influenced many other language teaching approaches and methods that subscribe to a similar philosophy of language teaching.

When a child is born in a community, it hears the language spoken by that community. First, it gets the language experience from its mother, other members of the family, neighbors and so on. So it can be rightly said that language starts with the ear. When the child has been exposed to speech for sufficiently long time, it tries to imitate the speech sounds that it has been listening to for a considerable time. Thus the most important and natural language skills are listening and speech. These two skills are inter-related. A child that is incapable of listening to spoken language is not able to speak. In other words, a child born deaf will be dumb. This confirms the fact that practice in listening is essential for the development of proficiency in speech.

Each language has its own system of writing exactly in the way they are pronounced. For example, most of the Indian languages like Tamil, Malayalam, Hindi, etc., belong to this group. But in the case of English there is lack of consistent relation between

sound and spelling. The spelling of English words has undergone very little change since the Fifteenth century whereas their pronunciation has undergone changes. This makes writing of English words more difficult than the words of many other languages. Training and practice are necessary to develop this language skill in the learners.

The visual representations of ideas are converted to sounds when a person looks at them and reads aloud. Reading, thus, is the decoding of the visual representation of experience. Reading is of two types-silent reading and loud reading. Both these form of reading make the reader share the experience of the writer. In other words, when a person reads, he gets the message which the writer has represented using marks on the surface of something on which it is written. Both writing and reading are not natural process. So training and practice are essential to be a writer and a reader.

A native speaker can listen and speak his language without any formal teaching. But writing and reading require formal instruction. In the case of a foreign language or a second language, the learners are not exposed to the language. So they are deprived of a chance to hear and listen. Hence some arrangement is to be made to make them listen to the language. Otherwise, it may not be possible for the learners to speak the language. This shows that teaching is essential for all the four language skills, as far as the second language teaching is concerned.

When two or more groups using different languages come into contact with each other for various reasons and purposes, there is the need for the one to learn the language of the other so that they communicate with each other. In the distant past there was neither written text nor grammar, and so people learnt the language of the other group exactly like they learnt their mother tongue. Thus the ancient Romans taught their children Greek before they were sent to schools by the direct and living contact with that language. Greek slaves were employed for this purpose. The Roman children learnt Roman and Greek simultaneously. When they came to school bilingual manual was used to teach them Greek. No formal Grammar was taught.

The Roman tradition continued till the middle ages when Latin became the language of culture and good education. Renaissance in Europe made it necessary to learn foreign languages. The aim of teaching foreign languages during this period was to enable the learner to acquire accuracy of expression to meet the demands of trade, commerce and social relationships. Richards and Roger point out: that traditional procedures are not rejected but are interpreted and extended. Dialogues, group discussions, simulation role play and similar other techniques are common in a communicate method, and they are not

new.

For the teacher, the knowledge of language varieties is essential since the learners speak different varieties in the class room. In the days when the method of teaching a language was largely grammar translation and learners were exposed chiefly to written language, perhaps it was not necessary to acknowledge the varieties that exist. But with the adoption of communicative approaches to language teaching, the learners are required to speak and interact more frequently in the class room, and they would do so mostly in the variety.

In earlier times, this may have been frowned upon, but judging a learner's speech during communicative activity is contrary to the principles of the new methodology. The attitude taken by the teacher to differences in language use will have to be more open and tolerant. Since learners come from different social, economic and regional backgrounds, they may be prone to producing errors which are due to the influence of their particular dialect. The teacher who knows this will be able to understand the difficulties of the learners in particular areas, say, some aspects of grammar and pronunciation and give more attention to such items so that the learner moves ahead in learning the language. It is in this light that grammars such as the communicative grammar of English can prove to be useful for teachers and learners. It is both pedagogically and democratically sound to adopt a tolerant attitude in the classroom since it will decrease the learner's anxiety and help learning.

When we think of the teaching of languages, first, we have to consider the nature of the language which we are to teach. A child in the modern society may have to learn one or more languages other than his mother tongue. The process of acquiring proficiency in the mother tongue and the other languages may not be the same. A child acquires proficiency in the mother tongue as a result of natural and random exposure to the language. It is termed as language acquisition, and the process by which a child acquires proficiency in a language through language teaching is called language learning. In the case of language learning the exposure is usually in the form of graded structures.

There is no uniform methodology as such. Different writers have suggested different procedures and techniques which they claim to be communicational. These techniques are mostly task – based in which the learners are involved in negotiating and sharing information. Byrne provides incomplete plans and diagrams which students have

to complete by asking for information. Wright places a screen between students and gets one to place objects in a certain pattern, this pattern is then communicated to students behind the screen. Geddes and Sturtidge developed “jig-saw” listening in which students listen to different taped materials and then communicate their content to others.

Communicative methodology proposes to equip the students with the competence that would enable them to communicate effectively in the target language. But there are many problems that one faces in this methodology. There actually exists no homogeneous view among communicative activists about the way a communicative syllabus can be interpreted in terms of classroom teaching. As a result, much idiosyncrasy is discerned at the level of classroom presentation of the language. Further, communicative language teaching demands a high level of competence both in the teacher and the students. In India, where such a competence is very low, confusion may be caused because neither the teacher nor students becomes easily familiar with the rules of use. Language use is culture specific and therefore, it is not always feasible to teach these things in an alien culture.

Students face another kind of problem. They are often asked to deal with the language without the help of a textbook, and virtually no formal teaching is done in the classroom. This often results in non standard classroom arrangements. Moreover, students bring to the class certain preconceptions about the mode of classroom teaching and, when they remain unrealized, they feel confused. Students in India look towards the teacher as an authority on all aspects of learning. They expect a certain amount of monitoring and control in the class room in order to feel secure in the examination. It is not at all practicable in our situation to leave students on their own. Some kind of control in ordering the classroom teaching, planned drills and exercises and monitoring students activities do not, hamper, in anyway easy acquisition of English language in India.

Communicative language teaching does not provide a consistent methodology that would form a guideline for teachers. The objection raised there remains valid for procedures that the approach envisages to realize its underlying principles. They were common in situational and oral methods of teaching, the initial enthusiasm that Wilkins and other British applied linguists generated through their works is fading fast because of heterogeneity in their views regarding techniques and procedures in communicative language Teaching.

In India, we have been following different methods at different levels of teaching. Upto the twelfth standard students are, until recently, supposed to take one General English paper that contained a passage for translation from and into English. In the North Region,

for example, in the Matriculation examination, students would be asked to translate a passage in Hindi into English. But lately, there has been a change in the system because of the change in government policy. With the publication of text books from the National council for Educational Research and Trainings (NCERT) modern Indian languages have been dispensed with and instead, English is taught through the Direct Method.

After the Plus Two stage i.e. the undergraduate level, the medium of instruction is invariable English, though the use of L1 is not ruled out. Whether we adopt a Grammar Translation method or a direct method, one thing has to be kept in mind. The method must enable students achieve competence in English, and it must be based on the needs of the students.

Ultimately, it is the overall performance of the students that we are concerned with. At the moment, it is only the achievement tests, given at the end of an academic session, that give us an idea of the areas of difficulty in our students. However, they are not enough. The teacher will have to obtain more information in order to decide whether a purely structuralist method will be needed or a structural functional method would be important for students. This information can be obtained by techniques that are available to the teacher.

According to the Modern Language Association, a language teacher should have seven qualifications, proficiency in the four language skills of Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing, ability to analyse the language, culture and professional preparation. This implies that a language teacher must know the language, its mechanism and the methods of teaching. In other words, a language teacher must know what to teach and how to teach. In this context, communicative method has an advantage over other methods of teaching English.

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Ringin in A New Dawn in Choma's Drum.

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Abstract

Published more than 60 years ago, "Chomana Dudi" is a classical work in modern Kannada literature which deals with the life of the untouchables and the problems they face. It brings out the realistic picture of a Dalit family facing extremely precarious conditions under the caste system. The effects of caste and class exploitation were so much so that the entire Dalit family got destroyed. Karanth's novel "Choma's Drum" signifies the cultural affiliation of Choma even at the time of adversity. In the novel, Choma plays his drum when he is happy or sad. It is quite significant that at the end of the novel, when he was dying he was seen playing the drum like a mad man. Thus the title of the novel speaks of itself.

The Indian novel emerged not merely as a pure literary exercise, but as an artistic response to the socio – political situation existing in the country. The struggle for independence in India was not merely a political one, but an all pervasive experience that became a part of the life of almost all the sensitive and enlightened Indians. Parallel to this struggle for political freedom was a social struggle – a fight against superstition, casteism, poverty, illiteracy and many other social evils that were eating into the vitals of Indian society. The socio – political movement that had caught the imagination of the entire nation also inspired the Indian novelists in English who rightly realized that novel too had a vital role to play in it.

Inspired by the exigencies of socio – political history of the country, the Indian novelists took upon themselves the responsibility of giving artistic articulation to the problems that beset the common people and their joys and sorrows, the crusade against the tyranny of poverty, illiteracy, suffering, superstition, sex and caste.

Dalit writing rests on the social inequality reflecting through racial and caste centric institutions. The term Dalit is generally believed to have derived from the Sanskrit root 'dal' which means burst, split, broken or torn asunder, downtrodden, scattered, crushed, destroyed. From these synonyms it is crystal clear that a section of people called Dalits has been torn asunder, crushed and destroyed. Eleanor Zelliot believes that "In the term and concept Dalit itself there is an inherent denial of dignity, a sense of pollution and an acceptance of the karma theory that justifies the caste hierarchy." (1992,3) Dr Ambedkar, in his book *Ostracized Bharat* writes: "Dalithood is a kind of life condition that characterises

the exploitation, suppression and marginalisation of Dalit people by the social, economic, cultural and political domination of the upper castes' Brahmanical ideology.” (April, 1927)

The sign of a Dalit is charged with memories of oppressive and discriminatory objectification. Both linguistically and ontologically it denotes the status of an object. It remains locked in the category of the derivatory 'other' and its aspiration does not amount to either subjecthood or free alterity. It can only be treated, therefore as a provisional sign. Rendered variously as the 'other', 'the downtrodden', 'the oppressed', 'the spurned', it remains inherently as a passive sign. It is against this objectification that the Dalit writers raise their voice

Karant, a highly respected writer in the Kannada language who belongs to a small village in the Western Ghats, writes about the predicament of the downtrodden, the marginalized in his works. The people - and their life - of this Ghat section form the background of all the novels of Karant. The life depicted in Karant's novels is mainly a very rural life, very far from the lives led in cities like Bangalore. The only connection to the outside world is the bus which comes to some of the villages, once in a while. Otherwise people are mostly unaffected and uninfluenced by what goes on in the rest of the world. Most of them earn their living directly off the land, some directly tilling it, some merely by the fact that they own lots of it. Whatever their caste, whichever the group they belong to, each and every caste and group has its own rules to follow, its own dharma, code of conduct which defines their life. Each person knows the role he has to play; each one knows his place in the society. The entire life is spent in making sure that this role is properly played, that the rules are strictly adhered to. This preoccupation with the role "rules" play in the life of simple folk, coats the characters of Karant with a sense of timelessness. But, it does not mean that the characters depicted by Karant have no ambitions, no fears, no pains, no pleasures. Instead, the people one meets in Karant's novels are very true to life, some magnanimous, human and kind; some very narrow-minded and scared of doing anything wrong, adhering very strictly to the rules laid down by their forefathers; some so poor that all they own is the rag they wear, some so filthy rich that they do not even know how rich, and so on. In other words, these are the people whom you would meet everywhere. Karant was able to penetrate into the vexing contemporary social problems of the poor and the downtrodden, their deprivation and exploitation and present them in the larger context of the human predicament.

Published more than 60 years ago, "Chomana Dudi" is a classical work in modern Kannada literature which deals with the life of the untouchables and the problems they face.

It brings out the realistic picture of a Dalit family facing extremely precarious conditions under the caste system. The effects of caste and class exploitation were so much so that the entire Dalit family got destroyed. The existential conditions of many Dalit families must have disturbed Karanth's consciousness. Karanth was also a cultural activist. Being an artist himself – he was a scholar and an exponent of Yakshagana – he wanted to preserve the cultural richness of the Dalits and the Adivasis. Therefore he titled his novel “Choma's Drum” signifying the cultural affiliation of Choma even at the time of adversity. In the novel, Choma plays his drum when he is happy or sad. It is quite significant that at the end of the novel, when he was dying he was seen playing the drum like a mad man. Thus the title of the novel speaks of itself.

The novel is a small narrative about Choma and his family. Choma belongs to Holey, an untouchable community. He is a widower with five children – four sons and a daughter. Choma is both father and mother to his children. From the very beginning of the novel itself we find Choma's world circumscribed. Karanth writes: 'There was nothing extraordinary either in Choma's drum or in his life. He had remained backward even among the Holeyas, the untouchables. His hut stood in solitary seclusion in the edge of the forest.’(Karanth, 12)

Choma had one burning ambition; to call himself a farmer, to farm a piece of land. There was only one hindrance in realising this ambition. So far, no one from his caste had ever been a farmer. But Choma still dreamt of the day when he would plough his land. That is why he had been looking after two calves for the past three years. Of course, he did not ever have money to buy cattle. These two calves got lost in the forest and he found them. Because nobody ever came to claim them, he just kept them. Now the calves had grown up and were ready to pull a plough.

Choma decided to go to his master Sankappayya and ask him for a little piece of land for rent. He had never talked about his wish to anybody, so far, not even to his children. Anyway, none of his children, except Belli, would say anything in answer. When Choma returned that afternoon, after finishing all the work, he found Sankappayya sitting, relaxing, in front of the house. Choma too sat down. Sankappayya threw a few beetle leaves and a piece of tobacco towards Choma. Sankappayya asked Choma about his oxen. Choma, finding it to be an opportune moment came out with his request: “Master, so many are tilling your land. If you had given a piece of land to this Choma, he would sing your name every day!” Sankappayya is wonder-struck. Untouchable, as a farmer! But Sankappayya had to ask his mother about giving Choma a piece of land to which she was dead against.

Sankappayya came out and said, "Choma, our forefathers never gave land to people of your caste. I cannot do that now." Choma heard Sankappayya's mother cursing from inside, "Look at these untouchables! They are becoming uncontrollable!" Choma slowly gets up and moves away, and goes to the toddy shop.

According to Habib, "the menial castes were deprived of any pretensions to setting up as tillers of land themselves, they could therefore, form a vast reservoir of landless labour with exceptionally depressed wages. This would, in turn, correspondingly enlarge the surplus that the ruling class could derive from the peasant." Beidelman argues that the caste system entails inequality in the distribution of power. He too considers land as the major factor around which the caste and village system operate. "Although castes are separated, dependence upon land unites castes about jajmans by means of this coerced dependence."

That night Choma felt miserable. By morning he had high fever. The manager of the coffee estate came and demanded his twenty rupees back which Choma had borrowed the year his wife died. Choma, who had decided to go with him to work on the estate, could hardly get up. It is about this time that his two sons, Chaniya and Guruva, who had gone to the forest looking for fodder, return. Choma decides to send his two sons to work in the estate. The work on the coffee estate was very difficult. To forget the misery, Chaniya and Guruva started visiting the toddy shop. Guruva also fell in love with Mary and eloped with her. Chaniya returns home alone. Choma was aghast - his beloved Guruva has married a Christian girl. Shortly after, Chaniya fell ill. As he was an untouchable he did not get any medical attention and soon succumbed to his illness.

The tragedy of Choma reaches its climax when he comes face to face with the terrible reality of being an untouchable at the time of his son Nila's death. When the boy drowned in the pond, the people around refused to help him because he was an untouchable. "Choma realized fully that the life of an untouchable is like a running sore." (ibid XVII)

His second son Guruva got converted and became a farmer. Choma now thinks that, when his own Gods have not come to his help what is wrong in believing in the Christian God. The helpless protest of his soul is heard when he ruminates: "Instead of being an untouchable, if he had belonged to any other caste his Nila would have been saved." He further thinks: "The caste of the untouchable is an unwanted caste even to God. Why does God bring men like him, this life? And why does he torment them?" (ibid XVII) The abject condition of Choma serves as a metaphor for suppression, debasement and servility which are an inescapable part of life.

However, Choma's decision to get converted is defeated by his belief in Panjuruli, the God of his ancestors. He decides to face whatever good or evil fate brings by staying in the traditional fold. But, when he sees his daughter's relationship with Marvel, his grief and despair reach the breaking point. In a heartrending gesture, Choma decides to cut himself from all ties; he throws Belli out of the hut, leaves the oxen back into the forest, and breaks the plough. The plough was once the symbol of his overwhelming aspiration in life and this hope of bettering his life are lost for ever and hence, he burns it. Out of agony, he shuts himself in his house as if to drive away all the evils of life, as if to keep himself aloof from the evils of society. The house symbolizes a world where there are no evils of society, a world where these evils cannot enter. He seizes the drum and beats it with such madness as never before. The oxen, the drum and the darkness – literal as well as metaphorical – with which the novel begins and ends, convey to the reader both Choma's doom and the inhumanity of the caste system. Choma dies beating the drum as if to make the world hear the agony of his cry. His death is also the death of the world. As the author suggests, it is like Lord Siva destroying the world through his Tandava dance: 'In a moment his mood changed. His life was nearing its end ... Never before had he played the drum like that, the sound was like that of Lord Siva's damaru on the day of the Last Deluge. Then it stopped, stopped abruptly.' The author is quite realistic in putting a note saying that orthodox caste rules strictly prevent the Dalits to better their lot. The root cause of Choma's poverty and doom is that he is an untouchable. Choma becomes a representative of a whole section of individuals who had become nonentities and whose potential had remained unrealized because they are inescapably trapped by the society.

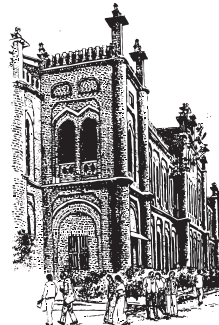
The last scene of Choma's life is a superb work of art which impresses upon us not as a acceptance of his tragic fate but as an act of turbulent defiance. Choma's end though appears as a failure is not really a failure, for, his frenzied drum beating which expresses his inner agony seems to be prophetic, ringing in a new dawn. The drum of Siva not only symbolizes destruction, but it also stands for the principle which makes way for new creation. This new creation is implicit in Choma beating the drum to death, a new world created where the oppressed will be treated on par with others with equal dignity and honour. The beating of the drum has been used as a poignant symbol of the rhythm of life as well as its final extinction.

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Wole Soyinka's *The Lion and the Jewel*: Mapping Postcolonial Differential Identities

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Abstract

*Set in the era of colonial-postcolonial transition, Wole Soyinka's *The Lion and the Jewel*, posits an exemplar for the making of a postcolonial identity. Lakunle, the representative voice of postcolonial citizen takes on the responsibility of representing the emergent postcolonial identity that envelope the discursive nature. Postcolonial identity, the ultimate result of the colonial process is put in juxtaposition with the traditional symbolized by Baroka and Sidi. The ambivalent, alienated and hybrid nature of Lakunle can be explicitly viewed in the manifold ways he advances to Sidi in love and through the supposed postcolonial modernity he forcefully symbolizes. Within his purview of reconfiguring indigeneity, Lakunle symbolically appends to the authoritarian version of modernity soaked in colonial power. The dilemma postcolonial identity goes through and the eventual alienation and rejection it obtains presents to us the gesture of the creation of a postcolonial self in relation to the other. This hybrid, complex and ambivalent patterns of construction of postcolonial identity require interrogation focusing on the transition, transformation and vacillations the postcolonial self undergoes. This paper is an attempt to interrogate varied aspects of postcolonial identity as portrayed by Wole Soyinka in *The Lion and the Jewel*.*

Key words: postcolonial, identity, hybridity, modernity, tradition

The Lion and the Jewel depicts the story of a village school teacher, Lakunle, who courts the most beautiful woman, Sidi, in the village of Ilunjinle. Representing the mimic of the West, Lakunle is the key to the interrogation of postcolonial identity. The presentation of Lakunle by Soyinka as one who mirrors an emblematic of the colonial/postcolonial changeover allows us to examine the making of the discursive nation of the postcolonial identity. The structural schema which is at play is embedded in the characters that contribute to the decolonial process in Africa. The interlink between the imperial structure and the traditional African society is subtly varied between the consumption and rejection of modernity. Moreover, it is not easy to sever the structural influences on the identity of the postcolonial. Postcolonial as a process has enveloped the characters that contribute to the making of a “modern” Africa. Lakunle is one instance of how viciously imperial structure

can evoke a split identity ragged between tradition and modernity. Postcolonial interrogative notion of identity argues for a “reaction against determinisms, it presents free-floating events; refusing to fix identity in structural categories, it essentializes identity through difference; resisting the location of power in structures or institutions, it diffuses it throughout society and ultimately dissolves it” (Coronil 99-100). Soyinka's contribution to the postcolonial assumes a reactionary position which eventually interrogates determinism as that which subdues the innate eminence of the *other* generated through a fastening of identities. The resistance offered by the (African) tradition is an untailed process that fabricates identity that disseminates through the society the reflection of the imperial essentializing hand offering prospects to interrogate the making of the postcolonial identity.

Tradition and Modernity: Identities in Conflict

The part played by traditional culture in contemporary Africa is significant to the understanding of postcolonial African identity. Soyinka, though engrossed in Western education, envelopes his plays with the spirit of Africanness by integrating episodes, themes and thoughts that are true to Yoruba community within African dramatic practices. Colonization entails conflict between cultures. In *The Lion and the Jewel*, language differentiates between the development brought in by colonial forces and the native's belief that tradition is backward. “Baroka, and Sidi through her decision, ultimately express and allegiance to precolonial ways and values, a message that is echoed in the use of indigenous methods of communicating identity” (Weiskopf-Ball 7). English colonial language carries the key to European epistemology/knowledge through an effectual manner in which power was perpetrated through governance. Under the disguise of imperial responsibility to inform the coarse subjects, language plays an important role in shaping the identity of the natives for their own 'good.' The colonizer impresses the language, thoughts and the world view upon the natives. Soyinka marks the postcolonial differentiation through peculiarity between the cultural shift that is occurring in the city and the much valued traditional systems in the country. Soyinka brings in the cultural identity-distinction through the language he employs: the modern language of the colonized being consciously imbibed in the colonized city and the metaphoric and the simple language which is inherent in the natives lock horns. Lakunle is “dressed in an old-style English suit.... His tie is done in a very small knot, disappearing beneath a shiny black waistcoat. He wears twenty-three-inch bottom trousers, and blanco-white tennis shoes” (p. 3). The village leader, Baroka, is first seen “in bed, naked except for baggy trousers, calf-length” (p. 25) and Sidi, a young woman, enters “[balancing] the pail on her head with accustomed ease. Around her is

wrapped the familiar broad cloth which is folded just above her breasts, leaving her shoulders bare” (p. 3). Soyinka's graphic description of the central characters involves postcolonial cultural and identity adherences contributing to the postcolonial differentiations.

The Lion and the Jewel blends the pleasant and factual flavor of African rural life in the colonial context of development which envisages the transformation of the psyche in the era of decolonization. The sense of growth and development endures an essential transition and transformation. The contention between the African and Western traditions and culture was significant to the induction of the postcolonial era. In *The Lion and the Jewel*, Soyinka interrogates “the overzealous embracing of Western values by Africans aids in the process of creating the sort of cultural *symbolic arbitrary* which postcolonial Africa needs for its productive and distinctive development” (Msiska 46). The “symbolic arbitrary” creates the blend between the colonial suppositions and the postcolonial interrogations allowing a creative plinth for transition. However, the play seems to have taken a caliginous view of mimicry and “instrumentalist hybridity” as approaches of postcolonial progress. While presenting the consequences of the postcolonial cultural mimicry, “the complete evacuation of tradition and a grotesque capitulation to the powers of Western modernity,” (Msiska 46) Soyinka offers a reduction that clears off the decolonial process that indulges the natives with a transformatory note. Referring to the mythical and archetypal elements that veil behind the existential aspects of African rural life, Soyinka presents within a web of discourses, the intersubjective nature of identity that contests and lays bare the transgressive binarial oppositions presented by coloniality.

Lakunle's arbitrary and inconsiderate modernity is presented as a foil to the “strategic inhabitation of modernity” symbolized in the traditional leader Baroka. Eldred Jones calls Lakunle 'the half-baked Westernized African’ (24). Lakunle “proposes a superficial, naïve, and pretentious view of progress, modernity and Westernization as a counter to what they consider the unmodern backwardness of African village life” (Jeyifo 106). Moreover, “Lakunle represents not western culture but only hollow Westernization, not real but only the image” (Ramachandran 201). Within the imperial efforts to Westernize Africa and the resistance to modernity is the making and unmaking of Lakunle's identity engraved. The emptiness Westernization has created in Lakunle alters the *self* of the native into the *other* that embarks a journey of futility. Throughout this journey Lakunle loses his identity as a male, African and modern and thus evoking splintered identities that posit the fluidity that

is imposed by the imperial upon the colonized. Baroka's position is creditable because it assumes a curative role to the surfeit of Lakunle. However, Baroka lacks the self-sacrificing commitment that is essential to the strengthening of the tradition. His "occupation of the inbetween space is in the service of a narrow ideology of individualism rather than a broader one of communal regeneration. In this manner, the Baroka's instrumentalist hybridity is revealed as an illusory resolution of the conflict between tradition and modernity" (Misiska 46).

The cultural conflict depicted in the *Lion and the Jewel* also presents a critique on the masculine subjectivity as fabricated by two different cultural formations. Soyinka directs a satirical intent towards the modern masochistic and the distorted traditional manhood. In their attempt to win over the village beauty Sidi, the village school master uses his westernized masculinity by pledging to introduce her to the western culture. However, "his knowledge of this culture is based on a literal, confused and even uncritical adoption of ideas he has merely picked up from his indiscriminating reading of anything Western" (Misiska 47). In front of the Western modernity, Lakunle's mind assumes an emptiness that borrows every supposition uncritically:

LAKUNLE: The scientists have proved it. It's in my books.
 Women have a smaller brain than men
 That's why they are called the weaker sex.

SIDI: [throws him off.]
 The weaker sex, is it?
 Is it a weaker breed who pounds the yam
 Or bends all day to plant the millet
 With a child strapped to her back?

LAKUNLE: But don't you worry.
 In a year or two You will have machines which will do
 Your pounding, which will grind your pepper
 Without it getting in your eyes. (4,5)

Lakunle's conception of womanhood is at once conformist and progressive. In Lakunle one finds "the construction of a "self" that is mimetically unrepresentable precisely because its representation, or rather its representability, is beyond the horizon of presently available or formalized linguistic, artistic, generic and ideological frames" (Jeyifo 16).

However, his standpoint as viewed from the postcolonial “enables a critical interrogation of colonization” (Kasule 20) and the impact on his thought and behaviour. He displays nineteenth century rational and scientific world view which associates intelligence with brain. However, his views transpire from an unreflective reading of the literature which blinds him from underscoring colonial views that the natives are inferior and shows us his ineffectiveness in forming a radical ideological standpoint from the reading he undertakes. His views “demonstrates the way in which the reduction of oppression to a single discursive location can itself lead to the production and support of other forms of inequality” (Misiska 47). Lakunle's seeming repulsion to the tradition of the natives and his affinity to the impending modernity leaves him midway between the decolonial process which has impacted lopsidedly on the African tradition. Therefore, the discursive location is the point through which the natives have built in a conversation characterizing hybridity only contributing towards the inequality of the society.

“Soyinka is skeptical about attributing an essential efficacy to technology that posits it as beyond the meditation of human interest” (Misiska 47). The ill impact machinery might have upon the African society is envisaged by Soyinka through the redundant exhortation Lakunle harps upon. Lakunle's view on machinery explains the superficiality of colonial authority. His language reflects the authoritarianism and ambivalence of colonialism, its incapacity to simulate productively itself within the “colonized subjectivity.” The impact scientific world view in Lakunle has also generated certain ambivalence in his identity as he uncritically authorize the import of machinery. Lakunle has assimilated the dualistic notion that hangs between civilization and barbarism that underlines the colonial formation. “She does not want to come out of the conventional ideologies. She does not know that she is marginalizing herself for the ideologies of the society (Naveen 46). When Sidi asks him to pay bride price to marry her, he says:

A savage custom, barbaric, out-dated,
Rejected, denounced, accursed,
Excommunicated, archaic, degrading,
Humiliating, unspeakable, redundant
Retrogressive, remarkable, unpalatable. (7)

In his deprecation of his culture, he “suffers from externally induced fantasies of redemptive transformation in the image of alien masters” (Soyinka xii). The fondness with which Lakunle imagines of cutting down trees to make parks apposite for romance is

reflective of a social imaginary that disables the reality, denial of *self* and “distorted valorization of alterity.” In Baroka one finds the symbol of insurmountable masculinity, Sidi tells Lakunle:

Out of my way, book-nourished shrimp.
 Do you see what strength he has given me?
 That was not bad. For a man of sixty,
 It was the secret of God's own draught
 A deed for drums and ballads.
 But you, at sixty, you'll be ten years dead!
 In fact, you'll not survive your honeymoon . . . (63,64)

On the one hand we see Lakunle's supposed intelligentsia and on the other we see traditional physical prowess and “privileging of sexuality” of Baroka, both come from two different discursive locations. Lakunle sees Baroka as a “voluptuous beast” and one who “loves this life too much” is a reminder of Baroka's “cultural conservationist project” which he uses to entice Sidi. He is a paradigm for positive hybridity:

I do not hate progress, only its nature
 Which makes all roofs and faces look the same.
 And the wish of one old man is
 That here and there, (52)

Lakunle could not impress her when he says: “Sidi, I seek a friend in need. An equal partner in my race of life” (8). The ambivalence of postcolonial modernity gets defeated at the feat of naive tradition.

The Postcolonial *self* in the Making

The Lion and the Jewel challenges the idea of *self* in relation to the *other* at the wake of postcolonial era. The *self* in relation to the *other* is the postcolonial identity in making. The affirmation of the *self* and the *other* that divides between the ambivalence of the postcolonial unconscious and the uncanny tradition manifests through the lead characters of the play. Lakunle, Baroka and Sidi are representatives of a period of ambivalence and transition which decides the future of Africa. The clarion call levied upon the African society by Soyinka is a narration of the process through which identities are ear marked through enforced situations of imperialism.

The making of the *self* in the postcolonial era is an ambivalent process that involves

conditions, temporal and spatial, inevitably linked to the colonial process and its implications on the minds of Africans. The restoration of the 'traditional' in relation to the pretentious existentialist modernity illuminates the fantasy of power and sexuality that is restored through the marginal presence of 'I'. Lakunle and Baroka are symbols of power and sexuality that are perpetrated through the imbibed postcolonial differential identity. While tradition and modernity are at war with each other, the postcolonial differential identity in the making undergoes tremendous changes that create fissures through the fixing of world views. The truth-value transformations and displacements that are anticipated in the colonial dislocation affects the tarnishing of cultural identities that are fragmented and reflected in “the stereotype of the native fixed at the shifting boundaries between barbarism and civility; the insatiable fear and the desires...” (Bhabha 41). In Lakunle, Baroka and Sidi, one might overtly observe the budging of boundaries transcending between the temporal and spatial, local and global, tradition and modernity.

The inaccessibility to an inclusive colonial world view and the inability to sever from the tradition put their identities in a conscious renewal that vacillates between fixity and fluidity. Therefore, the making of the postcolonial identity should be viewed as formed in-between these gaps that intercuts the articulation of the postcolonial *self*. One might also bring in the interrogation of whether colonialism preserves/perpetrates the ideological stereotypes that we observe in Lakunle and whether Soyinka argues for a reassurance of the traditional. The ideological stereotypes of power and sexuality transfer the postcolonial differential identity into a searching collective that is accepted without resistance. Lakunle's acceptance and propagation of modernity that creates an aversion in the mind of Sidi is a symbolic of reassurance of the traditional. Moreover, Sidi preferring Baroka over Lakunle comes as a blow to the supposed revolutionizing exhortations rendered by Lakunle that had but a little effect. Though the play does not directly deal with the colonial depersonalization language of colonizer- colonized binary, it lays bare the postcolonial ontological implications, dilemma, and imbalance that is creative and artistic. It is within through these inferences Soyinka attempts to build the apprehensions of the postcolonial *self* that undergoes a period of transition and transformation.

Mapping Postcolonial Differential Identities

The challenges presented by Soyinka are not directed explicitly to the imperialist history but, as Bhabha suggests, towards the postcolonial “state of emergence” that “challenges its historicist idea of time as a progressive, ordered whole” (41). 'Time as a

progressive ordered whole' emerges in the portrayal of characters that are true to the tradition and history that evolves through interweaving of power and sexuality. This state of emergence, as the play portrays, challenges the estrangement of the "Enlightenment idea of 'Man'" and the existential intelligibility of the authoritarian epistemology that is handed over to the postcolonial. The postcolonial existential and epistemological undergoes remarkable changes that to enclose modernity within tradition. However, the authoritarian manner through which the postcolonial differential identity is conversed through the Soyinka's characters replicates the existential impact and ineffectual movements that consolidate within the postcolonial *self*. Thus, the postcolonial ostentatious educated male/masculist identity in Lakunle undergoes a complete alienation in front of Sidi and Baroka. It emerges, on the one hand, as the "evocation of freedom" and, on the other, assertion of an emergent postcolonial differential identity/ idea of the *self*. Moreover, "Soyinka's artistic assertiveness and aggressiveness toward individual freedom and amelioration of individual status quo apparently reek of what purists may call Marxist or Communistic, he seems to fit more snugly into what one may call "a free thinker" (Iji. 20).

The process of free thinking is dialectically presented in *The Lion and the Jewel*. The intention to present a free mind and a colonially preoccupied mind by Soyinka though would present a Marxist progressive outlook satirizes the developmental modernity that is embodied by the natives. The developmental modernity imbibed by Lakunle is not the inherent nature of the native but a representative of the postcolonial differential identity. Bhabha opines that "from within the metaphor of vision complicit with a Western metaphysic of Man emerges the displacement of the colonial relation" (42). It is within the displacement that Lakunle's making of the *self* is trapped inevitably linking the past into the present and envisaging a renewed future. This colonial relation that is reflective and operative in the postcolonial identity is at once "dismembered and dislocated." Lakunle's identity undergoes a thorough dissection in front of Sidi and Baroka, each of his supposed modern notions not only faces severe cross-examination but also fails to win the heart of the village beauty, an example of how existential moments that is located closer to colonial relations experience lamentable ontological implications. As in the case of Lakunle, "the social virtues of historical rationality, cultural cohesion, the autonomy of individual consciousness assume an immediate, Utopian identity with the subjects on whom they confer civil status" (Bhabha 43). The rationality assumed by Lakunle imposes certain culturally renewed sense of existential contexts that is rejected by the tradition. Therefore,

the Utopian identity that is proposed by the colonial modernity fissures the identity of the natives. The intention to culturally civilize Sidi with Lakunle's modern ideas undergoes only an alienation of his own identity where the “otherness of the Self inscribed in the perverse palimpsest of colonial identity” (Bhabha 44). Moreover, the consign of identification is wedged in the apprehension of stipulate and desire. The possible shadow that emerges through the ambivalence of identification between the historic condition and the existential implications provides nothing but a “paranoid fantasy of boundless possession” (Bhabha 44) and exchange of a hypocritical image of being. The uncertainty that surrounds Lakunle's postcolonial identity calls for a self-reflection in the reflective nature where culture and the *self* enter into a constant negotiation with the *other*.

In conclusion, the postcolonial plenitude of vision that is presented by the colonial *self* disrupts the establishment of the cultural other that easily influences the postcolonial self. The differentials that are confronted by the postcolonial existential propositional space of representations present to us the objective vision of the colonial *self* that disrupts the ego and the identity. Therefore, the question of postcolonial differential identity is never the affirmation of a pre-given identity, never a *self*-fulfilling prophecy – as Bhabha notes, it is always the production of an image of identity and the transformation of the subject in assuming that image (45). Soyinka's attempt to fabricate the splintered postcolonial identities into an artistic whole is an instance of how the influence of imperial power permeates to engrave differentials in the postcolonial identities which in the making.

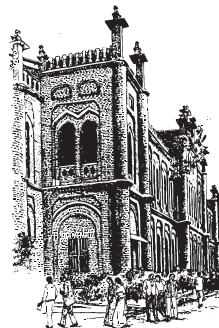
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Study in the Civilizational Interaction between East and West in Ruth Jhabvala's *Heat and Dust*

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Abstract

Though Ruth Jhabvala has presented the Indian scenario in an accurate light, she is a writer who has undergone heavy criticism. Polish by birth, she could not be an Indian writer writing in English; she evaded popular themes of spirituality or realism in preference to social themes; and that she was twiddling with a sensibility unknown to her. She was viewed as a displaced writer, hence a writer in permanent exile. Jhabvala refers to herself as an 'unhoused' writer and uses two strong metaphors to define herself, as a 'cuckoo' without a nest and as a 'chameleon who is always camouflaging in order to recognize the real nature of it'.

*This article studies **Heat and Dust** as a novel oscillating between two different generations, one of the past, and one of the present, and as a story of East-West encounter where the east becomes the base for destruction. The pungent erotic East has a way of trapping the Englishwomen in its love web. It also examines the twin themes of sexuality and colonialism and its values, with the change from old moral values to new ones, focusing on the high volt passion in the desert area of Satipur; the sublimation of passion due to circumstances and mistakes; the game of hide and seek between lovers, whether homosexual or heterosexual; the eunuch as comic relief.*

Visitors who came to India were fascinated by the East and its pungent aura which dominated their fantasy. The life and the beliefs of her people were always mysteries, and the colossal plains, majestic mountains and the noise of her cities wooed the outsiders. Simultaneously, many people showed their uneasiness with its legitimate social system-the purdah, polygamy, child marriage and erotic art. The sensuality of India, thus unnerved many Westerners. There was a kind of negative resentment towards the dark skinned Indian and this could have been the outcome of not being able to reflect the Indian society along with theirs. It was difficult to stretch out their imagination in order to understand her. This could have been the reason as to why Ruth Jhabvala wrote on the East-West encounter. She has managed to bring forth the situations accordingly. Her interest to portray the East along with the West could have been because she herself belonged to the West and was seen as an "outsider-insider" meaning someone who was not of Indian origin but had stayed enough to write on her realistically. Though the British had left they had left behind some segments for

the Indian to latch upon. The East and the West were constantly in touch with each other be it through education or new technological developments but to bridge the gap was difficult. The mental set up of both was very different. However much the East aped the west something's just did not change in the East.

The novel *Heat and Dust* oscillates between two periods involving two women one being Olivia Rivers and other being the Narrator who were bewitched by Indian spirituality, sensuality and male sexuality. Harinder K. Sohi (1986, 3) says: “*Heat and Dust* is an attempt par excellence to study the predicament of a European woman who, alienated from her own culture, strives to build a relationship with the unknown world of Indian reality.” Any form of mental and physical intimacy with the East was looked upon with distaste and they were wary to explore the dark and sexual dimensions of the Indian natives. The East took advantage of this mental make-up and justified themselves by getting involved in intimate relationships with the English. Mrs. Olivia Rivers tarnished the individual identity by getting exploited by a fading bankrupt dynamic Nawab in whose pursuit she becomes the fallen Eve in the rigid Christian English moralistic society. She had broken the code of marriage by getting into an extra-marital affair with the enemy and causing disturbances among her own clan.

Man by birth is not immoral, but is conditioned into being one by social conditions such as unemployment, poverty, inequality of human rights. The restrictive rules of the dos and don'ts laid by society sometimes can make a person trespass into temptation. In the novel we see how Olivia and others get wooed into the Indian gyre without even realizing the outcome of their doings.

The novel has been given a cinematographic approach, where extensive use of flashbacks has been utilized between the period of 1920's and 1970's. The novel brings forth the supremacy of one culture over the other through the aspect of love, where Olivia's personal attachments with the Nawab bring out the concept of happiness. Balance and yearning does not necessarily depend on ones color or culture. It is a novel where the higher plains of spirituality can be acquired by the route of sexual passion. In the case of the Englishman Chid who came to India to find spiritual bliss and found physical love instead. The reaction to Olivia's affair with the dark handsome Indian prince is viewed differently. The young narrator recalls her grandmother Tessie's and Great Aunt Beth's reaction.

They were cheerful women with a sensible and modern outlook on life: but nevertheless, so my parents told me, for years they could not be induced to talk about Olivia. They shied away from her memory as from

something dark and terrible (12).

For them Olivia had offended the English by committing adultery with an Indian prince whose supremacy the British were trying to dissolve. She had broken one of the Ten Commandments and got dishonor to her husband and the ruling Raj. With passage of time the old English women accepted this romance. For them the world of the royalties was a kind of fantasy behind the purdah. The men were not conscious of their wrong doings—having mistresses illegitimate children was part of their lifestyle. Major Minnies warns the English never to get entangled with the Indian magnetism as it would trap them into a lifelong snare. To survive in India: “And through it all I've learned this one thing: you can't live in India without Jesus Christ” (5). And if a man lived independently then: “They look like souls in hell” (6).

The English needed the support of God to protect them from the dark forces of the East. Like Mrs. Saunders, who kept hallucinating about the sexual fantasies of her Indian servants:

It is not good to let them see you in bed—the servants, she explained lowering her voice, and with a look towards the door. I want to be in bed. It's where I ought to be. But you do not know what goes on in their heads (119).

She goes a bit further by saying spices and hot chilies were assumed to make the Indian male highly sexual hence putting them into the mode of seduction. It is known that food has been the fuel of love and certain menus are traditionally more potent than others. The secret ingredients of satisfying love-life are finding the correct food to fuel one's burning passion. A relaxed intimacy with the East is what the British feared. They believed that an intimacy of any kind could not survive between the two races, in the case of Olivia who became pregnant by the Nawab had to have an abortion and leave for the mountains. The English society banished her from their minds. Women who fall from sexual purity fall completely and become irresponsible, deceitful, insensitive, unfeminine and promiscuous as in the case of Olivia. Dr. Saunders condemns her by saying that there was something rotten about her. He did not give her a chance to defend herself—the East had done its damage.

Douglas Rivers was aware of the constant visits of the Nawab to his house and Olivia to the palace. He did nothing to stop her and later abandons her for her relationship. Olivia reasons for going astray were the boring companies of two English families the Crawford's and the Saunders. She calls the Englishwomen old hens. Douglas bored her with his routine

life and the “prim” “straight nose” “high forehead” the noble fair Douglas started to become a non-entity to her. The discomfort of the English is got forth with the monotony of life, the heat of the plains, diseases that they had to confront. This was the life that even Ruth Jhabvala faced with her stay in India. What could Olivia have done in such times of frustration? She could not battle against the powerful grip of Eros, however hard she tried.

The Nawab and Olivia were just not friends but lovers too and the British in Satipur and the Indians in Khatm did not want this relation to continue. Inder Lal who belonged to contemporary India was not interested to engage himself in conversation on this scandal. To him they were people dead and gone and no one in modern India would be interested to dig into their past. He lived in secular India where inter-racial marriage was getting accepted. Things had changed with the British leaving India and the trial and error change of acceptance did take its own time to mature. We lacked complete social freedom even if we had attained political freedom. The social communication with the British had, led to a struggle in performance of the distinctive Indian who wallowed between the emotion of isolation and understanding. The west had sympathy for its civilizations, for the terrestrial, its splendor, its intricacies, its faith, its societies, and its sensitivity and at the same time the west felt the hostility from the severe climate, the dirt, the exploitation, and beliefs.

The parallel to Olivia is the granddaughter the narrator who visits contemporary India with Olivia diaries and letters in search of her romantic past. The narrator's life goes hand in hand with Olivia's but both have different personalities. The narrator lacked the docile domestic expertise, the feminine tenderness, gentleness and womanliness like Olivia. She arrived in India after independence as a traveler and had the freedom to live and adapt to the Indian lifestyle. The narrator visits Baba Firadus's shrine twice with Inder Lal as Olivia did with the Nawab. Both the wives of the Indian men are psychologically unfit. The narrator tries to find a modern solution to Ritu's illness while the Nawab maji prefers to take her daughter-in-law for a pilgrimage. The narrator is open about her intimacy with Inder Lal her house landlord who she calls as her dark lover: “He makes a pretense of going to sleep downstairs but when it is dark he comes creeping up. I'm sure everyone knows. But it doesn't matter. They don't mind” (140).

This modern outlook of the Indians in the early seventies is surprising. Maybe the English narrator's pre-marital affairs are overlooked by the neighbors, but Inder Lal's extra-marital liaison would have been scandalous in the Indian society or had Inder Lal been a woman the reactions of the neighbors would have been severe. Manu (1991, 200) would

have said “A woman who is unfaithful to her husband is an object of reproach in this world (then) she is reborn in the womb of a jackal and is tormented by the disease (born) of (her) evil.” Whatever it be the law of marriage holds man and wife till the end of their lives. For the narrator who was a Christian maintaining her virginity was an initiation of the divine model that is the Virgin Mary and a chaste person according to St Luke was equal to the angels. Olivia and the narrator had gone against the church by indirectly trying to obtain illegitimate offspring's outside their respective relationships.

Ruth Jhabvala also openly brings forth the deviant desires of the Nawab towards the Englishman Harry. Harry is fascinated by what he fears, that is the Nawab's manliness and somewhere also feels secure. Harry is very outspoken about his feeling for the Nawab than the Nawab. Nowhere has Jhabvala shown any kind of social discrimination or repression towards the Nawab and Harry. She has not been very explicit in portraying her homosexual sensibility nor has she totally isolated it as she refers to their relations as puzzling (homosexual tinge).cThe homosexual Harry characterizes a living example of all the likelihoods of Englishness that the British in India would rather reject existed.

Harry's background is in the dark. We just know that he has a mother in England who he longs to go back to. He arrived in India with the Nawab and labeled as his English friend and companion. The unnatural desires are folded up as perverse disorders in clean English society. Any active expression between two males was an indictable offence. In due course Harry finds himself another lover Freddie who moves with him when his mother dies.

Another form of sexual difference presented in *Heat and Dust* is that of the neuter gender/thirdsex hijras. The social attitude towards the eunuchs in India is a very negative one. Indian films have always used them to bring forth comic relief or just as a form of entertainment. In the novel the narrator had been called a hijra for being flat chested and not having feminine qualities. She wore men's sandals, had a man's physique. The narrator had read about the hijras in Olivia's letters.

There is one word that is often called after me: hijra. Unfortunately I know what it means. I knew before I came to India, from a letter of Olivia's. She had learned it from the Nawab who had told her that Mrs. Crawford looked like a hijra (great aunt Beth was, like me, tall and flat chested). The way they danced was also in parody of a woman's gestures, and I suppose that was what amused people so much (10).

The Nawab was comfortable to show the hijras to Olivia since he could not answer her

question about them. He showed it to her in the form of entertainment. In the case of Inder Lal he was shy and could not imagine the narrator's reactions to such abnormalities not realizing that the narrator was familiar with the word eunuch than hijra. He also wanted her to be protected from being called a hijra in a crowd though the narrator had got used to be called one by the boys.

I have also seen them sing and dance, It was when I was walking back with Inder Lal from seeing his office. We were quite near home when I heard a noise of drums from a side-street. Inder Lal said it was nothing worth looking at—"a very common thing," he said—but I was curious so he reluctantly accompanied me. [...] Here there was the troupe of hijras-eunuchs doing their turn. One played a drum, others sang and clapped their hands and made dancing motions. There was a cluster of spectators enjoying the performance. The hijras were built like men with big hands and flat chests and long jaws, but they were dressed as women in saris and tinsel jewelry. The way they danced was also in parody of a woman's gestures, and I suppose that was what amused people so much (p.10).

The eunuch has been portrayed as dangerous, and due to this the understanding between the normal being and a eunuch is on complete restrictive grounds. The need for the neutral sex to entertain themselves in public is to earn their living because society does not give them a job. It has been noted that during the Mughal era the eunuchs were constituted. The kings had eunuchs guarding their harems in order to prevent their wives from indulging in clandestine sex. Man enjoys vulgarity at the expense of the deformed like the Nawab and unlike Inder Lal who feels disgusted. Dr. B. V. Subrahmanyam (1991, 7) looks at them:

Terming the eunuchs as social parasite and health hazard, Dr. Subrahmanyam castigated the society for fostering superstitious lending eunuchs a mystical, divine aura. Some of them spread the belief that nemesis would befall parents who refused to propitiate Bahucharajic mata (neutral goddess) when the eunuchs choir visited the house of a new born.

Indian myths, superstitions made the west to distance them as their Christian world was too small to accept the diversity of a large culture like India. A social problem like sati was something very difficult for the west to come to terms with though in a hot discussion

among the English society everyone felt it was a barbaric act. Olivia and Dr. Saunders accepted it as part of the Indian culture and Olivia further goes on to say the English who were mere invaders had no right to interfere in matters which were not concerned with them. They had come to rule and not to change the value system. Olivia had been smitten by the Indian bug and could not see reason in this barbaric savagery.

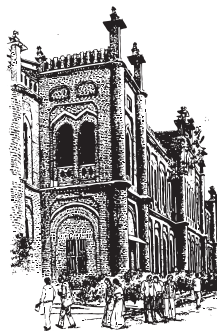
Laurie Sucher (1989:111) remarks

... though her compatriots as politely as possible let it be known that they think her a fool, the novel does not condemn her for this sentiment just as it does not unambiguously fault her for falling in love with the Nawab. Part of her regard for him is a by-product of her rejection of the British position as colonialists.

The novel themes the inter-racial union of sexual passion between characters such as Nawab/Olivia, Narrator/Inder Lal, Nawab/Harry, Maji/narrator. The patriarchal system of Indian marriages, the power behind the purdah, the elevated status of the male, and the political, social conflict between the diminishing princely states play an important role in the East and West encounter. The conflict between the two will remain however close they try to come together on the political or social plane.

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The Circulation of Invincible Social Energy as depicted in Ondaatje's *Anil's Ghost*

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Abstract

This paper analyses Ondaatje's Anil's Ghost in the light of Stephen Greenblatt's social energy. My interest in New Historicism has paved way for a better understanding of Greenblatt's Social Energy. The current relevance of the Eelam issue helps to unearth certain facts regarding the whole political, racial issue. Ondaatje's presentation of the social energy in Sri Lanka is in line with, and at times, in contrast to the original scenario in Sri Lanka. The paper deals with what is social energy and how to trace such an element in Ondaatje's text with the help of other relevant non-literary texts in order to arrive at the unbiased conclusion.

History and Literature are two different dimensions of a particular culture. While history manifests events as it is viewed by the individual sans imagination, literature makes its record in dynamic perspectives with an application of imagination. New Historicism attempts to study authors in context, and consider the text as the product of the time in which they lived. New Historicists acclaim that literature is not autonomous but one of the number of cultural texts. Catherine Gallagher explains New Historicism as “reading literary and non-literary texts as constituents of historical discourses that are both inside and outside of texts” (37). The celebrated New Historicist Stephen Greenblatt propounds that while establishing relations between different discursive practices, New Historicists attempt “to develop terms to describe the ways in which material---- here official documents, private papers, newspaper clippings, and so forth---- is transferred from one discursive sphere to another and becomes aesthetic property” (Forms of Power 3). Therefore, the significance of a literary text resides in its intertextual relations with extra-literary materials. Literary and non-literary texts operate inseparably circulating “social energy” (Greenblatt, Circulation 6). Social energy, for Greenblatt, is “manifested in the capacity of certain verbal, aural, and visual traces to produce, shape, and organize collective physical and mental experiences. Hence, it is associated with repeatable forms of pleasure and interest, with the capacity to arouse disquiet, pain, fear, the beating of the heart, pity, laughter, tension, relief, wonder” (Circulation 6). Since the aesthetic forms of social energy have minimal range, New Historicism co-opts non-literary texts for a better understanding. The following points

proposed by Greenblatt are adequate enough to understand as to how the social energy inherent in a cultural practice negotiated and exchanged. They are as follows,

1. There can be no appeals to genius as the sole origin of the energies of great art.
2. There can be no motiveless creation.
3. There can be no transcendent or timeless or unchanging representation.
4. There can be no autonomous artifacts.
5. There can be no expression without an origin and an object, *a from* and *a for*.
6. There can be no art without social energy.
7. There can be no spontaneous generation of social energy. (Circulation 7)

Having understood the norms of social energy and how it is negotiated and circulated, the readers next ponder over the question which Greenblatt also reflects as, “What then is the social energy that is being circulated? [They are] Power, charisma, sexual excitement, collective dreams, wonder, desire, anxiety, religious awe, free-floating intensities of experiences” (Circulation 19). This paper attempts to view Michael Ondaatje's *Anil's Ghost* in the light of non-literary materials attempting to capture the social energy.

Michael Ondaatje's *Anil's Ghost* presents major politico-historical incidents from Sri Lanka in fictive mode. The author launches three camps of enemies involved in the ongoing war in Sri Lanka. The reason for civil war is given as: “The terrorism of the separatist guerilla groups, who were fighting for a homeland in the north. The insurrection of the insurgents in the south, against the government. The counterterrorism of the special forces against both of them” (AG 42-43).

The major non-literary source referred to in this document is Amnesty International Report since it is a worldwide movement independent of any government, political persuasion or religious creed. Amnesty International acts on the basis of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human rights and other international instruments which are recorded by Michael Ondaatje in his fiction. The Amnesty International reports the three camps of enemies in the following:

Political violence in both the northeast and the south has increased markedly. . . . The first armed insurrection in the Sinhalese-dominated south occurred in 1971. . . . By 1978, however, several violent attacks against the police force in Jaffna had occurred which were attributed to the recently formed Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). In the following years, other Tamil separatist groups were in northern Sri Lanka to engage in armed opposition to the government, and the scale

of such opposition mounted despite government attempts to suppress the Tamil separatist movement by force. The government has also faced armed opposition from sections of the Sinhalese population in southern Sri Lanka. In 1971 thousands of people were killed in the south when a coalition government headed by Prime Minister Sirimavo Bandaranaike crushed an armed insurrection led by the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP). In the second half of 1987 the JVP again launched a campaign of violence in the south, to which the government responded ruthlessly, committing widespread violations of human rights. (*Sri Lanka: Extrajudicial Executions, 'Disappearances' And Torture, 1987 To 1990* 5-6)

In a non-literary text *Nerukkadiyin Kathai* such similar combatants are presented:

There was a time when JVP in the south and the government were in complete ties. The situation was so violent. The long term war between the LTTE in the north and the government brought Sri Lanka to a much savaged position. Though JVP has abandoned violence as a means, LTTE refuse to drop the guns. (88)

As is quoted in Ondaatje's *Anil's Ghost*, in the post independence era of Sri Lanka, one can witness all the three parties- the government, the separatist guerillas named LTTE in the north, insurgents named JVP (Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna) who are supported by the political party United Nations Front (UNP) in the south involved in war.

Ondaatje fixes the height of terror, “to be `eighty-eight and `eighty-nine, but it was going on even before that. Every side was killing and hiding the evidence. Every side. This is an unofficial war, no one wants to alienate the foreign powers” (AG 17). Radhika Coomaraswamy in her book titled *Ideology and the Constitution: Essays on Constitutional Jurisprudence* confirms the height of terror to be late 1980s as mentioned by Ondaatje:

The period from 1983 onwards must be viewed differently especially when one considers developments in the field of fundamental rights. . . . The northern insurgency, led by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), escalated after the 1983 riots aimed at Tamils living in the south of the island, and became a full-scale war. . . . This conflict led eventually to the signing of the Indo-Lanka Accord and the presence of Indian troops on the island. The accord then became the basis for violence in the south, and the JVP used the occasion to mount a southern insurgency which paralyzed the country at various times between the end of July 1988 and December 1989. By January 1990, the southern rebellion had been crushed by the use of military force and all the leaders eliminated. (43)

Amnesty International Report coincides with the textual reference:

Many thousands of people were killed in southern Sri Lanka during 1988 and 1989—perhaps 30,000, according to some observers. A significant proportion of these deaths occurred in the second half of 1989. . . . This period also saw renewed attacks and killings by the JVP, to which the government attributed a total of 6,517 killings between 1987 and mid-march 1990. (*Sri Lanka: Extrajudicial Executions, 'Disappearances' And Torture, 1987 To 1990* 13)

Therefore, it can be concluded that the war was at its peak in the late 80 and early 90s. The author does not dismantle with the appropriate mention of the year.

Textual reference reports that Gamini, being a doctor, witnesses the mark of torture in the victims. He receives a visitor from civil rights organization every Friday with the reports of victims: “Once a week, he went over the reports and the photographs of the dead, confirmed what was assumed, pointed out fresh scars caused by acid or sharp metal, and gave his signature.” (AG 213). Finally, he receives his brother's corpse and the mark on his chest, his broken arms bear the truth that Sarath has undergone torture by the army. War with its manifold disruptive force presses people hard to death. When war happens at a mass level, mass disappearance, mass death rate and mass grave have become a common phenomenon. At one point in the text Sarath makes reference to the extrajudicial executions: “A couple of years ago people just started disappearing. Or bodies kept being found burned beyond recognition. There's no hope of affixing blame. And no one can tell who the victims are. . . . What we've got here is unknown extrajudicial executions mostly.” (AG 17-18). The following passages are extracted from the text to elaborate the above idea:

The night interrogations, the vans in daylight picking up citizens at random. . . . Mass disappearances at Suriyakanda, reports of mass graves at Ankumbura, mass graves at Akmeemana. . . . The disappearances of schoolboys , the death of lawyers by torture, the abduction of bodies from the Hokandara mass grave. Murders in the Muthurajawela marsh (AG 156-157). . . . At a mass grave found in Naipattimunai in 1985. (AG 42)

The incidents quoted below from the non-literary texts prove the above description factual. Amnesty International reports,

“Disappearances” and extrajudicial executions are closely connected: many prisoners who have “disappeared” are believed to have been secretly extrajudicially executed with their bodies being dumped or burned. Many of the bodies found in

public places could not be identified because they had been mutilated or burned, or because they had been transported from other areas for disposal. Amnesty international received information on over 3000 people who were initially reported to have “disappeared” or to have been extrajudicially executed in southern Sri Lanka during 1989, but the organization believes the true figure was substantially higher. (*Sri Lanka: Extrajudicial Executions, 'Disappearances' And Torture, 1987 To 1990* 19)

Similarly, Amnesty International Report 1986 declares,

On 14 May, for example, 146 people- mostly Sinhalese civilians-were killed in Anuradhapura, allegedly by armed Tamil separatists. . . . On 16 August Amnesty International presented to the President Reports of Unacknowledged Detentions and Disappearances in Sri Lanka, detailing 186 cases of reported disappearances” in the Vavuniya, Mannar, Jaffna and Batticaloa areas between 14 June 1983 and 17 May 1985, they included 23 young Tamil from Naipattimunai who were allegedly taken away by members of the Special task force, made to dig their own graves and shot dead (256-259).

The assassination of President Katugala is the predominant incident in the text. The manner with which the incident was executed, has been described by Michael Ondaatje in the following lines. R--- is the name given by Ondaatje to the H-bomb:

R--- wore denim shorts and a loose shirt. Underneath these was a layer of explosives and two Duracell batteries and two blue switches. . . . both needed to be activated for the explosion to occur (AG 292). . . . R--- threaded his way on a bicycle through the chaos of people, . . . He approached Katugala having already switched on one of the batteries. . . . When he was within five yards of Katugala he turned on the other switch. . . . at four p.m. on National Heroes Day, more than fifty people were killed instantly, including the President. The cutting action of the explosion shredded Katugala into pieces. (AG 294)

This assassination of President Katugala is similar to the assassination of the Sri Lankan President Ranasinghe Premadasa in 1993. Chellamuthu Kuppusamy in his non-fiction depicts the assassination of President Ranasinghe Premadasa:

On 1st May 1993, the UNP had organized a May Day procession in Colombo. President Ranasinghe Premadasa himself was controlling the crowd and freely mixed with them. A suicide bomber pedaled his bicycle through the parade, and

when he was just five feet away from the President at Armors Street junction, he detonated the explosives wrapped around his body. The explosion was so powerful that the police were not aware of Premadasa's death for several minutes until his ring and wrist were identified on a torso. (184)

The New York Times reports:

Suicide Bomber kills President of Sri Lanka By Edward A. Gargan.

Published : May 02, 1993

The President of Sri Lanka, a country that has been swept by violence for more than a decade, was killed today by a man who detonated explosives strapped to his body during a May Day political rally. At least 10 other people were believed killed in the explosion in Colombo. The Government blamed a rebel group that has waged a 10-year war of secession in the country's north and east and has used suicide bombers in the past to kill Government and army officials. The group, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, denied involvement, Reuters reported.

Having analysed Ondaatje's *Anil's Ghost*, the circulating social energy in Sri Lanka is one of Power, Fear, and Anxiety. While struggling for power, all the three parties have indulged in war and created an atmosphere filled with fear and anxiety. The following are the outcome of analyzing Ondaatje's *Anil's Ghost*. By presenting the details from the literary and non-literary texts, one may conclude that the version of Ondaatje about the number of people disappeared and dead is comparatively less than the original. Though history is in the background the author tries to capture the medical profession and those who practice it in the suffocating political climate. The intelligence of the author lies in making the story move in an intrigue way. Though the author concentrates more on the historical dimension of various incidents, he does not mention the year of President Katugala's assassination that resembles President Ranasinghe Premadasa in history. While reading the text, the readers naturally get an itching sensation to go to other sub-literary texts to have a clear view of the ideas presented. Those who lived through the decades would understand where the author has altered the facts and to what extent. In spite of having welded fiction with non-fiction, the text retains literary flavour to its full fathom. Though the Tamil Eelam issue has been continuing for more than three decades, it has gained currency in the global arena after 2008. Being a well-known diasporic author, Ondaatje would have been more generous in mentioning the names of oppositional parties like LTTE and JVP in the text. By denying nomenclature, the author reduces the level of

accuracy to a great degree. Being a burgher and having been relied for his research documents on Manel Fonseka, a Sinhalese, one may conclude that the author is indifferent to the whole issue. Without having any pre-reading and cross references related to the issues mentioned, the maximum understandability is impossible to attain. The abstract notion of the war is conveyed to the greater public. Rather than going deeper into the root cause of the problem, the author generalizes the problem by saying, “the reason for war is war” (AG 100). More than historical details and events, being a fiction writer, the author has concentrated more on characters and their mad search for truth. Being a prolific writer and poet, the sentence and sense come freely out of Ondaatje's pen. There is no block in delivering them into the pages of the text. On the whole, the taste of history is missing. It would be more appropriate to term it as a thriller fiction rather than historical fiction for the predominance of fictional elements are high compared to the historical facts. In spite of all this, the social energy circulated in Ondaatje's *Anil's Ghost* is one of Power, Fear, and Anxiety.

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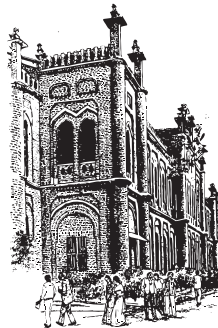
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The Motif of Self-Realization in Patrick White's *The Season at Sarsaparilla*: A Postcolonial Perspective

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Abstract

*The main objective of the colonial countries is to restore and reconstruct their history, culture and tradition. But settler colonies like Australia, New Zealand and Canada have inherited the culture and language of the English. Their main pursuit is to establish a culture and tradition of their own. Their literature should be universal and local in its appeal. Patrick White brought forth Australian literature to limelight. Satire is his forte. In *The Season at Sarsaparilla* he portrayed how people had become victims to the social norms and their own weaknesses. White attacked, at the same time, he was compassionate towards them. His actual aim is to make people realize, where they are. He earnestly appeals to their fellow Australians to realize their own potentials. He wanted them to come out of their weaknesses and promote their nation to great heights.*

Key Words: Post Colonialism, Settler Colonies, Self-Realization, Satire

The impact of colonization is perceptible in the postcolonial writings. There is a striking contrast between colonial countries and the settler colonies. The colonial societies suffer from the impact of foreign language, diversification of tastes, cultural clash and displacement. These crossroad situations create a sense of rootlessness amidst the people. After decolonization, the main task of the colonial countries like India, Nigeria, Bengal and Africa is to restore and reconstruct their history, culture and tradition. But settler colonies like Australia, New Zealand and Canada have inherited the culture and language of the English. Their main pursuit is to establish a culture and tradition of their own. And thus they could assert their individuality and could establish unique features that are different from the mother country.

In this process, Australian writers have retained the English Language and tried to replace the British tradition. They coloured their writings with their experience in the Australian landscapes. One of the major concerns for the critics of Australia is to trademark their literature. Many of the Australian works are too Australian. Instead of human life, only local manners and customs are portrayed. The demand is to see the picture of universal human life in local colour. The story of an Australian man or woman should be a microcosm of the humanity. The literature should be universal and local in its appeal. Bill Ashcroft et.al. in *The Empire Writes Back*, on “The Settler Colonies” pointed out that: “Post-colonial

literatures would apparently demonstrate their maturity when they stopped talking about themselves and go on with more 'universal'..." (137)

The much sought after quality in the Australian literature, the local colour and the universality of appeal, is brought forth by Patrick White in his works. White's works explore the nature of, "good and evil, love and hate, life and death, the material and the spiritual world, suffering and solitude." He was awarded noble prize for literature in the 1973 for his novel *The Eye of the Storm*. He has written 12 novels and best known as a novelist. In spite of that, his first love was theatre. He started his career by writing reviews. His contribution to Australian theatre is noteworthy. He has brought to the modern stage a wide range of characters through his eight plays. His first play *The Ham Funeral* (1947) remains a milestone in the history of Australian drama. The next play *The Season at Sarsaparilla* (1962) is a satire on Australian suburban life.

Patrick White contributed generously to the Aboriginal schools. He established the Patrick White Literary Award with his 1973 Nobel Prize. He was not satisfied with his fellow Australians political and social approach. He considered the transportation of convicts, the treatment of the Aborigines, and the allegiance to monarchy as Australian blemishes. To commemorate the centenary birth anniversary of Patrick White on September 28th, 2012, Barnaby Smith in his web posting, "Homelands: Patrick White – A Personal Odyssey", wrote: "Few of his countrymen have ever been as demanding or scathing of the moral outlook and intellectual capabilities of the nation as White."

The main intention behind his scathing remarks or satire was to create self-realization in the Australians. Barnaby Smith celebrates Patrick White's attitude towards Australia. Many post-colonial writers either from colonial countries or settler colonies acclaimed wider recognition. An analysis of biographies and the works of such writers, reveals interesting facts. Most of them are immigrant writers and their works lack "regional and local affiliation". Comparatively, writers in the native land and the works that has national fervour and focus do not get wider recognition. Elleke Boehmer in *Colonial and Postcolonial Literature*, on "Post Colonialism" says:

...it is significant that postcolonial writers who retain a more national focus, who do not straddle worlds, or translate as well, do not rank as high in the West as do their migrant fellows, or simply remain unknown. In metropolitan circles the attempt on the part of postcolonial nationalist such as Ngugi or Aijaz Ahmad to preserve cultural integrity or to retain hold of some form of national autonomy exerts relatively little critical or theoretical impact. (233)

Patrick White never worried about or longed for recognition. One of his novels *The Twyborn Affair* (1979) was shortlisted for the Booker Prize and later was removed at the request of the author. Patrick White did this with the noble motive of making way for the younger and more deserving writers. His main concern was to refine the taste of the Australians and to make them realize their abundant energy and vitality. He would like them to come up by using these effectively. Barnaby Smith in his web posting, "Homelands: Patrick White – A Personal Odyssey" shared Patrick White's reply to a question in an interview and it is worth quoting here:

Of course, the grip of Australia was on White himself, who when interviewed upon winning the 1973 Nobel said Sydney was "in his blood", even if his heart was in London. In a century where Australia's artists and musicians fled the primitive colony for Europe and the US, White returned to Australia in 1947 and stayed. "I shall continue to live here," he said in 1973, "as I feel the need to fight certain elements."

The above comment of Patrick White proves to be the quintessence of his second play. In his first play, *The Ham Funeral*, White concentrated on the development and growth of an individual. He analysed the limitations and the factors that prevented an individual from progress. He had also indirectly suggested the ways and means to overcome the problems. But with reference to *The Season at Sarsaparilla* his concentration was now not with an individual. He was more worried about the state of his own country, Australia. May Brit Akerholt in *Patrick White* pointed out that: "White's concerns are now with the conditions of his own country, and he moves from the portrayal of an individual's solipsistic introspection to the ills of Australian society". (36)

In the list of the dramatis personae, there are three couples, the Pogsons, the Knotts and the Ernies. The stage setting is simple. Majority of the action takes place in the three kitchens and in the backyards of these families. Clive Pogson's conformed comfortably to the role of a breadwinner and the head of the family. He left and arrived with punctuality. Girlie Pogson played the role of a respectable mother in an Australian suburbia. She was very particular in bringing up her two daughters, Judy and Pippy, in a disciplined way. The Knotts were the young replicas of the Pogsons. J.R. Dyce in *Patrick White as Playwright* says:

The house on the right of the stage contains the Knotts, Harry, a Salesman, is the husband of Mavis, who is expecting a baby. Beyond that, there is little to tell about them; they represent the large class of people who live and die without notoriety or distinction, but who live well nonetheless. (42)

The Boyles struck a contrast with other two couple. Nola Boyle belonged to the group of women characters of Patrick White, who were in 'dangerous forties'. While introducing her, White addressed her as lioness. Lionesses are especially popular for hunting. They look very different from male lions, and it is the lioness that does the hunting most, so the adjective lioness emphasized both femininity and ferocity. When Pippy talked about dogs in the opening scene with Deedree, Nola was introduced. Whenever Pippy continued to share her ideas about the dogs, further information and activities of Nola were presented. The real purpose of the animal motif in literature is to underline a theme, or make a statement about a certain character. Animals are used to depict characters more often than they describe themes. White had a specific instruction to the audience. He tried to correlate some aspects of Nola with the dogs, which would be expounded as the play progresses.

Her husband Ernie Boyle was also in his forties. He was very active. He was agreeable, innocent and generous. When compared to the head of other two families, he was from a low social position. Mr. Clive Pogson and Harry Knot were executives while, Boyle was a night soil man. Ernie worked during nights and returned home in the morning. When he entered, other men left for work. In spite of the difference in their social ladder, all the three families lived in the same lane. The entire plot revolved around the day-to-day happenings that took place in these houses.

The three house wives were shown involving in their household activities. They did their day to day work like machines. They had fixed definite schedule, as to, what to do and when to do. Monday was for laundry, Tuesday was for shopping and so on. Patrick White time and again, repeated this action throughout the play. Whenever we came across the words "razzle dazzle is on" in the stage direction, they involved themselves in their household activities. White had very meticulously used this technique. He wanted to highlight the fact that the Sarsaparillans were caught up in their routine day to day mechanical activities. They had not risen up from the normal level. Nothing fruitful or productive came out.

Judy, the elder daughter of the Pogsons, was around 18 years old. She was very pretty and sweet. But, she was rather withdrawn and tentative. She was interested in playing violin. Judy's music was sweet and true but, it was not exactly brilliant. Her obsession to violin had brought in many negative comments from most of the characters. Finally, one fine morning she decided to give up practicing violin. A person associates himself with the society, to further his own interests. But, in the Australian suburbia, one's own interest was stifled. May Brit Akerholt in her book *Patrick White* pointed out that:

Individualism and initiative are rejected, even feared in Sarsaparilla's Mildred Street where the inhabitants of three brick homes go through the motions of daily routine. The characters represent a cross-section of typical suburbia ... (36)

Roy Child, a brother of Mavis Knott, was a teacher by profession. He was in his early twenties and very causal. He was considered as a representative of the intellectual community. He frequently passed comments about men and matters of Sarsaparilla. He was held in high esteem by everyone. He had made comments and criticized the behaviour of Sarsaparillans. But, when situation demanded, he was not in a position to guide them. Julia Sheen, a model, who would always appear gloriously and perfectly dressed. She was very slim and beautiful. Mr. Erbage, a member of local council, who was in his middle fifties, was a married man. He was interested in Julia Sheen. A man, who should have public interest at heart, had the objective of flirting with a model girl. Mr. Erbage and Julia were supposed to have an affair. Julia became pregnant. In a state of confusion, she sought Roy's advice but he could not counsel her and prevent her from committing suicide. When Mr. Erbage informed the death of Julia to Roy, one could perceive only anxiety and not compassion for her. He was anxious about his prospects as a counselor. J.R. Dyce in *Patrick White as Playwright* rightly pointed out that:

The tragic note of the play is when Julia, finding herself pregnant, comes to Roy for help. Despite his ability to criticize, he has no help to give and no comfort to offer her in her distraught condition; ... (50)

Joyleen, the younger daughter of the Pogsons, was often addressed as Pippy. She was a straight forward, shrewd little girl. She was very inquisitive and eager. She did what she wished. Pippy never minded about her mother, who always wanted her to be polite and disciplined. Pippy was very eager to know what had been actually happening with the dogs. It was the mating season for dogs. A pack of dogs was running after a bitch. In order to gain advantage, the dogs fought among themselves. This activity was mysterious for Pippy, who was in her preadolescent age. Her mother Girlie Pogson was known for her morality and conformity to the rules and regulations of the society. She identified what Pippy was after. She admonished Pippy for the over enthusiasm that she showed towards the behaviour of dogs. Therefore, Pippy was very cautious and moved surreptitiously to learn about the dogs.

Pippy, one day while discussing with Mavis Knott, said she was much upset over the behaviour of dogs. She wished to go and have a look at the bitch, which was on heat. Mavis, the conventional wife, counseled Pippy not to speak so. She was a big girl, growing up and

was different now. Big girls should not talk about like that. Pippy questioned, if things happened like that what she could do. Mavis replied that one could just note but not talk. Pippy felt choked by the so called conventions. She found no room to develop her inquisitive intellect. She could not find a teacher, who could explain rationally to all her queries and allow her intellect to grow naturally. Instead, she was told about the traditional norms a girl should follow: “Mavis: (sighing) Well, that's the way it is. (Sententious) Girls've got to learn to be nice. Then they marry some nice man. And have a lot of little babies”. (S.A.S.1.1.124)

The explanation provided by Mavis did not clear Pippy of her doubts. She could not identify the rationale behind the association of the two areas; the behaviour of the bitch in the season and the maternal role to be played by a girl. It was Nola who allowed Pippy to grow naturally by explaining things without any prejudice. She helped Pippy to tackle the conflicts that arose at the time of transition from pre-adolescence to adolescence. If Nola had a child, she would have been a better mother than Girlie. On the contrary, in reality the situation was quite different. J.R. Dyce has aptly commented with regard to this point in her book *Patrick White as Playwright* that:

Pippy, a hopeful, and Deedree, “a late starter”, will take their problems only to those who can help them, not to their parents as such. The most feather-brained woman has clever children; the woman most fitted for motherhood has no children; ... (51)

Rowley Masson was another important character in the play. He was a friend of Ernie Boyle. During the World War, both of them worked together in the army. He was addressed as 'digger' Masson by Ernie. He felt proud to be addressed so. “Ernie (calling): A good mate of mine. Rowley Masson. 'Digger' Masson. We was together in the Western Desert.” (S.A.S. 1.1.97). The term "digger" was widely used in , to mean a miner. Later, it was applied to the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps. The troops were especially, good at digging tunnels between their own trenches and the enemies and were regarded by both sides as diggers. The job of digging between the trenches was very hard. The Australian and New Zealand Army Corps members considered it as a compliment to be referred to as diggers, since it indicated that they were good at a very difficult job.

After the war, Ernie was settled with Nola Boyle. The case was different with Rowley Masson. He was still not settled. Ernie Boyle having confidence in the “mate ship” went for his work, leaving behind Nola and Masson. Masson initiated the dialogue by offering Nola a cigarette. She accepted with hesitance. Not much harm had been done during Mason's stay on the first day. Nola too kept her glands under control. Ernie and Rowley

Masson had gone for outing to a pub. Nola was left alone at home. She enjoyed a walk in her garden. She enjoyed the beauty and fragrance of roses. She would like to lie naked among the falling roses. She was very much interested in enjoying the touches of falling roses on her body. But, one thing that prevented her from having that experience was the “prissy operated” neighbouring women. Nola could not behave naturally in a conventional society. From another point of view, her interest very clearly said that Nola was a prisoner to her body. The next night Masson seduced Nola by telling an adventure, that he had experienced in the desert. Nola also yielded and remarked that she very well knew, from the beginning itself that he was a bastard and had proved the same.

Thus, Patrick White in this play satirically portrayed how people had become victims to the social norms and their own weaknesses. In fact, these people had not realized their own pitiable state. White attacked, at the same time, he was compassionate towards them. His actual aim is to make people realize, where they are. Majority of the people have succumbed to society's conventional behaviour. As a result, there is no room for creativity and vitality. A few others have become prisoners to sensuousness. If these people directed their biological energies towards the constructive purposes, tragedies could be averted. Intellectuals like Roy become useless because of their pride. Once these weaknesses are realized, the Sarsaparillans will come out of the continuing cycle of fruitless seasons. Patrick White earnestly appeals to their fellow Australians to realize their own potentials. If they come out of their weaknesses, they could proceed in the path of progress and promote their nation to great heights.

Barnaby Smith's comments on White's novel in his web posting, “Homelands: Patrick White – A Personal Odyssey” proves to be appropriate to his plays too:

But, living in the country for his last 43 years and the fact the majority of his novels are set here, suggests that like many literary dissenters censorious of their homeland, his criticism is motivated only by his belief in the nation's immense potential and his frustration at what he called "the great Australian emptiness".

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A Cry for identity in Mahesh Dattani's *Dance like a Man*

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Abstract

*This study explores the inner self of the protagonist, Jairaj in Mahesh Dattani's **Dance Like a Man**. The play **Dance Like a Man** strikes hard at the society that prescribes certain roles to each gender and treats them as idiotic. Jairaj, the male protagonist of the play becomes a victim of gender restrictions. Usually women become victims or suffer due to the patriarchal culture. But this play focuses on the plight of a male who tries to break the conventional roles allotted to his gender by the society. In this process, he loses his identity as an artist in society. Jairaj's dreams are shattered as his father considers that Bharathanatyam is an effeminate thing that belongs to female gender. A man practising the dance is entirely unacceptable for the people of the society. His father, being a spokesperson of the society fears that his son would lose his identity as a male. Jairaj cannot accept that he has lost his individuality as an artist, but he comprehends his own self at the end of the play and his self-discovery brings a revelation of the essence of the art which has nothing to do with the practitioner being either male or female.*

Dance like a man is a play that deals with the issues of Gender. Dattani brings out this issue from one of his principal passions, Dance. This play talks about a young man who wants to be a dancer. He is growing up in a world that believes dance is for a woman. Dance, particularly Bharathanatyam is a very beautiful art form. It is practised by committed exponents for spiritual activity. But, the middle class Indian society does not approve of a man being a practitioner of this art form because it is considered to render him effeminate. A Man must act like a man. Being the provider of the family, he can indulge in manly sports that give identity to his sex.

Dance like a Man explores the life of a budding dancer, Jairaj. It also explores how he loses his career, his passion, his dreams and his purpose in life to societal notions of gender. Jairaj and his wife Ratna are dancers. They are under the shelter of Jairaj's father Amritlal Parekh. It is mentioned in the text that Ratna chose Jairaj as her life partner so that her career would not be compromised. But, Amritlal Parekh is a man of fixed notions. So he is unable to tolerate his son wanting to become a professional dancer. Bharathanatyam is good as a hobby, but to be taken up as a profession by a Man is something unthinkable.

Amritlal Parekh cannot tolerate his son wanting loud costumes, growing long hair and practising dance all the time. Even he does not like his daughter-in-law going to meet a

devadasi to learn this art form. He denies his son's dependence on him and makes him obey his dictates. He just completely spoils his son's profession. In this bad endeavour, he uses Ratna also as his accomplice. He assures her that her career would be safe, if his son is weaned away from dance. To safeguard her own interests, she too conspires with her father-in-law and she supports him to spoil her husband's dream.

The focus of the play is how social conventions of gender spoil the life of both male and female. The dramatic structure of the play evolves round the idea that individual's struggle against the society. The issue of gender discrimination is associated with individual choices, self development and self identity. Dattani admits that, "I wrote this play when I was learning Bharathanatyam in my mid twenties.... a play about a young man wanting to be a dancer, growing up in a world that believes dance is for woman". (Ayyar 2004). It signifies that dramatist was inspired by two irresistible passions. To become a dancer and the fear of social code that dance is a feminine art. Man's attempt to become a dancer would be tragedy for a man.

The play *Dance like a Man* begins with the introduction of traditionally arranged room of Jairaj and Ratna. Lata is a promising dancer, daughter of Jairaj and Ratna. She enjoys her life in the company of her lover Viswas, the son of Mithivala. Male prejudice against dance is seen in Viswas' very first conversation with Lata. Lata too is afraid of her future as a dancer. She doubts whether Viswas would allow her to dance or not.

VISWAS: Only doctors and fireman go out on emergencies. Dancers stay at home till its show time.

LATA: Actually they couldn't care less who or what you are. As long as you let me dance. (387-88)

Lata has a passion for the instruments, sounds, vibrations and rhythms, because she learnt the art of dance from her parents. She has an insecure feeling that her married life would ruin her art and her individuality. She even refuses to have children.

LATA: Viswas, when we are married – you will let me come here to practice, won't you?

VISWAS: Of course, Lata...

LATA: And we won't have children.

VISWAS: And we won't have... what?

LATA: I mean, not right away. We can have them later, can't we? (389)

The apprehension of Lata becomes the unconscious case of her parents' crisis.

The play deals with the conflict between art and society. It also focuses on the sense of competition among the artists themselves. Young Jairaj and Ratna are practising dance in the house of Amritlal Parekh. He is a representative of the society of the nineteen thirties and forties. He is a freedom fighter and a reformist, but limits the freedom of his son. His son, Jairaj wants to become a male Bharathanatyam dancer. Amritlal Parekh is an autocratic father for him. Bharathanatyam is the “craft of prostitute to show off her wares” (406). Hence a man has no business to learn such an art, and anyone who “learnt such a craft would not be a man” (406). But Amritlal never thought that the interest of his son in dance “would turn into an obsession” (415). According to Jairaj, Amritlal Parekh was “a conservative and prudish” as the white rulers. (416).

In the earlier days Bharathanatyam was associated with temples and rituals. The art was preserved by 'devadasis'. They were the professional dancers in temples. They were exploited by the priests and rulers. Finally, due to the economic needs this turned to prostitution. So, the dance form was ignored and neglected till nineteen thirties and forties. It further led the society to oppose this dance form. So no man wants to learn this dance form. If anyone wants to learn such a dance he ceases to be a man.

The play also focuses on the conflict in the character of Amritlal Parekh who represents the older generation of the society during thirties and forties. Jairaj and Ratna are the representatives of the younger generation who oppose this attitude. Jairaj and Ratna challenge the old man who has no good opinion about the art form. Amritlal even suspects Ratna attempts to learn the 'Mysore School of Dance' from Chennai amma. She is a seventy five years old exponent of the art form. As a result Jairaj and Ratna leave Amritlal Parekh's house. But they return to the house after two days without any help from outside. Amritlal imposes certain restrictions on them. He tells Jairaj not to grow long hair and asks Ratna not to learn dance from anybody else. He further informs Ratna that Man's happiness lies in being a man.

AMRITLAL: And Jairaj. Don't grow your hair any longer. (To Ratna) And you need not learn from anyone else. You understand.

RATNA : You are very kind.

AMRITLAL: I want to see you both happy.

RATNA : We are?

AMRITLAL: Are you?

RATNA : Can't you tell?

AMRITLAL : Do you know where a man's happiness lies?

RATNA : No.

AMRITAL: In being a man. (425-26)

He wants to make Jairaj a man who could be worthy of a woman. So he assures Ratna that she would be allowed to dance if she helps him make Jairaj an adult.

AMRITLAL: Help me make him an adult. Help me to help him grow up. (427)

Ambition overtakes Ratna. She buys her freedom to dance at the expense of her husband's desire. Thus she destroys Jairaj's self-esteem as an artist.

JAIRAJ: For one full year. For one full year I refused to dance – turning down offers because I didn't want to dance alone.

RATNA: I didn't ask for such a sacrifice. Tell me what you want in return. I'll do anything except sacrifice a year of my life in return.

JAIRAJ: I want you to give me back my self-esteem! (443)

Jairaj feels neglected and dismissed. He feels that he is used as a tool and as a stage prop. One day Ratna returns from a dance programme with a splendid costume. Jairaj follows her in a drunkard condition. It is obvious that Ratna continues her dance practice and gives several performances, whereas Jairaj becomes only a stage prop. Ratna scolds Jairaj for his drunkenness and asks him to do 'something useful'.

RATNA: Talk about what? Talk about how you insult me in front of other people? How you make me feel ashamed of you? How ... how disgusting you are? Oh, for God's sake, Jairaj, do something useful before it's too late! (442)

But Jairaj holds Ratna responsible for his drunkenness and he says that, he is deprived of dancing. Ratna blames Jairaj for his addiction to alcohol. She also holds Amritlal responsible for her husband's down fall. According to Ratna, Jairaj's down fall begins from the day he returned to his father's house. For Ratna, Jairaj stopped being a man from the fateful day onwards. And, she has been holding this complaint against Jairaj for the past forty years.

Amritlal has cut down all his son's passions. He has warned him that Bharathanatyam is a socially neglected art and only permissible for the woman like 'Devadasi'. Jairaj is discouraged by his father's desperate comments. Jairaj and Ratna have started their lives with a dream to perform their art. But Ratna after accomplishment as a dancer concentrates all her hopes on the performances of her daughter, Lata. Any failure of Lata would affect her very much. Anxiety about her daughter's performance has created a great expectation in Ratna. She wanted to achieve through Lata what she had lost in her life. It was a desperate attempt to challenge the patriarchal authority. She strengthens herself with a success of Lata but makes her husband more and more helpless. For Ratna, dance has been a passion in her life. So, she encourages Lata for dance. The passion for dance helps Ratna to discover the masculinity in the personality of Jairaj. Jairaj has failed to realize his perfect stature as an individual and as a dancer because of the dominance of his father. Ratna also humiliates him that he has always been a 'spineless boy' who would not leave his father's house for more than forty-eight hours.

RATNA : You! You are nothing but a spineless boy who couldn't leave his father's house for more than forty-eight hours.

JAIRAJ: Ratna! Don't ...

RATNA: You stopped being man for me the day you came back to this house...

JAIRAJ: For forty years you've been holding that against... (402)

Jairaj is isolated both as a victim of social prejudice and parental authority. The internal and external self of Jairaj is divided. In his external self, he is in conflict with his father. In his internal self, he is in conflict with Ratna. His masculine self fails to accept the victory of femininity both as an artist and as a person. The consciousness of Ratna and Jairaj move into two opposite directions. The case of Ratna, it moves in the direction of the success of Lata. The case of Jairaj, it only brings the great sense of loss.

The conflict in the life of Jairaj with his father is that, his father lives according to social expectations and individual choices. The traditional bondages of Amritlal do not permit Jairaj to exercise his own will. Amritlal stands for social acceptability and for Jairaj it is a matter of his own identity. The gender roles are strongly rooted in Amritlal that he even does not accept Guruji's long hair and the way of walking. Ratna is assertive and more competent to fight her identity. "You can't stop me from learning an art". (421) Ratna's protest to defend her rights spoils the confidence of Jairaj. She has no hesitation in

exploiting his 'manhood'. She informs that Jairaj would soon learn another art form called 'Kuchipudi' because in 'Kuchipudi' men dress up like women. She laughs for that. The laughter of Ratna against Jairaj signifies that she empowers his masculine self.

RATNA: Tomorrow, Jairaj starts learning another dance form – Kuchipudi.

AMRITLAL: So?

RATNA: triumphantly). In Kuchipudi, the men dress up as women! (422)

Gender issues are not a constructed phenomenon but it is rooted in the human mind. Amritlal has an insight into a weakness of Ratna. But Jairaj was too innocent to realize this fact. Amritlal grants his permission to Ratna to dance with a condition. Ratna should prevent her husband from dancing. “A woman in man's world may be considered as being progressive. But a man in a woman's world is pathetic” (427). In this context, Jairaj lost his identity as a 'man' and as an 'artist'. He is reduced to a miserable figure, a man without any self-identity and choice.

Amritlal with his power of money exploits the womanhood of Ratna. Ratna asks Amritlal that after he stops dancing what will he do with Jairaj? Amritlal says that I will make him worthy of you.

AMRITLAL: It is hard for me to explain. I leave it to you. Help me and I'll never prevent you from dancing. I know it will take time but it must be done.

RATNA: I will try.

AMRITLAL: You'll have to do better than that.

RATNA: All right. And once he stops dancing – what will you do with him then?

Amritlal: Make him worth of you. (427-28)

Amritlal's definition of 'happiness' and 'manhood' was absolutely a personal concept. Ratna's move against desires of Amritlal results in depression. She seems to be governed by her own sensual pleasures but actually she is the double sufferer. In the failure of Jairaj, she too has lost her 'womanhood' and the passion for dance. She gets the recognition of her inner self as a successful dancer but her femininity is neglected.

Lata emerges as a shining star of the art of Bharathanatyam. Ratna identifies her own image in the success of Lata.

RATNA: nThe star of the festival! The dancer of the decade! And why

shouldn't she get reviews like this? I deserve it. Spending sleepless nights arranging things. Sweet-talking the critics. My hard work has been paid off. (439)

She seeks consolation in the success of Lata outwardly, but her inner self remains unfulfilled. The isolation of Jairaj creates a greater vacuum in her life. The irony in the life of Jairaj is that his life is shaped and reshaped according to the desires and dreams of others.

JAIRAJ: Bit by bit. You took it when you insisted on top billing in all our programmes. You took it when you made me dance my weakest items. You took I when you arranged the lighting so that I was literally dancing in your shadow. And when you called me names in front of other people. Names I feel ashamed to repeat even in private. And you call me disgusting. (443)

Ratna carves out her own method to give a shape to Jairaj's manhood. Amritlal shapes him in whatever shapes he thinks, as a man should be. This heart rending and makes his life a tragedy. Jairaj's outburst provides him the expression of his consciousness. He is helpless but not weak.

JAIRAJ: You really have style. Not to mention brains. You destroy me first, then give the impression that there wasn't much to destroy in the first place, then blame it all on my father, then suggest I make myself useful by being your stage props then use words like 'regret' and expect to shrug my shoulders, resign myself and believe that my calling in life is to serve you. (444)

It is the discovery of his own identity hidden in his inner self. Here the 'artist' and 'man' are not two distinctive entities but one.

Bharathanatyam when practised by a male is considered to render him effeminate. Though the divine exponent of Bharathanatyam is none other than Lord Shiva himself, this art form is associated with women by a misconception. Jairaj's passion for Bharathanatyam goes unappreciated by his own father. His dancing is a way of expressing his own identity. He is a man who defies social norms. But his life is defeated by his father and his wife. "If the play questions conventional male stereotypes and points out that male identity is a construction conditioned by social norms and expectations, it does so by involving those very same constructions for the female characters" (59) says Angelie Multani in her paper, "On Mahesh Dattani's *Dance like a Man*: The politics of Production and Performance."

Jairaj and Ratna have a baby boy, Shankar. Jairaj hopes that he would teach his son

the dance of Shiva, the dance of a man. He wishes that Shankar would dance 'tandava nrityam' right on the head of his grandfather when he becomes a young man.

JAIRAJ: Then when Shankar grows up, I'll teach him how to dance – the dance of Shiva. The dance of a man. And when he is ready, I'll bring him to his grandfather and make him dance on his head – tandava nritya. (441)

But this desire of Jairaj also remains unfulfilled because the child dies. Whenever Ratna has a dance performance, she has the habit of administering a dose of sleeping drug to the child. The drug would keep the child from weeping. One day it so happens that the ayah administers an overdose of opium which kills the baby. According to Jairaj, Ratna is more responsible for the death of the child. He also charges that Ratna was always after the name and fame as a dancer rather than doing her duty as a mother and as a wife.

Jairaj and Ratna might have succeeded as dancers but they have failed as human beings and as wife and husband. The play ends with Jairaj's admission that they were only humans and lacked the 'grace', 'brilliance' and magic to dance like God.

JAIRAJ: We danced perfectly. In unison. Not missing a step or a beat. We talk and laugh at all the mistakes we made in our previous dances... We were only human. We lacked the grace. We lacked the brilliance. We lacked the magic to dance like God. (447)

In order to protect and continue any art form, the artist should raise above human weaknesses. It is a state of human consciousness that wraps up the distinction of male and female into a state of 'wholeness'. In his self - discovery, Jairaj discovers that the divine essence of human self is neither male nor female.

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Rohinton Mistry's *A Fine Balance* as a Political Satire

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Abstract

*The period of Emergency in 1970s is considered a dark period in the history of India in which people of different sections were affected severely. It was a ruthless attempt to sustain power at the cost of democracy. This paper analyses how Mistry uses **A Fine Balance** to expose the corrupt governmental machinery and portrays the plight of the common people during Emergency. Mistry also records the meek surrender of the suppressed people to the mighty political system and their inability to fight against the people in power.*

Rohinton Mistry is one of the renowned Indian diasporic writers who lives in Canada at present. He has three novels and a short story collection to his credit. He uses major political events of independent India as the backdrop of his novels. His *Such a Long Journey* talks about the Nagarvala Case, *A Fine Balance* portrays the internal Emergency imposed by Indira Gandhi and *Family Matters* has the consequences of Babri Mosque riots in 1990s. This paper analyses how Mistry uses *A Fine Balance* to expose the corrupt government machinery and portrays the plight of the common people during Emergency. B. Indira observes, “Emergency, a defence of an insecure leader, disturbs the coherence of routine of the average lives...They all believe that ... Emergency is a sort of a game played by the power centre and it would not really affect them... Very soon when their simplest dreams get thwarted they are forced into realizing the mayhem created by the Emergency” (110).

The Emergency saw the suspension of the basic fundamental rights guaranteed to every Indian Citizen by the Constitution of India. The period of this novel begins with the year of the declaration of Emergency in 1975 and ends with Indira's assassination in 1984. Between these two important political events, the stories of Dina, her tailors Ishwar Darji and Omprakash Darji, her lodger Maneck Kohlah and their motley friends are woven. The novelist pictures the struggles of these people to ensure their lives in Mumbai in the wake of Emergency.

The roots of Emergency lie in the effort to break the law and retain power through illegal means. Mistry narrates the cause of Emergency through Avinash, a

student Union Leader:

...the High Court found the Prime Minister guilty of cheating in the elections. Which meant she had to step down. But she began stalling. So the opposition parties, student organizations, trade unions- they started mass demonstrations across the country. All calling for her resignation. Then, to hold on to power, she claimed that the country's security was threatened by internal disturbances, and declared a State of Emergency". (FB 243)

It is evident that Emergency was imposed only for political reasons and sustain in Power. However, the Supreme Court dismissed the case against Indira and it allowed her to continue in office. Mistry attacks the move of the court through one of his characters. "When the highest court in the land turns the Prime Minister's guilt into innocence, then all this ... this becomes a museum of cheap tricks, rather than the living, breathing law that strengthens the sinews of society" (FB 552)

The government toiled a lot to campaign in favour of Emergency. As a part of it, the Prime Minister addressed many public meetings in support of the ruling party in which she justifies her decision. Mistry quotes one of her public Speeches:

There is nothing to worry about just because the Emergency is declared. It is a necessary measure to fight the forces of evil. It will make things better for ordinary people. Only the crooks, the smugglers, the blackmarketeers need to worry, for we will soon put them behind bars... There is a foreign hand involved against us—the hand of enemies who would not wish to see us prosper...but no matter, for we are determined that disruptive forces will be put down. The government will continue to fight back until there is no more danger to democracy in our country... You can trust your government to fulfill the task. Your part in this is very simple: to support the government, support the Emergency. (FB 262-263)

Interestingly, the speech seems to be a 'Freudian Slip' in which she acknowledges unknowingly, during Emergency people were worried, the lives of ordinary people and the democracy were at stake and people did not support government's decision to enforce Emergency.

The period of Emergency is considered as a dark period in the history of India in which people of different sections were affected severely. Especially those who opposed the government were treated in unlawful manner. Avinash exposes the ugly face of Emergency, “Under the pretext of Emergency, fundamental rights have been suspended, most of the opposition is under arrest, union leaders are in jail and even some student leaders... But the worst thing is the press is being censored... And she has retroactively changed the election laws turning the guilt into innocence” (FB 245). This reminds the Rowlet Act imposed by the British in 1919, which allowed the imprisonment without trial and led to the massacre in Amristar. Through this Mistry conveys that the people who are in power misuse it irrespective of their nationality.

Law-makers became law breakers during Emergency. For instance, one tailor was denied his remuneration for a large order. When the tailor goes to the office asking for money, with some political influence, he was sent to jail under MISA. Mistry comments upon this ridiculous function of law and order, “With the Emergency, everything is upside down. Black can be made white, day turned into night. With the right influence and a little cash, sending people to jail is very easy. There's even a new law called MISA to simplify the whole procedure” (FB 299). Here, the novelist questions the orderly function of law and order. Hence, MISA was used only for the convenience of the rulers to suppress the political enemies during Emergency.

Politicians toil a lot to establish themselves to create the space of their own in politics and they are mad after fame, money and power. They exercise power to show off themselves. For example, at the time of Emergency huge cut-outs were displayed with the figure of the Prime Minister. The slogan displayed were, “FOOD FOR THE HUNGRY! HOME FOR THE HOMELESS”, “THE CITY BELONGS TO YOU! KEEP IT BEAUTIFUL” and “THE NATION IS ON THE MOVE” (FB 303). On the contrary, people were starved to death and the number of beggars was increased. Owing to the “City Beautification Programme” poor people lost their only shelter in the slums. Ignorant people were tortured like anything. These facts illustrate that Independent India has not ensured a comfortable space for the poor for survival.

Politicians do ridiculous things for popularity and they even bribe the people to attend their public meetings. For example, in this novel Congress Party men persuade the people to attend the meeting to be addressed by the Prime Minister. One of them

cajoles the people, “The Prime Minister especially wants to talk to honest, hardworking people like you... The Prime Minister's message is she is your servant, and wants to help you. She wants to hear about things from your own lips” (FB 256). When this fails to persuade the people, they were forced to attend the meeting by a police officer. Sergeant Kesar warns, “Two people from each jhopdi must get on the bus! In five minutes – no delay. Otherwise, you will be arrested for trespassing municipal property!” (FB 257). This shows how law was misused as a weapon against ordinary people to get things done for political reasons.

At the end of the Prime Minister's meeting, an eighty-foot cutout of the PM was hit by the helicopter which was sprinkling flowers from the sky. “The cutout started to topple slowly, face forward. Those in the vicinity of the cardboard-and-plywood giant ran for their lives. “Nobody wants to be in the Prime Minister's embrace,” said Rajaram” (FB 264) who attended the meeting. Rajaram's comment is loaded with humour and subtle satire. Though everyone has come for her meeting willingly or by force, nobody wants to face her cutout. In addition, the fall of the cutout symbolizes the impending and inevitable fall of Indira as a ruler.

Politicians promise many things in order to woo the voters during elections. These promises are forgotten conveniently after the elections. This continues to be the fate of Indian politics. Mistry ridicules this reality of Indian Democratic System in the following passage:

The speeches were crammed with promises of every shape and size: promises of new schools, clear water, and health care; promises of land for landless peasants, through redistribution and stricter enforcement of the Land Ceiling Act; promises of powerful laws to punish any discrimination against, and harassment of, backward castes by upper castes; promises to abolish bonded labour, child labour, sati, dowry system, child marriage. (FB 143)

Besides, Mistry points out the fate of those promises, “Every time there are elections, they talk of passing the same ones passed twenty years ago... For politicians, passing laws is like passing water... It all ends down the drain” (FB 143).

Emergency intruded into the educational institutions too and corrupted the minds of the students as well as staff members. They were forced to accept the rule of

Emergency and adore the Prime Minister. Politics inside the campus affected the lives of students and their learning. Student union leaders were sacked and threatened. Avinash, the student union leader and friend of Maneck has great hopes in his life for his family. He reveals his family situation as, “I should be spending my time and energy on studies. I was the first one ever to finish high school in our family. Everyone's relying on me. My three young sisters, too. I must collect money for their dowries, or they won't be able to get married” (FB 237). But, he was kidnapped and his body was found in the railway tracks. This led to the suicide of Avinash's three sisters. The irreparable damage caused by the Emergency to the lives of the students and to their family is illustrated by the novelist through the episode of Avinash.

Though Avinash was killed because of his involvement in anti-Emergency activities, the officials projected his death as an accident. Mistry raises doubts regarding such political murders. “The police claimed it was a railway accident, but the parents spoke of wounds they had seen on their son's body at the morgue. According to the reporter, the injuries were the injuries were consistent with other confirmed incidents of torture” (FB 584). Through this passage, the novelist records that such political murders were very common during Emergency and people like Avinash is not able to do anything to protect their lives.

The lives of individuals were affected relentlessly due to Emergency though they were not related to politics even indirectly. For example, Omprakash and Ishwar, the tailors were forcefully taken to the Prime Minister's meeting against their wish. The party members promised them tea and a free bus ride. When the meeting was over, they were left with nothing. When the Prime Minister was addressing the meeting with her heart and soul, unable to pay attention Omprakash tells his uncle, “One more speech? When do we get our snack?” (FB 264). Through this, Mistry humorously discloses the minds of ordinary people who do not require eloquent speeches from the leaders but their only concern is their daily life and basic amenities. Thus, the ordinary people are forced to sacrifice their routine life for such 'kind hearted' leaders.

One of the pet projects of the government during Emergency was Family Planning. This was introduced with the intention to curb the ever-growing population of India, which seemed to be a threat for the development of the country. Sanjay Gandhi, the elder son of Indira took personal care in enforcing this project. Though it was started

with the good intention, it led to the compulsory family planning without proper medical facilities which cost the lives of many people. Omprakash and Ishvar were the victims of forced family planning operations. After the operation, Ishvar's legs were removed due to infection whereas the testicles were removed from Omprakash even before his marriage. As a result, both of them became beggars and their lives were completely ruined by Emergency's Family Planning Project.

As part of City Beautification Programme, the beggars and the pavement dwellers are sent to the Irrigation Camp where everyone is given some work. Apparently it seems to be a good plan which will make the city neat. On the contrary, the people are tortured unnecessarily. When the tailors try to explain that they are not beggars and they have a decent tailoring job, it is not accepted till the Beggar Master releases them with some influence. When one person asks innocently about the mode of salary for their work – weekly or monthly, the official replies angrily “You don't understand what I said? You will get food, shelter, and clothing. That is your salary” (FB 325). Like this, the human resource is extracted during Irrigation Programme.

The inhuman face of Irrigation Programme is exposed when a baby is denied its mother's attention. During the work, one mother stops to feed her crying baby. The overseer forces the woman to abandon the baby and resume work saying, “It's natural for babies to cry. They cry and then they stop. Don't give me excuses” (FB 341). Also, the camp witnesses some accidents that are not attended properly by the officials. “A blind woman, set to crushing rocks, had, after several successful days smashed her fingers with the hammer. A child fell from a scaffolding and broke both legs. An armless man, carrying sand...suffered neck injuries” (FB 353). Hence, Emergency mechanized the people who were in the government machinery and the human values were not given importance.

Rajaram is making his living collecting hair of the people. He has a huge collection of hair in his hut and selling it, occasionally, he earns his livelihood. His life is in trouble when the government smashes his hut as part of the 'Slum Clearance Programme'. Since he loses a place to store his collection, he is forced to find an alternative job. Later, he becomes a motivator for Family Planning project but fails to last long. Consequently, in want of money, he kills two beggars – a husband and wife who have long plait of hair. Thus, the political situation turns a hair collector into a

murderer. Later he becomes a spiritual guru named Bal Baba offering blessings to many. Here, Mistry humourously hints that religion becomes one of the safe places for the crooked and the criminals.

Modern political environment does not allow the poor people to make their own space to live and they are denied justice too. When the people are taken to compulsory Family planning, one person laments “For the poor there is no justice, ever! We had next to nothing, now it's less than nothing! What is our crime, where are we to go?” (FB 295). The novelist has voiced the feelings of the poor people here. The Policemen, the so-called protectors of people and justice do not come to the rescue of the people. These incidents illustrate that the police officers and the government officials are insensitive to the sufferings and feelings of ordinary people rather they are always the blind servants of the rulers.

Emergency affected not only the lives of the ordinary people but also the lives of the government employees who play a vital role in the smooth function of government machinery. Whether they favour the decision of the government or not, they have to obey the law-makers. Sergeant Kesar, a police official is involved in enforcing the laws of the government against his conscience which costs his peace of mind. “Gathering crowds for political wasn't bad. Rounding up MISA suspects was also okay. But demolishing hutment colonies, vendors' stalls, jhopadpattis was playing havoc with his peace of mind... He used to return miserable from those assignments, get drunk, abuse his wife, beat his children” (FB 316). This elucidates how Emergency inflicts psychological trauma to a government official and his family.

Though Emergency is considered as a black mark in the history of Independent India, many people admired Indira's rule. Gupta, manager of 'Au Revoir Exports' approves Indira's actions even after the court's conviction, “No, no no!, said Mrs. Gupta. 'That is all rubbish, it will be appealed. Now all those trouble makers who accused her falsely have been put in jail. No more strikes and morchas and silly disturbances” (FB 73). Nusswan, a business man praises the Prime Minister and welcomes her plans: “Magnificent changes are taking place. And the credit goes to our Prime Minister. A true spirit of renaissance... now we have pragmatic policies instead of irrelevant theories...thanks to our visionary leader” (FB 371). Narrating Nusswan's view, the novelist records the views of the people who supported Indira during Emergency.

Besides, it highlights the attitude of the people who accept the mistakes of the politicians. Here, Mistry does not take sides, but cleverly juxtaposes the views on Emergency as an outsider.

The survival of Sikhs became very difficult since the Prime Minister was killed by her own Sikh guards. As a result, Sikhs were killed in many places, especially in Delhi, the capital of the country. "They are pouring kerosene on Sikhs and setting them on fire. They catch men, tear the hair from the faces or hack it with swords, then kill them. Whole families burnt to death in their homes" (FB 572). So, some Sikhs removed their turbans and appeared clean shaven in order to hide their identity. Thus one major political event in the country put the entire Sikh race in danger.

The taxi driver who takes Maneck from the airport is a Sikh in hidden identity due to the recent developments. He says that Indira is responsible for her own downfall and claims that her decision to invade the Golden Temple hurt the sentiments of the Sikhs and that led to her murder. He accuses that she only nurtured the terrorist outfit for her political gains.

In Punjab, she was helping one group to make trouble for state government. Afterwards the group became so powerful, fighting for separation and Khalistan, they made trouble for her only. She gave her blessing to the guns and bombs, and then these wicked, violent instruments began hitting her own government. How do they say in English- all her chickens came home for roasting, isn't it? (FB 572)

This proves that Indira was the victim of her own political strategies which eroded her space from this world permanently.

Election is considered as the backbone of a democracy. But, the politicians misuse power to buy election results through their muscle and money power. Mistry throws light on the cynical manipulation of elections in rural India as follows:

On the election day, eligible voters in the village lined up outside the polling station. As usual, Thakur Dharamsi took charge of the voting process. His system, with support of the other landlord, had been working well without mistakes for many years. The election officer was presented with gifts and led away to enjoy the day with food and

drinks. The doors opened and the voters filed through.... They placed their thumb prints on the register to say that they had voted, and departed. Then the blank ballots were filled in by the landlord's men. The election officer returned at closing time to supervise the removal of ballot boxes to the counting stations, and to testify that voting had proceeded in a fair and democratic manner. (FB 143 - 44)

In this passage, Mistry criticizes the democratic system prevailing in India that has been suffering in the hands of powerful politicians.

People who are in power are not only the plunderers of wealth but also the basic rights of the poor ignorant people. When Narayan wants to exercise his right to vote, realizing the ground reality, his father warns his son, “You changed from Chamar to tailor. Be satisfied with that” (FB 143). However, Narayan is steady in his stand and he is for not letting the “blank ballots be filled by the landlord's men” (FB 144). Consequently, he and two other 'Chamars' are tortured and killed. “Burning coals were held to the three men's genitals, then stuffed into their mouths. Their screams were heard through the village until their lips and tongues melted away” (FB 146). This incident shows not only the caste discrimination but also the space of the poor in politics which is occupied by the local upper class politicians. Even the voting right ensured by the Constitution of India is denied to the weaker section. This caste discrimination has been overcome in India since the Constitution ensures that a decent number of candidates from SC/ST category is elected to State Assemblies and Parliament.

In the same night, Thakur engineers violence in the village using goondas. “They beat up individuals at random in the streets, stripped some women, raped others, burned a few huts” (FB 146). At the end, they kill Dukhi, Roopa, Narayan's wife Radha and her two daughters and burn them along with the hut. Ishvar and Narayan's son Omprakash escape the slaughter since they are in town. Thus the space for survival is denied to Dukhi and his family since they belong to the weaker section of the society in terms of caste and economy. In this episode, Mistry exposes the prevailing insecure space to the oppressed.

Though India is a secular country, Muslims, the religious minority suffer a lot. Mistry points out the problems faced by Muslims at the time of partition. As Muslims in

India suffered, the Hindus in Pakistan also suffered. Ashraf, a tailor recalls the incidents of partition painfully, “Every day trains are crossing that new border, carrying nothing but corpses... The trains are stopped at the station and everyone is butchered. On both sides of the border” (FB 126). Khushwant Singh has given an elaborate account of the killings in trains across the borders in his novel *Train to Pakistan* published in 1956. Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* also portrays such horrors vividly.

The novel describes the communal unrest against Muslims in India through the life of Ashraf. A gang kills the Muslims and damages their properties. It recognizes Ashraf's shop and wants to burn it. Narayan and Ishvar, the apprentices claim that the shop belongs to their father who is not a Muslim. The unsatisfied mob leader asks the boys to drop their trousers and having a lantern he “...bent low, held it close to their naked crotches, and was satisfied... There was general agreement that the foreskins were intact” (FB 130). Thus the religious sentiment of the Muslims suffered during partition.

While depicting contemporary political situation the novelist exposes prevailing caste differences in India. Dukhi Mochi's story takes the readers to the time of independence struggle in India. The intensity of caste problem among the Indians can be felt in this episode. Dukhi belongs to Chamaar community whose traditional job is removing the carcasses. The upper caste people are not able to tolerate the fact that Dukhi has got two sons- Ishvar and Narayan. They complain, “What is happening to the world?... Why two sons in an untouchable's house, and not even one in ours? What could a Chamaar pass on to his sons that the God should reward him thus? Something was wrong, the Law of Manu had been subverted” (FB 100). Hence, Dukhi is worried about the safety of his family because of the envious upper caste people. As a precaution “Every time he saw high-caste persons on the road, he prostrated abjectly, but at a safe distance - so he couldn't be accused of contaminating them with his shadow” (FB 100). It is painful to note that having two sons is one of the reasons for the trouble of a lower caste person. It unveils the narrow mind of the upper caste that is waiting for a chance to take revenge.

The rich exploits the work of the poor people whenever there is an opportunity. Thakur, an upper caste proprietor gives Dukhi an assignment of grinding chilies. Dukhi works sincerely throughout the day. When the work is almost complete, the motor splits

unexpectedly and crushes his left foot. The land lord scolds Dukhi for damaging the machine without considering the injury. “Listen, you stinking dog! You have destroyed my property, yet I am letting you off! If I wasn't such a soft-hearted fool, I would hand you to the police for your crime. Now get out!” (FB 104). Thus at the end of the day Dukhi is left without remuneration for his hard work. This incident speaks for itself bringing out the multiple hardships undergone by the poor.

When Ishvar and Narayan are young, they enter the classroom meant for the upper caste children out of curiosity. In the absence of other children they take the books found in the class longingly. “The chinks and slates fascinated them. They yearned to hold the white sticks in their hands, make little white squiggles like other children, draw pictures of huts, cows, goats, and flowers. It was like magic, to make things appear out of nowhere” (FB 109). The children receive brutal corporal punishment for this and they are accused of spoiling the serenity of the classroom. Thus, even children are not spared and they are denied the right of education because of their caste. Through this episode, Mistry portrays the injustice done to people in the name of caste.

Unable to bear the sufferings of his sons Dukhi takes this matter to Pandit Lalluram, the so-called good man in the village, and seeks justice. But, he advises him to leave the matter saying, “Your children entered the classroom. They polluted the place. They touched the instruments of learning. They defiled slates and chinks, which upper- caste children would touch. You are lucky there wasn't a holy book like the Bhagavad Gita in that cupboard, no sacred texts. Or the punishment would have been more final” (FB 113). This incident exposes the ugly face of the caste system and the efforts of the upper caste people in keeping the oppressed illiterate.

The oppressed people had to digest all kinds of human right violations for survival. Mistry has recorded some of these incidents in his novel. Bhola, a Chamaar's left hand fingers are chopped for stealing which was not proved. The affected could not protest against this but they had to content “Bhola is lucky...Last year Chhagan lost his hand at the wrist. Same reason” (FB 96). In another incident, Buddhu's wife “refused to go to the field with zamindar's son, so they shaved her head and walked her naked through the square” (FB 97). In the world of the novel, the upper caste people take the law in hand to humiliate the oppressed.

Lack of work and the obligation to feed the children drive some people to steal things. Roopa, Dukhi's wife takes this risk for her children. "After the milk went dry, Roopa began nocturnal visits to the cows of various landowners...She took only a little from each cow; thus, the owner would not sense a decrease in the yield" (FB 97). Once she visits an orchard during the night to collect oranges and is caught by the guard and he exploits her physically. Hence, an attempt of survival by a poor woman ends in her physical exploitation.

Though Dukhi is aware of her visits during the nights to orchards and farms, he pretends not to know anything about this, because he is not in a position to earn better to feed their children. He knows that it is the only alternative, which he does not dare to do. On her return from the orchard after being exploited, she weeps silently thinking of her plight.

Dukhi pretended to be asleep as she entered the hut. He heard her muffled sobs several times during the night, and knew, from her smell, what had happened to her while she was gone. He felt the urge to go to her, speak to her, comfort her. But he did not know what words to use, and he also felt afraid of learning too much. He wept silently, venting his shame, anger, humiliation in tears; he wished he would die that night. (FB 99)

This incident illustrates the inhuman face of caste system and oppression of women. The affected has to lament like Dukhi who is not able even to console his wife.

There is a contradiction in the behaviour of the upper caste people as far as the exploitation of women is concerned. An upper caste male does not want to have any relationship with a lower caste female whereas he does not worry to have physical relationship with her who does not belong to his caste. They are not worried about being polluted due to the physical contact. The study of the oppression of women proves that the upper caste people want to maintain the caste discrimination only for their social status. If they really care about the caste discrimination, no dalit woman will suffer physical exploitation by the upper caste males.

Dukhi does not want to let his sons suffer like him and he realizes only the economical independence can help them to overcome caste barriers. So, he sends both of his sons Narayan and Ishvar to Ashraf Chacha who lives in the city to learn tailoring.

The boys return to their village after learning tailoring and establish their own shop in the village. The living standard of the family improves by the efforts of the boys, but this earns the displeasure of upper caste people in the village. The intensity of the animosity towards this upcoming family is clear when Thakur forces the musicians to withdraw during the marriage between Narayan and Roopa. This incident is an evidence for the intolerant nature of the upper caste people.

Mistry's anxiety to have a country free from caste discrimination can be felt through a messenger who spreads Gandhi's message:

What is this disease? You may ask. This disease, brothers and sisters is the notion of untouchability, ravaging us for centuries, denying dignity to one fellow human beings. This disease must be purged from our society from our hearts, and from our minds. No one is untouchable, for we are all children of the same God. Remember what Gandhiji says, that untouchability poisons Hinduism as a drop of arsenic poisonous milk. (FB 107)

The government's indifference to such sensational caste problems is marked through the mouth of Narayan. "Government passes new laws, says no more untouchability, yet everything is the same. The upper-caste bastards still treat us worse than animals" (FB 142). Hence, Mistry juxtaposes the reality of contemporary India and his vision.

The close reading of the novel reveals that people try to suppress those who are next to them in the social order. For example, Dukhi's family suffers a lot since they belong to the Chamaar community but Roopa ill-treats a person from Bhunghi community which is relatively lower than Chamaar community. When Narayan points out her wrong attitude, she justifies "We are not going to deal with such low-caste people! How can you even think of measuring someone who carts the shit from people's houses?" (FB 133). Here, Mistry illustrates that the subjugation of an individual does not turn one good but it leads to the suppression of the weaker one.

The novel has triggered controversy on its treatment of India. While the novel receives accolades for its artistic quality, Mistry's portrayal of India is questioned by the critics. Jaydipsinh K. Dodiya comments that in *A Fine Balance*, "...everything ends with a sad and negative role. Mistry talks of negative features of India's political and social situation. He has deliberately ignored the positive aspects

of India's political and social life" (76). In spite of such controversies, it cannot be denied that India's dark socio-political face during Emergency is exposed by Mistry in this novel.

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Voice of the Marginalized: A Study of Gita Hariharan's *Fugitive Histories*

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Abstract

*Religious fundamentalism is a point of concern for India in recent times. Some political parties use religion in their propaganda for political gain. Hence, the life of religious minorities like Muslims and Sikhs is in jeopardy. The riots of Gujarat in 2002 is considered to be a systematic political terror unleashed against the Muslims. This paper analyses Gita Hariharan's bold attempt as a writer in recording the problems faced by Muslims in her novel **Fugitive Histories** during the riots. Through this novel, Hariharan attempts to give some solace to the affected people.*

Gita Hariharan is a distinct writer who has been enriching Indian English literature through her valuable contributions. In general, her novels speak for the cause of women. For example, her *The Thousand Faces of Night* and *When Dreams Travel* expose patriarchal oppression and they advocate liberation for the women folk re-narrating myths. Besides, she displays social concern dealing with problems related to politics, history and other social issues. In her latest novel *Fugitive Histories* Hariharan takes up 2002 Gujarat riots and exposes the role of government machinery in engineering violence against Muslims. She records the sufferings of the minorities in detail and criticizes the powerful hands involved in it.

The plot of the novel revolves around Sara, the aspiring social worker, who meets the riot-ravaged teen Yasmin for preparing a documentary film about 2002 incidents in Gujarat. Yasmin lives with her father and mother and she has lost her brother Akbar during the riots. Hariharan explicates how the riots affected the lives of the individuals and society. Also, she records the repercussions of the incidents in the minds of the victims even after several years giving authentic details.

During the riots, the Muslims were forced to give away their houses in which they were born and other properties. So, they moved to a relatively safer place for Muslims where they have nothing to own. Yasmin's family shifts with the hope of survival to the new religious border in the city. Having lost the house and shop to the riots, Yasmin's father establishes a small shop in the new place in order to improve his financial condition. Hariharan highlights the pitiable condition of such people through the depiction of Yasmin's

father. “He has set up a shop with two other men but the people who are willing to buy from them often have no money; the others walk past the shop as if it doesn't exist, as if they have trained their eyes not to see a Muslim shop. More and more, Abba exhales in defeated spurts of breath, letting go” (FH 150-151). Hence, the forced dislocation worsens the financial condition of the family permanently.

The pressure to disown the native place is paramount to Muslims during the riots. It is announced in the loudspeakers in the place in which Muslims live. “Go to Pakistan! Go back to Pakistan!” (FH 157). It shows that the so called safe area for Muslims is already in the danger zone. This makes them to feel as one of the victims acknowledges, “Now we're prisoners in our own city. We're in jail at home” (FH 164). It illustrates that the democracy in India does not ensure a peaceful living place for the victims during 2002 incidents.

The visit to the riot-hit area arises mixed feelings in Sara and her friend and assistant Nina. “They call this a border,' Nina tells Sara as they cross a highway, reach an area that is a bizarre mix of bungalows, short and tall buildings, many hovels, too many hovels. 'And some call this area mini Pakistan” (FH 110). Though they have been living in their birthplace for generations together, the religion forces some of the Muslims dislocate within the same city. Hariharan documents the dislocation of Yasmin's family: “They had to quit their neighbourhood, *their* India. They found a safe house in a Muslim neighbourhood but in return the safe house made them give up their home, their old life. It made them give up on Akbar, shift him secretly in their heads from missing list to the declared dead list” (FH 138).

Constitution of India ensures Right to Education to all Indian citizens. But, getting education becomes a problem for the Muslims in the riot-hit region since the school is situated in the Hindus area. Many Muslim parents stop their female children from going to school considering their safety as Sultana's parent. Since Yasmin's parents are determined to give a better future to her, they allow her to cross the border of religion everyday to attend the school. Yasmin is also very particular in changing the fear-ridden trend:

She has to do it all alone somehow. Then everyone who tells Ammi and Abba she shouldn't go to school will never be able to open their mouths again. They'll know they're wrong, they won't say it's not safe for girls *anything can happen*. They won't say it's no use, it's better she goes to sewing class like Sultana, it's better she does some work right now. It's better she helps you. (FH 116)

It portrays the anxiety of the parents who is worried about the safety of their children.

Hariharan records that the communal forces prevent the victims from enjoying their Right assured by the Constitution.

The feeling of hatred poisons not only the minds of religious fanatics but also those who involve in the field of education. After the riots, many gave up education and those who preferred to continue their studies are ill-treated even by the teachers. One of the victims explains how her son faced difficulties in the school:

' We wanted him to study in the English medium school so he could be an engineer,' Zainab was saying. 'But the principal was doing the *partition work*. He'd ask Nasir in front of everybody else, "Aren't you from Pakistan?" Or he'd say, "You're not fit for an English medium school," though Nasir did all his work. He kept calling my Nasir a terrorist till the child couldn't bear it anymore.' (FH 156)

It is unfortunate that the teachers who have to inculcate ethics and tolerance in the young minds propagate religious animosity. Hence, giving emotional disturbance the students were successfully prevented from going to educational institutions in the sensitive areas.

Hariharan recalls that India has been a difficult place of survival for Muslims since partition. Asad's grandfather, the one he used to refer to as Mulla, was also forced to dislocate to Pakistan. But he withstood the pressures and decided not to leave his homeland at any cost. "He chose to stay on in his home, he gave up the Land of Pure for Bombay for the land of impure, Ahmedabad. Sara could acknowledge her great grandfather's choice, his faith in *home*, and says she is Muslim Indian. Or Indian Muslim, since great-grandfather Mulla *chose* Nehru's republic while merely inheriting the republic of God" (FH 180). While narrating the determination of Mulla, Hariharan draws attention to the distinct identity gained by the children born out of inter-religious marriages. People like Sara who does not have any deep consideration for religion manage the situation and those who identify themselves with a particular religion lose their mental balance.

While the Gujarat riots remain the pivot of *Fugitive Histories*, it goes much further into the past. It suggests that it is easy enough to create a situation where people lose their bearings, trail down those who are perceived as alien, and work to intensify the existing conflicts. Here, the main plot revolves around the communal riots and how the characters adapt towards it or resist it. Then, it also mainly concentrates on the identity crisis of the characters. Hariharan writes in a clean and straight forward manner that all her characters are suitably dealt, they talk and communicate effectively which keeps her novel flowing. Her stories reverberate with echoes from the text of the past and at the same time curves out

the present with clarity. Similarly, her writings project clearly how the characters face the problem and come out of it beautifully.

Yasmin, the school-going victim loses even her sleep, like other Muslim victims of the rehabilitation camp, after 2002: “Every night Yasmin waits for sleep to find her. She lies as still as possible, eyes shut tight. It should be easy then, the easiest thing in the world for sleep to come to her, settle on her like a warm old blanket. But, like Yasmin, sleep too is afraid of the dark” (FH 115).

The riot victims try to instill hope of life with some positive attitude. One of the ways of controlling emotions is being satisfied with what is available. Revealing the mind of Yasmin, Hariharan portrays the Muslims who survived in the riots and their desperate attempts to develop a positive mind:

Yasmin is thinking too hard. She's thinking: we're lucky we have two rooms even if they're dark and small. We're lucky we have two rooms in a safe area. We're lucky we have a tap in the bathroom, we have to use the water tank outside only once a day. We're lucky we have electricity. You're lucky you go to school. You're lucky your father got some money at least for the old house. You're lucky you didn't have to see your brother's dead body or see him killed. You're lucky you can remember him as he was. You're lucky, we're lucky. They have to say it often, in as many ways as possible. They have to say it as often as possible because in their hearts they don't believe it. Now Yasmin has to believe it. She's lucky. (FH 122)

Hariharan unveils the inner turmoil of the Muslim parents who have lost their sons and daughters in the riots. Yasmin's parents visit the police stations to find out their missing son Akbar. However, police ill-treats them often. During one of their visits, a policeman ridicules her missing brother as “A college student called Akbar Ali. What do you think happened? Has he eloped with a Hindu girl? Or left home to join the terrorists?” (FH 134). When the parents protest the mockery of the police, he replies “...this is probably what Osama bin Laden's mother says of him.” (FH 134). It demonstrates the psychological crisis the Muslims undergo in the riot-hit areas. Consequently, Akbar's parents make up their mind believing “Missing is not so bad, it's better than dead” (FH 136). On the contrary, the sufferings of the affected people do not vanish from their minds and it triggers their emotional balance often.

The disturbed minds of the victims are well exposed by Hariharan when Yasmin says that the victims are worried about the ghost of the dead persons. “There's more than

enough room for Abba, you and me. But the simple truth is that this place will never be big enough for them. They are crowded out by too many ghosts; the dead, the wounded and the maimed take up more room than the living can” (FH 122). It is clear that the victims are not secured and happy in the new and so-called safe place. Though the place is relatively safe, their emotions have lost their balance.

The victims expect a savior to redeem them from the existing problems. Yasmin believes that one of the heroines of Hindi movies will come and save her and other victims. “She's seen all her pictures, she thinks Shabana Azmi will come and save her from here” (FH 111). Zahida Kala who lost her children in the riots behaves strangely. “She wouldn't know how to kill an ant, but every time she sees someone on TV who looks Muslim and who looks like he's angry or fighting, she gets up and kisses the screen” (FH 158). It highlights the desperate state of the victims who are badly in need of a helping hand to overcome the present situation.

The memory of the affected does more harm to them than the actual riots. Though they want to start a new life, they are disturbed whenever the past surfaces in their mind:

Yasmin thigh throbs; it's only a scar, there is blood running under the skin, there's no piece of wood jamming up its flow. But how strange it is, being hated. It makes old scars pain all over again. And how strange it is to hate. It opens up an old wound, it makes it throb so you think it's a fresh one, you have been wounded all over again. (FH 161)

It establishes that the riots have done a permanent damage on the minds of the victims, which can never be rectified.

Sara's interview with the victims plays a key role in releasing the stress from their minds. Some of them pour out their hidden emotions hoping to get some relief. Through the confessions, Hariharan illustrates how they just lead a life of existence. Yasmin also witnesses this. “Yasmin can no longer see which voice in the room belongs to which body, or whether the voices have bodies at all. They are just voices, nothing else because if they were really bodies, really *people*, wouldn't someone have heard them by now, give them some justice in five long years? (FH 162). It is said that time will bring desirable change in everyone's life. But as far as the victims are concerned, they are not able to regain what is lost.

Hariharan questions the existence of God while narrating the injustice done to the victims during the riots. Yasmin thanks God always for her existence. Like her, the affected

is waiting for the almighty for help. Hariharan satirises the power of Gods in her description of Yasmin's everyday routine. She prays,

Allah, your grace can do anything. You know better than anyone that *anything* can happen. Let your grace melt to become water, corporation water. Let it come to your thirsty children through the city pipes. If the city pipes are broken, if the government has forgotten to repair them or thinks we are so worthless we don't need pipes, let the water find other ways. Let it find invisible pipes only you know of, let it travel all the way to this little tap of ours. Allah, only you can teach this tap what it means to be a water tap. (FH 117)

While presenting the plight of the victims, the novelist humorously digs at the government machinery, religious fundamentalism and their unethical means of suppressing the minority Muslims systematically. Moreover, as the corporation water refuses to reach the Muslims, the grace of the God as well as the benefits of the government eludes the victims.

Hariharan portrays the intensity of 2002 riots through her powerful language and appropriate imagery. When the affected share their misery, Sara's mind shifts to a new world in which she visualizes different scenes.

Sara's eyes are intent on Nasreen. Looking at her, listening to what she's saying, Sara can almost see a pair of invisible arms pulling Nasreen into a pit. And suddenly, even as Sara imagines this pit, they are past all preludes. All of them, not just Nasreen, are being pulled into the pit or pushed into it. Now they are in the deep smoky pit of the story. It's not a pit with imaginary terrorists or imaginary Pakistans. There is nothing invisible or imaginary in this pit...It's a pit in which everyone is running – women, children, men, everyone. Everyone is running, the pit is only a pit, there's nowhere to run. It's a pit where long hard things fall on soft flesh, long sharp things pierce soft flesh. It's a pit that calls fire to it like a magnet. It's a pit that blazes so bright, so hot, you may think the hungry orange fire will never be done with filling up its stomach. (FH 157).

Hariharan portrays this imagery in the vision of Sara adopting magic-realism and the scene unfolds in her semi-conscious state. The 'pit' refers to the world and society in which people are born and forced to live. As the people caught in the pit have no option to escape, the Muslims also have no options to escape from the pit like darkened place. As the invisible

arms pull Nasreen to the pit, the socio-political atmosphere of the country have dragged the victims to a state of existence. Moreover, the phrase “sharp things pierce soft flesh” establishes that the minorities of the country are always vulnerable to the powerful religious and political fundamentalisms.

Hariharan seems to be worried since the riots took place in the state where Gandhi was born. She makes his ghost to witness the riots and feels that the present happenings are against his principles. In the course of narrative, Hariharan introduces the Ghost of Gandhi as a narrative device and laments on the predicament of the victims. The ghost of Gandhi says, “*I can't watch the destruction of all I've lived for. I would rather drown myself in the waters of the Sabarmati than harbor hate or animosity in my heart*” (FH 176). Through this, the novelist stresses that either Gandhi or his principles have no relevance to end current religious atrocity. Hariharan uses italicised font to differentiate the ghost's words from other characters'.

The novelist triggers controversy when she remarks on the political strategies of Gandhi while referring to his ghost. “The rumour is that he is hiding in the city's token abode of peace, fasting and fasting, refusing to touch a grain of rice ... he is refusing to share his secret knowledge of how to light fires and douse them; or how to light one fire with one hand, while dousing another fire with the other” (FH 172). In this passage, Hariharan raises doubts about the honesty of Gandhi as a political leader saying that he is responsible for unrests in the country. As a creative writer, Hariharan is very bold enough to record such a contradictory view ignoring potential criticisms.

Like her other novels, Hariharan uses simple stories to enhance the theme of *Fugitive Histories*. The story of an ant haunts Mala even in her old age. An ant asks a frog, snake and other creature to save its drowning baby for which every one refuses, so the ant bites a little boy. “He picks up the stick, which hits the dog, which runs after the cat, which chases the rat, which gnaws a hole in the snake charmer's basket, so the snake inside escapes and is about to eat up the frog, but the frog jumps into the water and rescues the baby ant” (FH 13). Through the story, the novelist illustrates that everyone's life is interlinked in this world and every action leads to a chain or reaction that influences the lives of others either directly or indirectly. Hariharan explains the same concept further. “What happens to one also that happens, in some way, to the other. That's how all those fragments that pass for different lives forge a cunning chain. The interlocking links may not always be visible, but still they're made of iron. And the ending in a chain story can't really be the end. To make sense of it all, you have to go back to the beginning” (FH 13). It vividly portrays that the

contemporary political and social problems affect the lives of every citizen of the country. Proving this point Hariharan also has made use of the 2002 riots to develop the plot of *Fugitive Histories*.

The communal unrest affects not only the people who live in that area but also the people who live in the other part of the country. Asad's are leading a happy and peaceful family life in New Delhi. Suddenly, the existing peace is disturbed because of the emergence of communal riots in Gujarat. Hariharan narrates the troubled life of Asad:

After few years, there is a political disturbance caused by Communal Riots in Delhi. Don't tell me we're now going to turn into earlier Muslims overnight. Moderate Muslims, Modern Muslims, reasonable Muslims.'Asad turns to Aslam, the only self confessed believer there. 'Or the other kind of Muslims they want us to be, the demon Muslims'. Asad's voice sounds like he's bringing back order. His words sound like he's bringing them back to themselves. But actually he's agitated, more agitated than all of them. (FH 201)

Being born as a Muslim Asad is wounded a lot because of the violence against fellow Muslims and stays indoors. His expatriated feeling has also resulted in alienation. Consequently, he always remains in his studio, and becomes an introvert. Hariharan clearly project his agitated state of mind and also the prevailing turmoil outside his studio: "The last few months Asad has been working with exaggerated energy, as if his paintings can do what rallies and protests and talks can't. But he is also throwing out as much as he draws and paints" (FH 209).

In *Fugitive Histories*, Mala's home in Delhi is empty and she looks into the savings of her lifetime, the sketches left behind by her late husband Asad and the memories they conjure up. After the communal attacks, Mala goes through Asad's sketches and comes to see the reasons why he gave way to the inner turmoil that had shaken all that he believed in for love and thought is indestructible. She suddenly comprehends the reasons why his inner colors had faded and his sketchbook had gone blank. Sifting through them on restless afternoons and sleepless nights, Mala summons ghosts from her childhood, relives the thrilling days of love and optimism. When Asad and she robustly rebelled social conventions to build a life together and struggled to understand how events far removed could so easily snatch away the certainties they had always taken for granted.

Hariharan's skills go beyond delving deep into the political and social problems of her country. She produces rich and complex characters with compassion. Her characters

cannot always be agreed but they can be understood since they deal with the hidden parts of human emotions. Hariharan portrays with remarkable precision the web of human connections that binds as much as it divides.

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Revolutionary Stratagem and the Existence of Dalit Women – A Study of Women Characters in Bama's Novel 'Sangati'.

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Abstract

This research article makes a content analysis of the translated fiction written originally in Tamil by the Dalit writer Bama with specific reference to women characters, entangled in cosmic social issues that prevent them from enjoying normal womanhood neither at male dominated domestic environment or in the caste prone society. In the novel 'Sangati', the writer defines from socio historic perspectives, the stiffest challenges and strong oppression the Dalit women encounter in the so called modern society. What is surprising is that these women characters unlike their male counterpart, manifest resilience and employ “subversive strategies” to escape during the hours of crisis. These aspects of Dalit women shall be highlighted in this article with an intention to categorize the strategies adhered to survive amidst power ridden forces and their inhumane atrocities by examining their persistent courage made conspicuous; tenacious battle waged against injustice; sense of forbearance displayed at odd hours. Most of Bama's novels are autobiographical, while a few are the reflections of her observations. These traits of hers make her writings both in original and translation authentic and realistic.

Key words: Bama, Sangathi, dalit women, oppression, strategies, survive, courage,

Dawn of Dalit Movement in Tamilnadu

Tamilnadu, is a state known for Dravidian movement which played a vital role in subduing the power of upper caste people that stood a barricade for the realization of democratization in its true sense. If not for its active participation in socio political scenario, there would not have been any reservation quota for the under privileged and thereby wide opportunities for them to grow academically and economically high. Ironically, all the efforts of the veterans and warriors of Dravidian movements to institutionalize their caste based policies have aggravated the consciousness of subordination among lower caste people and established an exclusive identity as “Dalit” and paved way for the dawn of Dalit movement in Tamilnadu.

The primary aim of the Dalit Movement is to fight against the caste conflict that lies in the forms of exclusion from common civic responsibilities, discrimination between upper and lower caste people, inequalities based on economical status, oppression of selfhood etc. and essentially as Vikalp puts it “to facilitate the development of a confident self” among

Dalits through literature especially. In the words of Mishra, Women too hold strong positions and play active role in the movement through direct participation and as “independent thinkers and writers in the literary world” questioning the existing dogmas and theories on life advocated by the upper caste people.

Dalit Woman as a dalit among dalits

The women writers who have realized that they could “fight through books” (Prasad 65) focus not only on the general issues related to Dalits but also make specific focus on the colossal problems that dalit women face both within and out of the community. The sufferings they undergo as Dalits are unphathomable and inexplicable. Indian urban women despite the fact they are well educated and economically strong always believe that the Indian society, which is very patriarchal in its organisation structure, is biased and cruel in treating them. But when compared with the problems that Dalit women face theirs are insignificant and less than being trivial. *As Ruth Manorama puts it*, “Dalit women are discriminated against not only by people of higher castes, but also within their own communities. Men are dominant in Dalit communities. Dalit women ... have less power within the Dalit movement itself.” In other words she is a Dalit among Dalits.

A few Tamil women writers who happen to be born in Dalit family portray the life of Dalit women through various genres as they have experienced and observed. Their self-reflective outbursts of their sufferings and empathetic descriptions of Dalit life have sought the attention of many translators. They have added credits to their literary career by translating their works in English so that the non natives of Tamilnadu and the rest of the world would come to know of the Tamil Dalits' plights.

Bama's insights on Dalits Women's predicaments

Bama is one of the Tamil Dalit writers whose fictions have been much recognized and have become the materials subjected to much discussion and analysis. “Karukku” is the first autobiographical novel written in Tamil. Her autobiography not only documents her life, her personal thoughts and attitudes but also chronicles the experiences of her community and its problems in a locality permeated with high caste people. It explores the victimized life of Dalits, confined to manifold bodies of political power, religious authority and caste based autocracy. Bama as well makes special focus in her novel on the multiplicity of oppression and humiliation the Dalit woman faces at her house.

The actual problem of Dalit women have been dealt in her second novel 'Sangati'. The women characters who we see through the protagonist, Velliamma Patti, lead an

inferior and a horrible societal and familial life that could be unimagined by women of upper caste. Already the society has segregated them from the society, as low caste people, meek and vulnerable to become easy prey to the insensible wrath and insatiable sexual desire of upper caste men. Mariamma, Velliamma Patti's grand daughter was about to be raped in pump set shed by upper caste man, Kumarasamy Ayya. Mariamma had a narrow escape from him. The irate man vindictively concocted a story and the blame fell on her and the village court fined her for no fault of hers. This injustice evoked a hot discussion among other women. Sexual harassment happens to be a common and inveterate event casually, discussed by women of Dalit community, compelling them to bear the brunt silently:

After this, the crowd broke up and everyone went home. As we were walking home, Arokkyam said, Look how unfair these fines are. Even last week, when my granddaughter Paralokam went to pull up grass for the cow, the owner of the fields said he would help her lift the bundle on to her head. That was his excuse for squeezing her breasts, the barbarian. He's supposed to be the mudalali's son...the poor child came and told me and wept. But say we dared to tell anyone else about it. It's my granddaughter who is to be called a whore and punished...(26)

Silence to many women is one strategy adhered to escape harsh punishments from upper caste society. If they raise their voice and demand justice, they find no chance to survive on this earth. Contrary to these common and insensitive sentiments of the helpless women, the protagonist, Velliamma paati suggests seditious means to escape from such barbarians :

Our Paati was furious. She kept on railing at Mariamma. 'When the fellow pulled you into the shed, why couldn't you have kicked him in the balls then and there? Now you have been hauled unfairly in front of the whole village, given a bad name, and made to pay a fine, to top it all...(26).

Worse than this is the domestic conflicts that emerge between husband and wife. Dalit Community is patriarchal in its life style. Dalit man could exert his superiority only over his wife. His craving for power is satiated only by the exertion of his chauvinistic pride as man among his own community, especially towards his wife.

Survival Instincts and Subversive strategies

Dalit men in Bama's novels are subjected to humiliation in a society that shuns lower caste people. They are treated like “ dogs with their tail rolled up when they are in fields with their landlords. There is no way they can show their strength in those circumstances. And so they show at home and children.” (65). Their ill treatment in the

hands of their masters happens to be a prick to their self-esteem. Ashamed of their own self, they reach home drunk. Their spouses are supple targets for them to vent out their feelings. They thrash them black and blue. Wretched creature is the wife in Dalit community: No support from husband to run the family; what he earns he spends on liquor; being intoxicated he whacks her to almost death and sometimes even to death; handles her as an object of sexual pleasure; ill treats her as he is treated by the upper caste people.

A woman in Dalit community, as depicted in Bama's novel is not to be dissuaded by these happenings however cruel they are. She has learnt the art of surviving at any cost. She becomes resilient to such incidents and makes conspicuous of her tenacious characteristics, either sublime or subversive, and use them as strategies to rebel and fight against cruelties to make a living. Though the biased social system demands her to be silent she is not always. She is courageous and hardworking, ceaselessly at home and also outside to take care of the household single-handedly, enduring the enormous violence and physical assaults of her husband and she equips herself with cleverness to tackle the situations using dissenting stratagem..

Most of the Dalit Feminists including Bama talk about Dalit woman facing violence in some form or the other at the workplace, in public arena and at home. Being raped or sexually assaulted by men of superior caste or by the starved fatty men of their clan is a routine one happening in Dalit community. Hence in all Tamil dalit literature sexuality of a dalit woman is a common theme coarsely handled by them to accentuate on women's subjugation to sexual assault even at tender age. But the Dalit writers make one difference from others. Unlike other women writers they never project their characters as women, always whining and wailing with tears filled in eyes. Instead they compile them mouth-full; a seaming art though, it is a talent they are gifted with to use as an armour expiating the lost egalitarian privileges in the caste-prone patriarchal society. Talking about women's tactics to confront husband's assault, Aditi Swamy says, sometimes "sharp tongue and obscene words are a woman's only way of shaming men and escaping extreme physical violence." The dalit woman wags the nerveless bastion to put her husband to shame with added accentuation through vulgar gestures- unimaginable by a timid women of upper caste. What may seem to be obscenity and ill-mannered are the means to escape from being bashed by or even killed by her husband. Rakkama is not a "quite creature" (61) as assumed to be at the beginning of the novel. She uses abusive terms to curse and makes obscene and ill-mannered gesticulations to stop her husband tormenting her physically:

Rakkamma would not leave her alone. Go on , da kick me, let's see you do it, da! Let's see you are a real man . You only know how to go for a woman's parts. Go and fight with a man who is your equal and you'll see. You'll get your ball burnt for your pains. Look at the fellow's face! Thuu!" And she spat at him.... How dare you pull my hair? Disgusting man, only fit to drink And she lifted her sari in front of everybody. This was when Pakkiaraj(her husband) walked off,....(P.61).

The narrator of the story justifies her act however repulsive and incorrigible it was: “she acted in that way because it was only means of escape” (62). Bama is not always angry while expatiating the experiences of dalit women. As observed by Fatima Bernard and her co authors in their writings, Bama brings out “all that is bold and beautiful” (Bernard 51) in dalit women's life in a jesting mood, and also enumerates the imperceptible but potent and influential weapons used by them to confront the harsh domestic situations at home. A few women physically fight with their husbands, reciprocating to every harsh punch of theirs, even if they have to lose the battle at the end. While readers are horror-struck to witness Rakkama's hideous behaviour, Kaliaamma lightens the heart of the readers. She is a character, who can never be bullied. She retaliates vehemently with same kind of hits and blows what her husband intends to give her. Her husband, fearing embarrassment in front of his people, restrains his physical attacks and both have mere verbal exchanges:

.... The quarrels between our neighbor Kaliaamma and her husband Chinnappan were quite comic. When I watched them, I wasn't disturbed inside myself (Narrator). Because Kaliaamma was ready to fight, one to one, head –on. Sometimes, she was the one who came out victorious. If he hit her, she was ready to strike him back. Perhaps because of this, their quarrels remained within the bounds of words. They seldom came to blows. (63)

She is not one among the few who endures humiliation with a sense of fortitude to prolong and sustain their marriage.

Again to quote Nalini Iyer, Bama's “path of self-fashioning” deluged with feministic attitude is predictable in her creation of women character. With a sense of admiration Bama describes the characters. Her characters in 'Sangati' are as Fatima and others point out are “uneducated, traditionally obedient and proverbially ignorant rural women ... emerging out of their apathy and fear to become courageous leaders and enlightened followers.”(Bernard 49) They constantly fight against the spouses who are drunkards; with forbearance face challenges; and make differences- differences in “coping strategies” (P.xix)

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'Family' as depicted in the select novels of Anita Rau Badami

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Abstract

The following study focuses on three novels of the Indo-Canadian novelist Anita Rau Badami. Her stories are spun around families all of which sound realistic and true to the last detail. Descriptions of ceremonies, humorous episodes about relatives, common fights that are characteristic of every home make Badami's novels spring to life and provide an appealing read. The characters are drawn from different cultural and economic backgrounds. Though most of her characters are based in India because of the language and cultural barriers within the country they seem very different. Familial relationships are explored and the female family members portrayed in Badami's novels are very different and daring. The complexities of Indian families which are expected to conform to the norms of the society, gender inequalities that exist within the walls, the problems of patriarchal system in modern times, importance of women are some of the focal points discussed in this study.

India is a country which gives a lot of importance to family and its values. Indian families follow a stereotypical patriarchal system with father as the head of the family who in most cases acts as the sole bread winner of the family. Family is the strength of each individual and one is identified and revered based on his family and its history. Indian born Canadian author Anita Rau Badami's novels mostly deal with family life, the similarities, the differences and such factors that bind its members together and help them to stay intact and forge on with life. This study includes three of her novels namely, ***The Tamarind Mem***, ***The Hero's Walk*** and ***Can You Hear the Night bird Call?***

Badami's first novel, ***The Tamarind Mem*** is based on shared memories and storytelling between a mother and her daughter. By making the daughter and the mother speak in turns, Badami provides us two versions of the same story. The daughter Kamini lives in Vancouver and her younger sister Roopa lives in the US. While the daughters are away, the widowed mother Saroja insists on staying back in India, planning train trips around the country, particularly to all the places her husband refused to take her. Her husband Vishwa Moorthy is a railway engineer who is at home only for brief intervals since his job demands him to travel to different parts of the country to lay rail roads and mend broken tracks. His absence from home creates a void in the family which leads to a lot of problems in the domestic front and after a point there is no communication between the two.

It becomes Saroja's sole responsibility to raise her two children. The frustrations and discontents that her unhappy marriage provides her make her a moody, sharp tongued, irritable person and hence she is called a 'tamarind mem'. Her husband expects her to play the role of a perfect memshaib but she likes to join him in his railway tours. She acts as a dutiful mother but a failed wife. In almost everything, they differ and there is marital disharmony. The writer explores mother-daughter relationship in this novel and enriches her work with descriptions of ceremonies that make family life rich and colourful.

Marriage is a very important ceremony in Indian families, and in Hindu homes horoscopes are matched, priests are consulted, relatives are called forth and after a lot of such formalities marriages happen. Arranged marriages and the events that follow are portrayed with much relish by Badami. The arrival of the prospective groom and his family to the bride's house, the discussions about jewellery and the elaborate snacking arranged provide a very familiar picture for the reader. When ceremonies are followed strictly and with much care, the people who are to be married are not asked for their consent and liking. The elders decide and the young are expected to accept it wholeheartedly without any grudges. In *Tamarind Mem*, Saroja is married against her will to Vishwa Moorthy who is much older than her. Saroja desires to study further and become a doctor but she does not have the support of anyone at home. They turn deaf ears to her cries and her mother never ceases to extol the pleasures and joys of marriage, "A woman's happiness lies in marriage" (TM,159). "Marriage is a crop that will last a thousand years." (TM, 162). Years of conditioning and indoctrination does have its effect on Saroja and she tries hard to perform her role to perfection.

The pathetic condition in Indian homes is that in spite of being a mother, women are denied the opportunity to make decisions for their children. Education can bring about changes in the condition of women in society, which is why Saroja insists on educating her daughters. In *Can You Hear the Nightbird Call?* Pa-ji makes it a point to educate Sharan and broaden her views about the world. He wants her to be like a two edged sword acquiring two languages: English to do business with the whites and Gurbani to deal with her own people. Though there are disapprovals from his family, Sripathi in *The Hero's Walk* permits his daughters to go abroad for studies and beams with pride at his daughter's achievements. Education enlightens and elevates and those men who understand this do not stand in the way of young female achievers at home, instead they encourage them and help them to achieve their goals.

The Hero's Walk is Anita Rau Badami's second novel which won her the 2000 Common wealth Prize for fiction. This novel is about a family, its members and the society they belong to. The family pictured in the novel comprises the middle aged Sripathi Rao, a copy writer, his silent, docile wife Nirmala, his activist son Arun, his spinster sister Putti, his nagging mother Ammayya, his absent NRI daughter Maya, her Canadian husband Alan and their daughter Nandana. Nandana has a relatively small part in the text, but the story revolves around her. The South Indian Brahmin family in *The Hero's Walk* believes in conventional attitudes but the members of the family are forced to confront contemporary problems and hence they adapt themselves and change their opinions about life. When Maya marries against her father's will, she is disowned and forced to cut all her ties with her family. Maya and her husband along with their child live in Vancouver. Maya is a brilliant, accomplished and headstrong woman who is disowned for marrying a white man. Maya becomes the first in many ways in her family; she is the first woman to be educated in the family, the first to go abroad for studies, the first to marry on her own and the first to die young.

Badami's picturization of Maya's family in Vancouver is alluring, there is the lovable father Alan, the beautiful and intelligent mother Maya and the talkative cute daughter Nandana. Nandana and her father Alan share a very lovely relationship. Alan is the one who introduces her to books and she develops a liking for them. Her father paints and designs her dresser drawer for her; they do many activities together as a family, which makes the little girl miss her parents a lot. Though there are no separate chapters on Alan, he is beautifully pictured and one yearns for such a father.

Beautiful descriptions of grandparents showering love on their grandchildren is found in *The Hero's Walk*. Nirmala becomes Nandana's primary caregiver after the death of Nandana's parents in a road accident. She likes being fussed over by mamma lady who gave her only nutritious food, vegetables and fruits. She seems to forget that Nandana is a child and that children like to have chocolates, ice-cream and cakes. She even likes to be fed by mamma lady, "No -no, chinna, you mustn't waste good food...and slowly, she would put apiece at a time into Nandana's mouth, kissing her every time she ate one. Which she had to admit she liked, even though she wasn't a baby and could eat it by herself."(*The Hero's Walk*, 214).

Mothers consider it their utmost duty to get their daughters married properly and settled well in life. Being the dutiful mother Nirmala is worried that Maya would end up

like Putti if they don't find a suitable match for her soon. She argues with Sripathi that more than studies and all other achievements, marriage is a very crucial factor in the life of a woman if it does not happen at the right time it may never happen at all. She says, "The girl is already twenty-two, time for her to get married. As it is we have your sister still at home. Two-two unmarried women in the house is not good...this scholarship and all is fine, but more important is marriage...these things take time, and before we know it she also will be sitting like Putti and counting holy beads." (*The Hero's Walk*, 98). Contrarily Ammayya hoards a secret desire to cling on to her forty-two year old daughter Putti for the rest of her life and she rejects each one of Putti's suitors. Putti is the only one person in the whole world "who made Ammayya feel that she still existed." "Toothless and ancient I may be, thought Ammayya grimly, but not yet a corpse. And as long as I have my wits about me, my daughter will be mine." (*The Hero's Walk*, 83) Putti's desire to become a teacher is rejected by Ammayya who instructs her that women from respectable families should get married and run the household; their work must be confined to their own home and not to the world outside.

Badami writes about different women and one such powerful portrayal is that of Ammayya who is a hilarious character, everything about her is amusing, her habit of using chemical formulae for water, her occasional Latin terms, and she proves her might through her display of knowledge which she gained while helping Sripathi learn the encyclopaedia Britannia by heart through his father's insistence. Every month she tonsures her head to show herself as the bereaved wife of Narasimha Rao, on the contrary she wears all her gold chains and bangles.

The sensitive portrayal of ordinary life in an old culture with old traditions and values springs to life with the creation of characters like Ammayya. Ammayya never allows outsiders to enter her house, even Koti the house maid has to enter the house through the back door and she is strictly instructed to use a separate bathroom and when Arun uses it. Ammayya frowns and is disappointed by his unbrahmanical ways. She is disappointed by his ascetic and unimpressive life and she recollects that it is the thing "...with men in this family. Arrived in the world with a lot of noise and did nothing to deserve all that initial attention." (*The Hero's Walk*, 227)

Badami interestingly captures the little fights that go on between husbands and wives in families which is usually followed by comparisons and mocking of physical traits and characteristics. Making fun of Sripathi's thin mouth, Nirmala says, "...it looked like a

zippered purse...he had always found her to be like a bar of lifebuoy soap-functional but devoid of all imagination” (*The Hero's Walk*, 4). Like in many homes for everything that goes wrong, Sripathi scolds Nirmala and even holds her responsible for Maya's love for a foreigner. He says that being a mother she should have known that something was not right with her daughter even in the beginning and it would have been easier for them to cut her budding love for Alan. The new avatar of Nirmala frightens Sripathi, she is the one person whom he could always take for granted, one with whom he was friendly and could speak his heart out but post Maya's death she distances herself giving him hard-eyed cold looks. He could always “...depend on her for her simple wisdom and goodness, but now she seemed to be changing before his very eyes.” (*The Hero's Walk*, 293).

Women in Indian society are expected to stay indoors, their sole purpose being cooking for the family and bringing up children. They are also taught to live within their means, “A good Hindu wife had to maintain the pretence that her husband was supporting the family” (*The Hero's Walk*, 14). The plight of Indian women in yester years where they could not even question a husband who takes a mistress is put forth in the novel. Ammayya's mom consoles her that she must feel proud that her husband is able to support two women and that since she is treated like a queen there was nothing to worry about and also instructs her to continue her role of a wife efficiently.

Siblings taking care of each other and little acts like holding hands while crossing roads, carrying each other's bags, fighting against the younger kid's enemies bring back memories of good old days. To Arun, Maya is a bold elder sister who “shielded him from bullies and fights,” and played the role of a protector all throughout his elementary school years. He remembers her as one who dared everyone to save her little brother from all sorts of trouble at school and at home. “A sibling may be the keeper of one's identity, the only person with the keys to one's unfettered, more fundamental self.” says Marian Sandmaier a renowned writer and editor specializing in psychology. Sensing his interest in environmental issues she sends him paper clippings, cd's and other such useful material that may be of help to him.

Many fathers sacrifice their desires and struggle to provide proper education and food for their children, but when their children are irresponsible and do not care to earn for the family, the fathers become enraged and totally feel helpless and do not know how to handle the situation. Likewise in *The Hero's Walk*, when his father scolds Arun for whiling away his time and getting himself involved in protest marches, his mother defends him

saying, “at least he has the guts to go out and do something about garbage and pollution and all.” (Hero's Walk, 43). Arun is a total contrast to his father. While his father carefully avoids every danger possible that lurked around the world, Arun is very willing and daring to brave each and every odd against the world. He is the “planet-saving son” to his father and is a revolutionary, thoughtful and caring individual. Sripathi is always critical of Arun's activism regarding environmental issues, thus he repeats Ammayya's attitude towards him about his decision to give up medicine. *“What are you involved in now? Henh? Some other saving-the-world project? Why are you wasting your time trying to be a big hero instead of getting a job? Here I am, head full of grey hair, going to work everyday like an ox, and my son sits at home dreaming useless dreams.”* (Hero's Walk,)

Can You Hear the Night bird Call? has three important female characters and the story revolves around them, while Sharanjeet Kaur called as Bibi-ji and Leela Bhat are immigrants to Canada and Nirmaljeet Kaur called as Nimmo is based in India. Sharanjeet Kaur is born into an impoverished family. She changes her economic condition by using her beauty and feminine wiles to ensnare a rich groom who was actually promised to her plain looking elder sister, Kanwar. Her dreams for a better life are primarily fuelled by her father Harjot Singh who desperately wanted to go abroad in search of wealth but his ship *Komagata Maru*, carrying several passengers like him on the lookout for good jobs, was forced to retreat from the shores of Canada. Disappointed with life and luck, Harjot Singh resigns himself to his cot all day and all night and Sharanjeet Kaur's mother Gurpreet Kaur's life becomes bitter as she is burdened with the responsibility of being the sole bread-winner of her family and of ensuring that both her daughters are married into good families. The silent plight of Kanwar, who gets rejected by many grooms, showcases the condition of women in Indian society where a woman is valued solely on the basis of her looks, her “femininity” and her social status. Eligible bachelors find Kanwar wanting in all these aspects and she is, ultimately, forced to marry a widower and stay in India only to be brutally murdered during the communal riots that take place during the Partition of India.

The traumatizing effect that violence leaves on victims and their pitiable plight is portrayed through Nirmaljeet Kaur, the daughter of Kanwar Kaur. Kanwar along with her husband and two sons faces violent deaths in the communal riots that arose during India's partition. Nirmaljeet Kaur's firsthand experience of death and violence at a very early age keeps her frightened all throughout her life and she never trusts anyone and feels safe only within the walls of her house. She holds her family very precious which consists of her

husband Satpal, her two sons Jasbeer and Pappu and her only daughter Kamal. Bibi-ji does not have children of her own and by chance she comes to know of the existence of her long lost niece, Nimmo. She comes to India, reunites with her niece thus ending her desperate search for her sister's family. Bibi-ji helps Nimmo financially and releases her husband from the clutches of a money lender and in return Bibi-ji asks Nimmo to give her son Jasbeer to be brought up in Canada to provide him with good education. Reluctantly she gives away her son which causes a deep wound in his heart and he never forgives his mother for her act. She loses her son to Bibi-ji and repents later for trusting her aunt. The jealousy between brothers vying for their mother's love, trivial fights with neighbours, present an interesting and pleasant read. Though Bibi-ji tries her best at parenting she does not succeed, there are issues like her age, the child's mental agony caused by separation from his parents and his homeland. Even at the end of the novel Jasbeer acts as a recluse, he does not fit in, he is neither there nor here.

Badami depicts interracial marriage between a German woman called Rosa Schweers and Hari Shastri who is of South Indian origin. Hari comes from a very pious Hindu family and they believe that he has committed a heinous crime by marrying a “casteless” woman who follows a different religion and belongs to a different nation. They treat Rosa as an “outsider”, and Hari's mother always waits for opportunities to verbally abuse her white daughter-in-law. The violence that is perpetrated against Rosa on the basis of her colour, her religion, her way of living, initially makes her fight back in response to her victimization. But she finally admits defeat in the face of constant discrimination by her in-laws and the lack of support from her husband, and so retreats into her own world of misery and unhappiness. Only death relieves her from her state of wretchedness that her in-laws have imposed on her. Leela is their daughter who is labelled by her grandmother as a “half-and-half,” a nickname that is quickly picked up by her cousins in order to continuously taunt her about her mixed racial background and also to make sure that she always has to linger outside the family's circle of love.

Leela in an effort to blend in and to camouflage her mixed parentage marries Balu Bhat, a chemistry professor with a rich heritage and a renowned family name. She feels uprooted by moving over to Vancouver and is angry with her husband for destroying her stable life which she yearned to have all her life. Even while living in Vancouver she teaches her children of Indian customs, she passes on all her superstitious beliefs, she takes pride in talking about her husband's family heritage but always is careful not to mention about her

own parents and her casteless state. Back home she is looked upon as an in-between like the King Trishanku hanging between the two worlds of heaven and earth, an image Badami employs in previous novels too. She has a complete advantage moving abroad since there are no caste based communities but people were merely looked upon as ethnic minorities, and nobody cared about her mixed parentage. She has great time bonding with Bibi-ji from Punjab, Mrs Wu from China; the telephone directory which had unfamiliar names in the early days of her arrival to Vancouver now is filled with names of friends who were like her own family.

Family, the basic component of Indian society is convincingly portrayed in all of Badami's works. "There are so many of us, and our lots are so different, what wonder that Nature's mood is often in harsh contrast with the great crisis of our lives? We are children of a large family, and must learn, as such children do, not to expect that our hurts will be made much of--to be content with little nurture and caressing, and help each other the more." --says George Eliot in Adam Bede. The entire world is one family and Badami's characters stress the universality of human nature. One can change other things about his/her life, but one has to start and end with the family which is what Badami tries to convince her readers about.

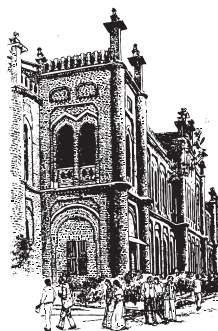
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Teaching English through Cricket Commentary: a Non-Conventional Method in the Acquisition of Speaking Skills

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Abstract

This article intends to analyse the possibilities of acquisition of speaking skills by using cricket commentary. Since enhancement of speaking skills of any language is developed mostly by practice through imitation, it is better to find a field of activity that the learners are exposed to and are interested in. One such means is the exploitation of cricket commentary to teach English. Majority of the learners are interested in watching cricket and they are exposed to good English through watching cricket and listening to commentary. The aim of this paper is to formulate simple guidelines for the learners of the English language on the basis of cricket commentary to enrich their speaking skills and to indicate some feasible means of facilitating language learning through cricket commentary.

Background to the study

Enhancing speaking skills of second language learners of English is an uphill task. Therefore, various pedagogical tools have to be used to develop speaking skills but several methods that were tried out already failed to attract the attention of the learners. It is difficult to provide a comfortable and even platform for learning. It is always beneficial for both teachers and learners to identify learners' the interest and use it to create an enabling ambience that facilitates the acquisition of language skills. Perhaps, tracking down the field in which the learners are exposed to the English language makes the task of the teacher easier.

During the childhood days of many Indian children whose mother tongues are diverse, cricket commentary has been the only source of listening to good English, knowingly or unknowingly. While watching cricket they get used to some rare words like bamboozle, caress, and tamper unconsciously. Some philosophical statements with similes and metaphors can be learnt from people like Navjot Singh Sidhu. For instance, he is known for idiomatic use of English: "Doubt will always create a mountain and faith will tunnel through it," "One, who doesn't throw the dice, can never expect to score a six," "Patience is the greatest of all shock-absorbers." They can also have the privilege of listening to many old idioms and phrases such as playing the second fiddle, Herculean task and much more.

In a scenario where the so called modern English schools are busy in creating a species of children who can promptly say “yes miss” and “no miss,” it is inevitable that cricket commentary makes a great impact on getting used to English as a language. Nowadays, students are very much interested in watching the whole cricket match right from the toss to the post match presentation ceremony and even the pre- and post-match analysis of a match, so that the students can have an elaborate discussion on the match during the break of the next day at school or college. Listening and imitating commentators does a world of good to enhance one's fluency because fluency means to construct sentences in feet which one can easily acquire through listening to masters of cricket commentary. Thus, Tony Greig, Ravi Shastri, Richie Benaud, and Robin Jackman, et al. are becoming the silent English language teachers for millions of Indian students. Elders who followed cricket matches through noisy transistors would always encourage children to watch a cricket match through radio by which they mean that those commentators are vivid in their narrative techniques so that even by listening to their commentary we can watch a match. Personally, the researcher owes a lot to cricket and its live commentators who played a vital role in improving his language since watching cricket was the only source through which he could listen to English.

Research questions

As stated earlier it is quite clear that majority of the Indian students are obsessed with cricket and are exposed to good English language through watching cricket. The discussion which is generated by the following questions will be the focus of this article:

1. How can this factor be exploited by an English teacher?
2. How well can this method be designed as a learning tool?

This analysis is mainly divided into two divisions: learner's roles and teacher's roles in using cricket commentary as a module to teach the nuances of speaking skills.

Methodology

The structural framework of this method is carried out by having two major parameters in mind: ends and means. Speaking skills must be enhanced to a considerable level and the means of learning, must also be interesting so that it can attract the active participation of all learners. Therefore, this learning will feature different activities which will require the involvement of all learners in an equal proportion.

Learner's roles

The learner while enjoying the sheer pleasure of watching cricket can simultaneously acquire English language speaking skills in numerous ways. The learner has to pay a little attention to the commentary. After identifying the words and phrases, they have to find out the meaning and usage of those words with the help of a dictionary or a teacher. The learners who are well in course with the proceedings of the match can easily identify the context of a catchy phrase and can try using it in their day to day conversational English. For instance, Ravi Shastri used the phrase “bending his back” when Yuvraj Singh, the Indian cricketer, was steering the Indian team towards victory during the semi-final match against Pakistan in the 2011 ICC World cup. Yuvraj Singh was the man who was driving the Indian vehicle towards Wankhede, Mumbai. Here, Wankhede means the stadium where the world cup final was to be played. A viewer can easily decode the meaning of this phrase since he is in line with the context of the game and now the learner has to try and use it while conversing with fellow learners. Another working example can be the phrase “**playing the second fiddle**” used by the commentator. The learner should use it in his own sentence like “I always tend to **play the second fiddle** since Raju always takes the lead during group singing.”

Besides, learners can also use the facility provided by espncricinfo.com which provides a well documented ball by ball commentary in a script form. By using this, the learners can easily identify the new vocabulary they struck with and can also identify the idioms and phrases used by the commentator. By using this, the learner can try commentary of his own during the repeat telecast by muting the volume which will do a world of good to his fluency. The learners can also send commentary feedback for which the learners has to possess good language and also cricketing ideas to get his commentary feedback published on the website. The learner can also try commentating during street cricket matches and they can also try describing things other than cricket. Certainly, narrating techniques will be enhanced since commentators always try to portray a picturesque view of a match with their words. The problem of groping for words will be reduced which will in turn help in enhancing the fluency of the learner. Trying to imitate the commentators can also help in acquiring speaking skill since majority of the commentators speak good English. Thus, the major role of the learner is to be in full alert to search for words, idioms and phrases and should use them in their daily discourse. They should also practise commentating whenever they find opportunities.

Teacher's roles

As facilitator, a teacher should formulate certain tasks related to cricket commentary. The teacher should screen a cricket video clip and the students should be allowed to follow the commentary. After screening, the teacher should test them by asking the meaning and usage of the words or phrases used in the commentary. If there is any doubt among the students, the teacher should solve the doubts regarding pronunciation, articulation, and usage. The teacher can ask the learners to prepare a commentary for a part of the match and can ask the learners to enact a commentary session in the classroom so that the teacher will be able to correct the learners. The teacher can also arrange group discussion on the previous days match and should effectively monitor it. The teacher must be innovative in finding different means of using cricket commentary to teach English. Since cricket is an ultimate attracting force, it would draw the students' attention towards the content of what is taught. Thus, a teacher acts as an effective facilitator in using cricket commentary to enhance the speaking skills of the learners.

Summing up

In the light of the possible means of using cricket commentary for enhancement of speaking skills, it is quite evident that it would be well received among students and it would also become a success in its cause because the majority of the learners are exposed to good English language through cricket commentary. Instead of trying all the traditional methods which may strive hard in fitting well with the interest of the learners, this kind of non-conventional methods would help them learn through things which the learners are well aware of. This would also make a teacher a co-learner. Thus, learners and teachers play on their own turf and optimize the learning outcomes. Moreover, the method is so open-ended that teachers may improvise/remodel/redesign it to suit the level of learners.

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Sports Sources in Developing Reading Skills

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Abstract

Reading is the most crucial skill to be mastered due to several reasons. Reading, a service skill, necessitates very minimum requirements such as a text and motivation. The theory of top-down, bottom-up, and meta-cognitive could be used as the basis for improving the techniques of teaching 'reading.' As reading has become a dying art, it is high time teachers of English inculcated the habit of reading among the learners who solely depend on the electronic media. The selection of reading materials plays a major role in making the learners read. Sports news is used as the source material to teach different types of reading strategies. This article is an attempt to impart reading habits among engineering students by developing modules through Interest Oriented Learning Approach.

Key Words: Reading, Interest Oriented Learning, Sports Sources, Modules

Introduction

Among the four language skills, reading is possibly the most extensively and intensively studied by experts in the field of language teaching. The results of the researches conducted for many decades on nature of reading—how people learn to process textual information—have contributed contrasting theories about what works best in the teaching of reading. As a result, language educators can choose among a wide variety of teaching methods and techniques for students learning to read in their second language (SL) or foreign language (FL).

The principal theories of reading are the three main theories which explain the nature of learning to read. The traditional view or bottom up processing, focused on the printed form of a text, the cognitive view or top-down processing enhanced the role of background knowledge in addition to what appeared on the printed page, the metacognitive view is based on the control and manipulation that a reader can have on the act of comprehending a text and thus, emphasizes the involvement of the reader's thinking about what he is doing while reading.

The traditional view:

According to Dole et al. (1991), in the traditional view of reading, readers acquire a set of hierarchically ordered sub-skills that sequentially build toward comprehension ability. Readers are considered to be the passive recipients of information in the text. Meaning resides in the text and the reader has to reproduce the meaning. This view was influenced by behaviorist psychology of the 1950s, which claimed learning was based upon “habit formation, brought about by the repeated association of a stimulus with a response” and language learning was characterized as a “response system that humans acquire through automatic conditioning processes,” where “some patterns of language are reinforced (rewarded) and others are not,” and “only those patterns reinforced by the community of language users will persist” (Omaggio 1993, 45-46). Behaviorism became the basis of the audio-lingual method, which sought to form second language “habits” through drilling, repetition, and error correction.

According to this view, reading is a linear process by which readers decode a text word by word, linking the words into phrases and then sentences (Gray and Rogers, cited in Kucer 1987). According to Samuels and Kamil (1988: 25), the emphasis on behaviorism treated reading as a word-recognition response to the stimuli of the printed words, where “little attempt was made to explain what went on within the recesses of the mind that allowed the human to make sense of the printed page”. Information is received and processed beginning with the smallest sound units, and proceeded to letter blends, words, phrases, and sentences.

- According to Nunan (1991), reading in this view is basically a matter of decoding a series of written symbols into their aural equivalents in the quest for making sense of the text. He referred to this process as the 'bottom-up' view of reading.
- McCarthy (1999) has called this view 'outside-in' processing; referring to the idea that meaning exists in the printed page and is interpreted by the reader then taken in.

The bottom-up model describes information flow as a series of stages that transforms the input and passes it to the next stage without any feedback or possibility of later stages of the process influencing earlier stages (Stanovich, 1980). Language is viewed as a code and the reader's main task is to identify graphemes and convert them into phonemes. The ESL and EFL textbooks influenced by this perspective include exercises that focus on literal comprehension and give little or no importance to the reader's knowledge or experience with the subject matter, and the only interaction is with the basic building blocks of sounds and words. Most activities are based on recognition and recall of lexical and grammatical forms with an emphasis on the perceptual and decoding dimension.

This model of reading has felt to be insufficient and defective for the main reason that it relies on the formal features of the language, mainly words and structure. In this view, there is over-reliance on structure. It must be noticed that knowledge of linguistic features is necessary for comprehension to take place. To counteract over-reliance on form in the traditional view of reading, the cognitive view was introduced.

The Cognitive View:

A paradigm shift occurred in the cognitive sciences during 1960s. Behaviorism became somewhat discredited as the new cognitive theory represented the mind's innate capacity for learning, which gave new explanatory power to how humans acquired their first language; this also had a tremendous impact on the field of ESL/EFL as psycholinguists explained "how such internal representations of the foreign language develop within the learner's mind" (Omaggio, 1993: 57).

Ausubel (cited in Omaggio, 1993: 58), made an important distinction between meaningful learning and rote learning. An example of rote learning is simply memorizing lists of isolated words or rules in a new language, where the information becomes temporary and subject to loss. Meaningful learning, on the other hand, occurs when new information is presented in a relevant context and is related to what the learner already knows, so that it can be easily integrated into one's existing cognitive structure. A learning that is not meaningful will not become permanent. This emphasis on meaning eventually informed the top-down approach to L2 learning. The 'top-down' model is in direct opposition to the 'bottom-up' model and in the 1960s and 1970s there was an explosion of teaching methods and activities that strongly considered the experience and knowledge of the learner.

According to Nunan (1991) and Dubin and Bycina (1991), the psycholinguistic model of reading and the top-down model are in exact concordance. Goodman (1967; cited in Paran, 1996) presented reading as a psycholinguistic guessing game, a process in which readers sample the text, make hypotheses, confirm or reject them, make new hypotheses, and so forth. Here, the reader rather than the text is at the heart of the reading process.

Cognitively based views of reading comprehension emphasize the interactive nature of reading and the constructive nature of comprehension. Dole et al. (1991) have stated that, besides knowledge brought to bear on the reading process, a set of flexible, adaptable strategies are used to make sense of a text and to monitor ongoing understanding. These new cognitive and top-down processing approaches revolutionized the conception of the way students learn to read (Smith, 1994). In this view, reading is not just extracting

meaning from a text but a process of connecting information in the text with the knowledge the reader brings to the act of reading. In this sense, reading is a dialogue between the reader and the text which involves an active cognitive process in which the reader's background knowledge plays a key role in the creation of meaning (Tierney and Pearson, 1994). Reading is not a passive mechanical activity but purposeful and rational, dependent on the prior knowledge and expectations of the reader. It is not merely a matter of decoding print to sound but also a matter of making sense of written language (Smith, 1994: 2)

Schema Theory:

Another theory closely related to top-down processing called schema theory had a major impact on reading instruction. The schema theory of reading also fits within the cognitively based view of reading. It describes in detail how the background knowledge of the learner interacts with the reading task and illustrates how a student's knowledge and previous experience with the world is crucial to deciphering a text. The ability to use this schemata, or background knowledge, plays a fundamental role in one's trial to comprehend a text

Rumelhart (1977) has described schemata as "building blocks of cognition" which are used in the process of interpreting sensory data, in retrieving information from memory, in organising goals and subgoals, in allocating resources, and in guiding the flow of the processing system. He has also stated that if our schemata are incomplete and do not provide an understanding of the incoming data from the text we will have problems processing and understanding the text

Schema theory is based on the notion that past experiences lead to the creation of mental frameworks that help a reader make sense of new experiences. Smith (1994: 14) calls schemes the "extensive representations of more general patterns or regularities that occur in our experience". For instance one's generic scheme of an airplane will allow him to make sense of airplane he has not previously flid with. This means that past experiences will be related to new experiences, which may include the knowledge of "objects, situations, and events as well as knowledge of procedures for retrieving, organizing and interpreting information" (Kucer, 1987: 31). Anderson (1994: 469) presents research showing that recall of information in a text is affected by the reader's schemata and explains that "a reader comprehends a message when he is able to bring to mind a schema that gives account of the objects and events described in the message". Comprehension is the process of "activating or constructing a schema that provides a coherent explanation of objects and events mentioned in a discourse" (Anderson, 1994: 473). For Anderson and Pearson (1988: 38),

comprehension is the interaction between old and new information. They emphasize: “To say that one has comprehended a text is to say that she has found a mental 'home' for the information in the text, or else that she has modified an existing mental home in order to accommodate that new information”. Therefore, a learner's schemata will restructure it to accommodate new information as that information is added to the system (Omaggio, 1993).

Content and formal schemata:

Schema theorists differentiate formal schemata (knowledge about the structure of a text) from content schemata (knowledge about the subject matter of a text), and a reader's prior knowledge of both schemata enables him to predict events and meaning as well as to infer meaning from a wider context. Formal schemata refers to the way that texts differ from one another; for example, a reading text could be a fictional work, a letter to the editor, or a scientific essay, and each genre will have a different structural organization. Knowledge of these genre structures can aid reading comprehension, as it gives readers a basis for predicting what a text will be like (Smith 1994). Content schemata refer to the message of the text. One's familiarity with the content will make more productive and efficient. As Anderson (1994: 469) explains, “a reader comprehends a message when he is able to bring to mind a schema that gives account of the objects and events described in the message”.

Activating and building schemata:

Since the reader plays a fundamental role in the construction of meaning, his age, gender, experience, and culture are important considerations for teachers who want to select readings that will motivate their learners. Anderson (1994) notes that when readers cannot locate a schema that fits a text, they may find it incomprehensible. In such cases it may not be possible for the reader to understand the text, and the teachers should engage in “building new background knowledge as well as activating existing background knowledge” (Carrell, 1988: 248).

The Metacognitive view:

According to Block (1992), there is now no more debate on "whether reading is a bottom-up, language-based process or a top-down, knowledge-based process. Research has defined that the control readers execute on their ability to understand a text can be attributed toward metacognitive view. Block (1992) has referred this control as metacognition. Metacognition involves thinking about what one is doing while reading.

Klein et al. (1991) stated that strategic readers attempt the following while reading:

- Identifying the purpose of the reading before reading

- Identifying the form or type of the text before reading
- Thinking about the general character and features of the form or type of the text. For instance, they try to locate a topic sentence and follow supporting details toward a conclusion
- Projecting the author's purpose for writing the text (while reading it),
- Choosing, scanning, or reading in detail
- Making continuous predictions about what will occur next, based on information obtained earlier, prior knowledge, and conclusions obtained within the previous stages

Moreover, they attempt to form a summary of what was read. Carrying out the previous steps requires the reader to be able to classify sequence, establish whole-part relationships, compare and contrast, determine cause-effect, summarise, hypothesise and predict, infer and conclude. After selecting the text, the teacher needs to do the following three stages of activities to activate and build the learners' understanding. Pre-reading activities, in which the teachers' have to make learners think, write, and discuss everything they know regarding the topic, employing techniques such as prediction, semantic mapping, and reconciled reading. The objective is to make sure that learners have the relevant thought for understanding the text. During-reading activities, the teachers guide and monitor the interaction between the reader and the text. One important skill teachers can impart at this stage is note-taking, which allows students to compile new vocabulary and important information and details, and to summarize information and record their reactions and opinions. Post-reading activities which facilitate the chance to evaluate learners' adequacy of interpretation, while bearing in mind that accuracy is relative and that "readership" must be respected as long as the writer's intentions are addressed (Tierney and Pearson, 1994). Post-reading activities focus on a wide range of questions that allow for different interpretations

Sports Sources in developing Reading Skills:

Based on the theories of reading, Sports act as a field of interest for many learners and thus, it creates a platform to apply the strategies of reading in an effective manner. Reading has become a dying art. So it is high time for the teachers of English to inculcate the habit of reading among the learners who solely depend on electronic media. The selection of reading materials plays a major role in making the learners read. As Krashen talks about the "Input Hypothesis", he mentions "Comprehensible input refers to utterances that the

learner understands based on the context in which they are used as well as the language in which they are phrased” (Richards & Rodgers 2001:182). This insists the importance of selecting the reading material based on the learners' insight.

As sports news is known and interesting to the learners, this is used as the source material to teach different types of reading strategies. London Olympics has created the greatest impact and enthusiasm among the younger generation. A news article related to this has been chosen as a source material to teach Reading skills. Modules were prepared based on the model of Business English Certificate course (BEC) Vantage level Reading component. The first module was on matching exercise where the reader is expected to match the answer statements with that of the news reports using various skills of Reading such as skipping, skimming and scanning. The second module was on Cloze exercise in which the reader is expected to find out the correct option by understanding the language structure such as unity, coherence, cohesive devices, etc.,

Reading

- Look at the statements below and the Olympic news reports
- Which news report (A, B or C) does each statement 1-7 refer to?
- For each sentence 1-7, mark one letter (A, B or C)
- You will need to use some of the letters more than once.
 1. This young man added a feather in the cap of India just like that of the wrestler Sushilkumar.
 2. This unbeaten Jamaican created a History in the Athletic field.
 3. He obeyed the words of his coach to clinch a medal in the London Olympics.
 4. This Indian Shooter's performance looked like that of a highly experienced Shooter.
 5. He is a sprinter who aimed to become a legend.
 6. This Olympian holds a position in Indian Civil Services.
 7. He is a man possessing a pleasing personality.

A sprinter and a showman

By retaining his Olympic 100m title Bolt has emulated the great Carl Lewis as the only ones to win back-to-back short dash gold medals in the 116-year history of the modern Games. In doing so in yet another display of brilliant sprinting, clocking an Olympic record 9.63s, the second fastest time ever behind his world record of 9.58s, the Jamaican also silenced doubters including an array of former stars, and carved for himself a niche in the annals of

athletics history. Bolt had said that he wanted to be a legend and for that he had to retain his titles. “That was the first step to becoming a legend,” he said. In four years since Beijing 2008 he had been beaten only twice in the 100, by Gay in 2010 and by Blake this season, excluding the disqualification in Daegu.

A pleasant surprise!

Vijay Kumar clenched his fists in celebration after winning the silver medal. There was no drama. He was calm even while he was shooting at five targets in four seconds, eight times in the final. He looked like a seasoned champion in a nerve-wracking contest. He readily posed with the national flag, when requested, before the medal ceremony. Even after the victory, he was as polite as ever. The Olympic silver medal hung lightly around his neck. The 26-year-old Vijay Kumar, a bachelor, does not have a degree from any University. But the Army subedar from Himachal Pradesh is a master in the art of shooting. It was a brilliant fare from the young man, who was the dark horse in the Indian shooting squad.

A huge stone off my chest — Narang

Narang completely believed in the methods of his coach Stanislas Lapidus of Kazakhstan in his quest for an Olympic medal. He stayed within the boundaries set, though he was overwhelmed by the manner in which the media built up Indian athletes as superstars in the run-up to the Olympics. For most of us who thought Narang was paying less attention to practising after he had opened an academy in Hyderabad and brought experts from around the world to help hone India's shooting talent, it was a huge relief that the man could cut out everything and focus on his training. For someone who was hesitant to say even 'hello' to you when one was talking to the other shooters in Athens, Narang has retained his personality. He treats you with the same affection and respect.

(Source: Sports star)

Reading

Read the article below about winning Silver Medal in Wrestling (London Olympics 2012).

Choose the best sentence from the given options to fill in each of the gaps.

For each gap 1 – 6 mark one letter (A –H).

Do not use any letter more than once.

There is an example at the beginning (0).

SEEING OPPORTUNITY IN EVERY OBSTACLE

He is a champion at heart. (0).....G..... . Without doubt, Sushil Kumar, 29, is the one Indian sportsperson who has made tremendous progress from the last Olympics in Beijing. (1)..... .

Sushil, like a phoenix, came back into the contest after losing the first round in Beijing. He won three rounds in the repechage to emulate K. D. Jadhav (1952 Helsinki Games) by winning a wrestling medal for India in the Olympics. “What I could not do in Beijing, I will try to do in London,” Sushil said then. He kept his promise.

“A lot of people wondered whether we could change the colour of the medal in wrestling. With the blessings and good wishes of the whole country, I am happy that I could do that. I see a golden future for Indian wrestling by the next Olympics,” said Sushil, after winning the silver medal in the 66 kg freestyle category at the ExCel Arena, hours before the Closing Ceremony.

(2)..... . Perhaps Sergey Bubka's charm had rubbed off on Sushil as he received his medal from the pole vault legend in Beijing. Bubka, incidentally, had bettered the world record 27 times. Sushil had finished 14th on his Olympic debut in Athens (2004).

(3)..... . And now, in London, he has won the silver medal. So, do not be surprised if he becomes the No. 1 at the 2016 Olympics in Rio. Cricketer Sachin Tendulkar called Sushil in London to congratulate him on the wonderful achievement. He expressed his desire to meet the champion wrestler at a function in India soon.

Sushil, who rode on the confidence of his Beijing Olympic medal to win the World Championship gold in 2010, is of the view that Indian wrestlers are capable of matching the best in the world. He himself proved it by defeating the defending champion, Ramazan Sahin of Turkey, in the first round. (4)..... . Instead, he looked at it as an opportunity.

“When I fight anyone, I just try to do my best. I do not worry about the record of the opponent. Everyone who comes to the Olympics has to be good, and is trying to show his ability to the world. You have to be prepared for anyone.

(5)..... . The wrestlers are becoming quicker by the day,” said Sushil, who spends months together in training camps with single-minded devotion.

(6)..... .

There was a bit of blood in the semifinal bout as Sushil pressed his face hard on

the ear of Akzhurek Tanatarov of Kazakhstan. The Indian was trailing 0-3 in the decisive third period then and needed to do something dramatic to revive his fortunes.

Sushil became the only Indian to win back-to-back individual Olympic medals because he does not look at the expectations of his fellow citizens as a burden. Instead, Sushil treats it as a positive energy. He may not be the best in the country, even counting his two Olympic medals apart from his World Championship gold, but Sushil is definitely one of the most loved Indian sportsmen.

(Source: Sports Star)

- A. Facing the Beijing Games champion was not a hurdle for Sushil.
- B. Sushil's improvement has been sure and steady.
- C. Moreover, he is the only Indian to win individual medals in two successive Olympics.
- D. Every situation is different and you have to be alert all the time.
- E. Four years later, in Beijing, he won the bronze medal.
- F. One cannot succeed at the highest level of sport if he is not willing to shed blood, sweat and tears in training.
- G. It is not surprising that he helped Indian wrestling graduate from the bronze medal status to silver on the final day of the London Olympics.
- H. Sushil pointed out that most of the wrestlers knew each other and had a lot of concern for each other

Observation:

Learners of pre-final year EEE were given these modules and asked to answer the questions. It was a splendid experience to notice the urge of the learners to do the activities. The learners felt that the first module was quite easy whereas the second module needed some extra effort. *They expressed their ideas freely and in fact there was an overwhelming response from the learners that ultimately resulted in interaction. As there was interaction, their communication skills were given importance and they gained confidence to share their ideas. Language learning becomes enjoyable when their interest become the modus operandi.*

Conclusion:

Sports Arena paves the excellent way in learning the language. When the learning process involves innovative strategies, it definitely bridges the gap between academic performance and communicative effectiveness. As a revolution to the conventional methods of

teaching, integrating Sports related activities make teaching and learning English an enjoyable experience. Knowledge about Sports definitely helps the learners get adequate training in making use of the language in an efficient way. In order to understand the context and to make use of the language it is mandatory that learning with interest and practicing it accordingly will surely accelerate the speed of learning and improve the skill of reading. The entire activity is performed by the learner that ultimately results in a “learner-centered approach” which can be termed as Interest Oriented Learning.

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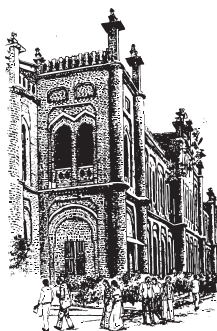
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Negotiating between Science and Fiction: A Reading of Amitav Ghosh's *The Calcutta Chromosome*.

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Abstract:

*It is a widely acknowledged fact that the contours of the twenty-first century are defined by the process of globalisation which has brought about much transformation in its wake. The modern world is incomprehensible without considering the effects of globalisation at the intellectual, social economic and cultural levels of life. The revolutionary innovations and techniques in the field of science have also contributed towards changes far beyond human expectations. Contemporary Indian writings in English, specifically fiction have attempted to produce varied responses to the challenges and vicissitudes characterizing human existence in a scientifically and technologically advanced world. Amitav Ghosh is one of the acclaimed literary voices of the postcolonial era whose works attest the presentation of a host of issues ranging from the portrayal of the dichotomized worlds of the colonizer and the colonized to the futuristic vision of the world through highly innovative use of scientific techniques. In this article, an attempt has been made to read Ghosh's **The Calcutta Chromosome** (1996) as a presentation of the plight of modernity scorching its way to make sense of their life and existence in a scientific and technological age.*

There is something intractable hidden and remains lodged at the secret heart of everything that fits into the system, something that cannot fail to make things happen in it.

-- Jean Francois Lyotard, *The Postmodern Explained to Children*.

Born in Calcutta in 1956, Amitav Ghosh is a celebrated writer of the contemporary postcolonial times whose literary oeuvre bears testimony to his versatile genius. His greatness reveals itself in his superb ability to alternate with ease between different subjects as anthropology, history, science or fantasy. *The Calcutta Chromosome* is Ghosh's fourth novel, and is subtitled *A Novel of Fevers, Delirium and Discovery*. *The Calcutta Chromosome* was published in 1996, and Ghosh become the first novelist from the Third World countries to receive the prestigious Arthur C. Clarke Award for Science Fiction. Shifting between past and present, ***The Calcutta Chromosome*** houses a number of characters with their varied experiences, but what unites them is their drive to find meaningful insights into their lives in a world of contradictions, and this is well illustrated in the presentation of major as well as minor characters. Besides, the novel is noted for its strange blend of philosophy, history, religious, science and psychology.

The narrative of the novel proceeds by using Antar, an Egyptian employee with International Water Council, as a medium to track the life experiences of L. Murugan, an Indian scientist working in New York based organisation called Life Watch, “a small but respected non– profit organisation that served as a global health consultancy and epidemiological data bank” (CC 8). At the outset of the novel itself, Ghosh introduces us to the main thread that connects the different, yet interlocking narratives of the novel. In the opening pages of the novel, the readers are introduced to “the remnant of an ID card” (CC 3). With the aid of Ava who “had been programmed to hunt out real–time information” (CC 4), Antar finds out that the owner of the ID card was one of his former colleagues at Life Watch who had been “missing since August 21, 1995” (CC 20) and last seen in Calcutta. The ID card found on Ava's screen acts as a stimulating influence on Antar who tries to unearth all the details regarding Murugan including Murugan's research bent of mind and his search for the elusive Calcutta Chromosome. Referred to as “Morgan” (CC 31) and further described as a “cocky little rooster of a man” (CC 31), Murugan has developed an interest in the early history of malaria research” (CC 31) right from his graduation days at Syracuse, and has ever since been active in the field of malarial research. Having attributed a godly status to Ronald Ross, Murugan decides to devote his entire life to find more facts about Ross and his malarial findings, and so lands in India. Therefore, risking his career, Murugan undertakes to fulfill his quest by travelling from the United States to Calcutta, the haven of Ross's discoveries. Murugan desires to reach Calcutta before August 20th, the day which Ross has designated to 'World Mosquito Day' (CC 33). Despite much protests from his organisation which “had done everything in its power to dissuade him” (CC 33), Murugan remains firm in his decision to leave for Calcutta and even to work there on a meagre salary.

With a view to popularise Ross and his discoveries, Murugan decides to learn more about the significance of the malarial research. As one goes through the novel, one finds that though Murugan is full of accolades for Ross, yet he is also not without apprehensions in relation to Ross's research career. In order to supplement for Ross's findings, Murugan draws his own assumptions. Following his obsession with Ross and his malarial findings, Murugan even writes an article entitled “Certain Systematic Discrepancies in Ronald Ross Account of Plasmodium B” (CC 32) which he later revises as “An Alternative Interpretation of Late 19th Century Malaria Research: Is there a Secret History?” But unfortunately both the articles meet with hostile reception and he is dubbed as an “eccentric” and a “crank” (CC 32). It is of interest to note how Murugan's quest has a simultaneous focus on the personal life as well as scientific career of Ross. The introduction

of Lutchman in the scientific life of Ross can be seen as a deliberate move on the part of the novelist, for as a “healthy looking young fellow” (CC 65), Lutchman acts as a guinea pig on whom Ross's experiments on the malarial bug are carried out. It is Lutchman who cleverly tries to mislead Ross and Murugan is doubtful about Lutchman's intentions. Murugan tells Antar:

I've got some leads, said Murugan. 'Too many maybe. As I see it, he was all over the map, changing names, switching identities, My suspicion is that he was the point man for whoever was the real brain behind the scheme (CC 76). Murugan's life in Calcutta helps him to find out and fill in the gaps in Ross's research career by providing references to Ross's predecessors like Elijah Farley who worked in the laboratory set up by D.D Cunningham. It is here that Farley meets Mangala, the washer woman who treats the patient of syphilitic dementia, all in strict privacy. Ghosh presents Mangala as a semi-goddess who performs rituals far beyond human comprehension. While dealing with Mangala, Ghosh suggests that Murugan's quest combines in itself science, counter science, occult and witchcraft. Murugan is awestruck at the way in which Mangala uses malaria as a treatment for syphilis. The idea of interpersonal transference is worked out through Mangala, and Murugan finds out that it is Lutchman who helps her to carry out her plan. A six or seven year old girl tells them: “Today is the last day of the Puja of Mangala- bibi. Baba says that tonight Mangala bibi is going to enter a new body.”(CC 200). Murugan's doubts about Lutchman are conveyed through his conversation with Antar. In fact, the character of Lutchman serves as a vehicle to convey the nuances of counter-science with its theoretical propositions including the ultimate transcendence of nature. As a revolutionary medical technology, counter science talks about interpersonal transference, and it is this that motivates Murugan's spirit of enquiry to know about truth. As Murugan says:

See why I have to go to Calcutta Ant?” Murugan shouted, as they bore him inexorably towards the entrance. If there is a Calcutta chromosome I've got to find it. I guess I need it more than you do. CC 92).

Murugan's faith in counter-science receives a further impetus, when superstition and witchcraft combines itself with counter science. Murugan further confirms that Mangala's obsession with the Malaria bug led her unawares to. “The Calcutta Chromosome” (CC 209), and this is because “She's not in this because she wants to be a scientist. She's in this because she thinks she's a god. And what that means is that she wants to be the mind that sets things in motion” (CC 215).

The Laakhan stories featuring the eponymous hero in his different roles either as a postman or a village schoolmaster is in fact a revelation of the mysteries surrounding, Laakhan's life and his experiences. Murugan also finds that there is an inseparable bond between Mangala and Lutchman. Murugan has found out that Lutchman's real name is 'Laakhan' (CC 217), and that he hails from Renupur. Murugan's spirit of inquiry to know more about Lutchman leads him to the knowledge that 'Laakhman' (CC 217) identifies himself with Roman Halder, and also connects himself to Phulboni. This is further testified when we come across the whole story of Phulboni's visit to Renupur and encountering an accident at the Renupur railway station. The author of the Laakhan stories is Phulboni, "a splendid – looking man: over six feet tall, straight and lean as a lamp-post" (CC98). As he was working for a well-known British firm, Palmer Brothers, Phulboni was sent on a trip to the remote provincial town of Renupur. The writer is confronted with a strange experience at Renupur Station. After having travelled for two days by train, Phulboni reaches the Renupur station, the smallest Phulboni had ever seen, but finds to his surprise that the place was "uninhabited and unpeopled" (CC 222). To Phulboni, the station was a desolate spot, except for a tiny, bandy-legged man "dressed in a mud-stained dhoti and a railway man's coat" (CC 222). Because of monsoon flooding, Phulboni elects to spend the night in the signal room, but meets with stiff opposition from the station-master. Not paying heed to the entreaties made by the station-master, Phulboni decides to make himself comfortable and fine in the signal room where he comes across strange occurrences. Here, he is also enticed by a bobbing red light until he is finally placed on the railway track. He hears a few cries of "Laakhan," one of the names adopted by an important member of the counter-science group. Phulboni believes that he is soon to be run over by a train, but wakes up to find himself safe. Suddenly, he hears the sound of the train, but "this time the train was all too real" (CC 237). The train grinds to halt at a distance, a mile away, and Phulboni understands that the siding is in a disused condition as there has not been a station-master at Renupur for more than thirty years. The introduction of the supernatural into the narrative structure of the novel is achieved with the figure of the station master and the spectre holding the red light, and the Phulboni episode really puts the readers in a state of nervous excitement as well as a source of puzzle. The strange and unfamiliar sights and sounds that put Phulboni in a state of fix can be summarised as the product of a feverish mind, and, therefore, beyond the scope of rational explanation. Hence, Ghosh seems to suggest that neither science nor religion can offer logical and syllogistic solutions for problems of mysterious nature. When the glimpse of the light which seemed to have guided Phulboni fades away quite suddenly, he is struck by an inexplicable fear:

Phulboni froze; a chill ran down his spine. Then he remembered his gun and settled back reassured. There was nothing he knew of that was proof against a.303. He went on puffing at his cheroot (CC 230-231).

Ghosh's particular fascination for trains and railway stations finds expression in *The Calcutta Chromosome* where he exploits the setting of railway stations to add to its supernatural touch. The readers are taken aback at the odd events which take place at stations, and so the railway settings turn out to be a source of fear and suspicion. For instance, Mangala is found at Sealdah station, and Murugan turns himself into a lunatic asylum at Sealdah Station, and Phulboni's vision of the bizzare spectacles take place at the Renupur Station. Commenting on the role and significance of the rail in Ghosh's novels, Martin Leer writes: “[r]ailway stations . . . function as the sites where characters and stories appear from and disappear into; centers which connect parallel worlds, a kind of real-world Internet portals” (41-61).

As the events unfold, the readers come to realise that dream is a key trope in the novel. Phulboni dreams of being run over by a train, and Murugan dreams of carrying out the research activities left behind by Ross. It is this dream for the ideal that informs the thematic direction of the novel, and the craving for the perfect and ideal is undoubtedly linked to the man's search and research into the nuances of his/herself and finally to have an identity of his/her own. In the course of man's search for selfhood, one can notice that very often they get entrapped in social situations where they are relegated to the margins to play the role of “other.” In *The Calcutta Chromosome*, Ghosh exposes the plight and fate of men like the real-life Lutchman (fictionalized as Laakhan) who could have become scientists of great renown had they benefited themselves from education. Through the series of episodes in the novels, novel, Ghosh firmly points out that the intellectual subjugation and subordination of those without knowledge is quite untenable and unethical. By means of this literary piece, Ghosh tries to highlight the contributions of those who pass into the convenient forgetfulness of history. In the novel, Ronald Ross is projected as a symbol of scientific knowledge, for his research in malaria in the mid-nineteenth century and his subsequent winning of the Nobel Prize point towards Ross's urge to convey his knowledge for the sake of the posterity. But it is not so in the case of the so-called counter-science group who functioned along the lines of secrecy. And in practice, the counter-science group reposed no faith in the process of communication, “because to communicate, to put ideas into language would be to establish a claim to know -- which is the first thing that a counter-science would dispute” (CC 91). Like Mangala Bibi and Lakhan, Phulboni also is a firm

believer of the cult of silence. That knowledge is limitless, and nothing can be known with a degree of certainty from the ideological standpoint of the activists of the counter-science group, and therefore, they choose to remain silent. Knowledge, as viewed through the lens of the counter-science group, is something that “couldn't begin without acknowledging the impossibility of knowledge” (CC 91), and based on this premise, the members of this group chose to work in a silent mode with the tool of indirect communication. Michael Wood points out that “a complicated fidelity to silence is one of literature's most attractive attainments” (1). Phulboni acknowledges the paradoxical fact that the significance of language gets highlighted against the context of silence, and so understands the intimate bond that exists between language and silence for the “the Word is to this silence what the shadow is to the foreshadowed, what the veil is to the eyes, what the mind is to truth, what language is to life” (CC 25). He further makes it clear that silence is a real means of communication and so “Mistaken are those who imagine that silence is without life; that it is inanimate, without either spirit or voice” (CC 25). As members of a secret group, Mangala and Lutchman never disclose their identities, for they rely on the technique of secrecy and believe in the cult of silence. No wonder, the text of *The Calcutta Chromosome* is concerned with the quest of the postmodern man towards attaining a self-defined identity and achieving immortality, and how Antar and Murugan are portrayed as heroes in their quest for cognition and knowledge as the final point of salvation and immortality.

As the novel is concerned with the praxis of knowledge and discovery, Ghosh presents situations in which he tries to question and analyze the western hegemony of knowledge and power. The discovery made by Julius Bon wagner- Jauregg in 1927 in relation to his finding that artificially induced malaria could cure syphilis won him the Nobel in the same year. Ghosh notes that the efforts and trials undertaken by these researchers still continued, albeit in different countries and by different persons. In the novel, we find Mangala proceeding with malarial research activities by taking cues from her predecessors like Ross or Wagner – Jauregg. Being the leader of the “counter science group,” Mangala claims to 'know' the pros and cons of the subject of malaria, and even succeeds in developing a weird strain of malaria that could be cultivated in pigeons. By making the bug cross-over, Mangala used pigeons like a test tube and claimed that she had found out a cure for syphilis, a sexually transmitted disease by applying the technique of transferring malaria from a pigeon to a patient suffering from syphilis. But while engaged in the process of “crossing-over of randomly assorted personality traits, from the malaria donor to the recipient” (CC 212), Mangala and her team comes across the unique Calcutta

Chromosome “a biological expression of human traits that is neither inherited from the immediate gene pool, none transmitted into it. It's exactly the kind of entity that would be hardest for a conventional scientist to accept” (CC 213). Such a Chromosome, as Mangala concludes, exists in the non-regenerating tissue, the brain and its peculiar feature is that it could be transmitted through malaria. But Mangala, a washer-woman did not know about the nature of a Chromosome and its applications in everyday life. Consequently, her treatment often resulted in producing strange personality disorders, but Mangala became more and more interested in this kind of treatment through which she claimed to control the ways in which the “cross-overs” worked. As Murugan observes:

Just think, a fresh start: when your body fails you, you leave it, you migrate—you or at least a matching symptomology of your self. You begin all over again another body, another beginning. Just think no mistakes, a fresh start [...] a technology that lets you improve on yourself in your next incarnation? (CC 95).

Murugan understands the modus operandi of the counter-science group, and the efforts made by them to put into practice the theory of interpersonal transference. Its supporters led by Mangala attempt to master the art of transferring souls, and this accounts for the reason why she is worshipped as 'Mangalabibi'. Here, Ghosh sets in contrast, two people hailing from different countries and backgrounds; Mangala's amateur skills as a scientist are juxtaposed to that of the professional expertise of Ross, are juxtaposed to the professional expertise of Ross, the 'real' science-man. This kind of contrast intends to highlight the superiority of native knowledge over western notion, and the failure of Ronald Ross or, D.D Cunningham to discover the 'Calcutta Chromosome'. Ghosh, thus, questions the perceptions of the colonial masters regarding the colonized in the postcolonial milieu of the contemporary society. Mangala wields the monopoly of folk knowledge and endeavours to solve the mystery of malaria through its power. The nuances and ambiguities of the postcolonial experience are clearly brought out through a contrast between the eastern and the western societies: the coloniser society in the novel is represented by Ross, Cunningham and others and the colonized includes Mangala who claims to control everything. In the tussle between counter-science and modern science, it is the former that has gained the upper hand and in keeping with the tenets of counter science, Mangala continues with her experiments by exploring the oriental beliefs of life, birth and rebirth.

It is relevant to note that in an age where attempts are made by man to reclaim and retain their identities, *The Calcutta Chromosome* presents situations where Ghosh has introduced supernatural elements into its narrative structure to explicate the theory of

interpersonal transference of souls. Such crossing-overs have resulted in shift of identities. For instance, in the novel, Sonali Das, who looked after the women's supplement of the *Calcutta* magazine, herself had been a witness to the process of transmigration of soul when Laakhan's spirit is transferred on the body of Roman Halder. Sonali notices that the rituals were performed by a woman dressed "in a crisply starched saree, with a white scarf tied around her hair" (CC 143), who is in fact Mangala in the guise of Mrs. Aratounian. Sonali's visit to Robinson street hotel forms an important episode in the theme of quest.

As the narrative progresses, we learn that Murugan himself had been a patient of syphilis, and hence his quest to know about Mangala and Laakhan. The concept of interpersonal transference is seen at work towards the end of the novel, when Sonali tells Murugan and Urmila that she had seen Roman Halder's body, and it is addressed as Laakhan, and that the lady near the body is Mrs. Aratounian. Murugan understands that the spirits of Mangala and Laakhan are reincarnated in Mrs. Aratounian and Roman Halder respectively. Here, Murugan's quest for that Calcutta chromosome gets complete. The novelist has successfully brought all the loose threads of the narrative into a single whole, and as the spokesperson of the novelist, Murugan says: "My part was to tie some threads together so that they could hand the whole package over in a neat little bundle some time in the future, to whoever it is they are waiting for" (CC 259).

Thus, it can be seen that through a mixture of science, religion and history, *The Calcutta Chromosome* presents a "crossing-over" of physical time, and Ghosh has even made attempts to make "a fresh start [...] a technology that lets you improve on yourself in your next incarnation?" (CC 95).

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